



Conservation News

Harrison County Soil & Water Conservation District

Vol. 38, No. 1

Fall 2021

Teachers' Conservation Workshop: Watersheds & Pollinators



Beth D'Aquila, District Coordinator

Harrison County Soil & Water Conservation District had the privilege to organize "Watersheds & Pollinators" and share our knowledge with nearly 30 teachers while hosting our Teachers' Conservation Workshop. This 3-day educational workshop, with a grant from MS Dept. of Environmental Quality, was a huge success thanks to our awesome presenters and teachers! Teachers were enthusiastic to incorporate an appreciation of our natural resources into their classrooms. We are also thankful that Hancock County SWCD welcomed 13 additional Harrison County teachers at their teachers' workshop.

We appreciate the Harrison County Board of Supervisors for use of the County Farm Road Shelter, a fabulous facility; and to the Harrison County Sheriff's Department for use of the Harrison County

Farm each day for our field trips such as hands-on fisheries and aquatic exploration of the lake, as well as the NRCS rainfall simulator for show and tell about soil health.

My District colleagues from Hancock, Jackson, Stone, and Pearl River counties were a tremendous asset to our team. We appreciate our NRCS staff who always partner with the District to make our workshops and field days a success; it takes a village and we are grateful for their dedication. Lance Middleton with MS Soil & Water Conservation Commission is our real VIP, he was essential in carrying out the teachers' conservation workshops in each county! MSU Coastal Research & Extension staff also proved to be essential and a good resource for teachers. Debra Veeder with *continued on page 2*

Teachers' Conservation Workshop: Watersheds & Pollinators

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MS Wildlife Federation spent a half-day with teachers as they learned about 'Adopt a Stream' and were provided many resources. We are grateful also to WLOX-TV13 and WXXV-TV25 for the fantastic coverage.

In addition to presenters, teachers got creative with many reduce-reuse-recycle hands-on activities. Teachers also received a "Watershed & Me A-Z" book and "Forestry & Me A-Z" book, an Earth beachball to demonstrate 70% of the earth's surface is water; they even made an ecosystem. It was a great learning experience and the teachers were happy to receive their CEU's for their education dedication.



Mississippi Inland Cleanup Program

Jessi A. James,
MSU Coastal Research & Extension Center

Litter is a global issue that is known to decrease tourism, cost significant amounts of money to eliminate, and have tremendous environmental impacts. The Mississippi Inland Cleanup Program (MSICP) is a trash-free education and cleanup event program sponsored by Mississippi State University Coastal Research and Extension Center as an expansion of the Mississippi Coastal Cleanup Program.

This new program will extend the efforts of the coastal program by removing debris from the local community through events and provide outreach to help stop trash at its inland source. The MSICP headquarters is located in Biloxi, Mississippi, however, the program ultimately aims to provide its educational services across twenty-one southeastern Mississippi counties. Despite this year's many challenges, six Mississippi counties safely hosted community cleanups that resulted in the removal of over 5,500 pounds of litter (abiding by COVID-19 guidelines).

The Mississippi Inland Cleanup Program will also be adding a sub-program to this year's initiatives, called

“Adopt-A-Campground”. Through conversations with community partners, campgrounds have been identified as prime locations for some of the first MSICP activities. Locals and tourists alike enjoy exploring the abundant natural resources throughout Mississippi and campgrounds often serve as the primary entrance for some of the most picturesque landscapes throughout the state. Their proximity to natural areas, often waterbodies, and accumulation of visitors make campgrounds a perfect location to promote conservationism - however, this also makes it a majority point of entry of litter into the environment. Interested in preserving our natural resources as an individual, group, or organization? Consider adopting your local campground!



More information on this organization and how to get involved with other local litter prevention and removal programs can be found at nolittermovement.com



Harrison County Beautification Commission

Trey McNight, Director

Created in 1988, the Harrison County Beautification Commission promotes a cooperative effort between the municipalities and unincorporated areas of the county to preserve the natural beauty and environmental integrity of our community. As a certified Keep America Beautiful Affiliate, the Commission's programs focus on Recycling and Litter; Waste Reduction; Beautification; and Community Greening. The Commission also strives to encourage, educate and envision a clean, green and beautiful place to live, work, and grow.

An exciting project currently in the works is a multi-agency effort to expand the "Wildflower Trails of Mississippi" program to D'Iberville. The program fills suitable properties with colorful, native wildflowers and grasses – especially along Mississippi's highways. The four-acre site chosen for the wildflower project fronts I-110, which is often referred to as the gateway to the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

The HCBC is also working in conjunction with the Harrison County Board of Supervisors on an Anti-Litter Campaign that will include signage placed across the County to encourage residents to keep their communities clean and beautiful.

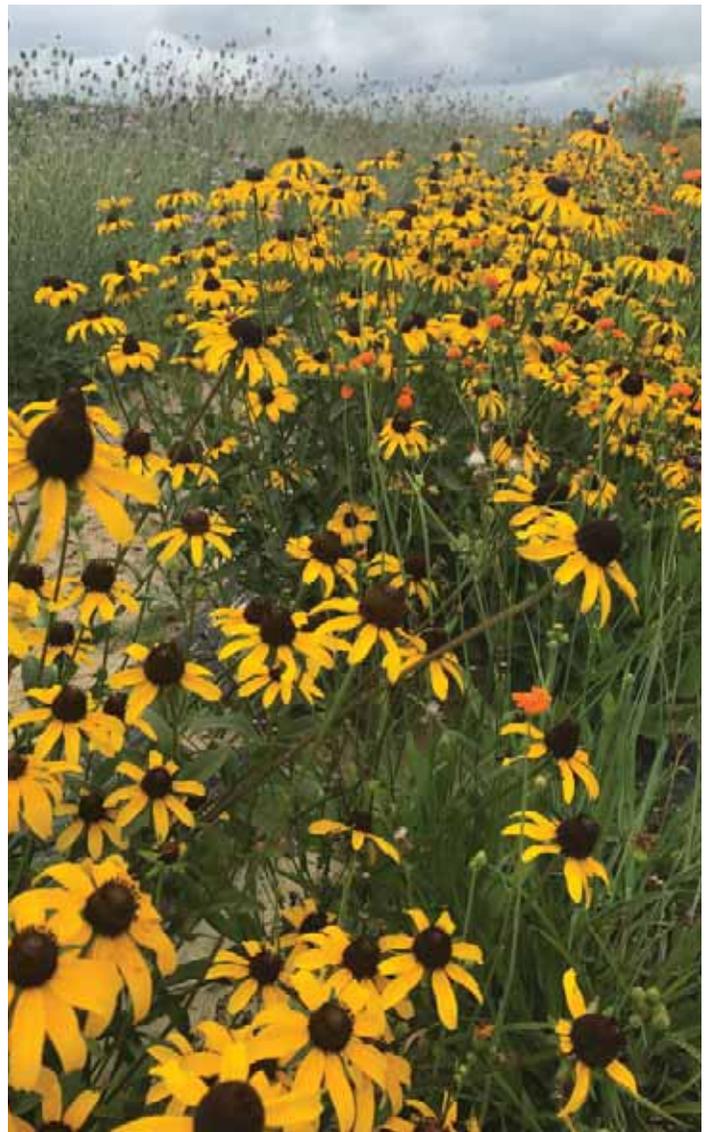
Other recurring and ongoing projects include the following:

- Renew our Rivers
- Great American Clean-up
- Earth Day
- Bring It
- Coastal Clean-up
- Christmas Tree Recycling
Christmas Cardboard Recycling
- Community Clean-ups
- Adopt-A-Road, Adopt-A-Spot
- Leaders Against Litter
- Harrison County Soil & Water Conservation District Field Day

The Harrison County Beautification Commission partners with numerous organizations, businesses and various forms of local government to achieve clean-up-oriented goals. The unsung heroes that empower the Commission are volunteers. Without

the help of students, citizens and public employees alike, the achievements and successes of the HCBC would not be possible.

The Harrison County Beautification Commission is always looking for opportunities to guide and assist citizens of Harrison County in creating and preserving a beautiful environment. Please feel free to contact us to help plan and organize your community clean-up or beautification project. If you would like to volunteer and help make Harrison County cleaner, and greener please contact Beautification Director, Trey McNight, at 228-214-1405 or thmcknight@co.harrison.ms.us



Wildflower Trails of Mississippi

NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program

**Tyree Harrington,
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service**

This year has been very productive as far as putting conservation on the ground and assisting landowners with their conservation needs. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has spent \$35,870 in Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funds and \$33,609 in Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) funds.

These are federally funded programs which landowners can apply for through your local Soil and Water Conservation District or the Natural Resources Conservation Service office. To be eligible to participate in USDA programs, you must register your farm with the Farm Services Agency (FSA). They can be contacted at 601-795-4409 ext. 4. Applications can be completed at any time. However, there are cutoff dates for processing applications.

EQIP practices include but are not limited to fencing, watering facilities, heavy use areas, forage and biomass planting, prescribed grazing, high tunnel systems, fire lanes, prescribed burning, herbaceous weed control, etc. CSP is an annual payment that is paid for conservation enhancements of conservation activities that you are currently doing.

Popular EQIP practices include those that increase efficient use of agricultural water, soil health improvements, such as cover crops and no-till; pasture improvement, such as prescribed grazing and watering systems; forest improvement, such as forest stand improvement; and habitat improvement, such as early successional habitat management.

What can NRCS do for our municipalities? NRCS can provide assistance through our Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program. This program assists local units of government during such times as periods of high rainfall events and natural disasters. EWP assist with the repair of certain infrastructures such as eroding banks, protecting utilities, protecting property and debris removal

NRCS provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment. More information on NRCS conservation programs can be found at <https://www.ms.usda.gov>.

For these and other services, contact NRCS District Conservationist Tyree Harrington at 228-860-1363 or tyree.harrington@usda.gov



Installation of a heavy use watering facility, cross fencing and pipeline.

Cicuta: Pretty Flowers-Pretty Deadly

Joe Buckley, Commissioner

There is a native wildflower that is widespread around the country. This plant frequents wet soils in right of ways, pastures, parks, and riverbanks. Commonly called cowbane or poison parsnip, this plant is the most toxic in our country. It is known as Water Hemlock. Water Hemlock is related to carrots as well as a host of edible plants. It is often confused with wild parsnip with a cluster of umbrella shaped white flowers. It also is frequently confused with non edible plants like Queen Ann's Lace.

The toxic properties of this plant pose a danger to most any mammal that eats any part of it. As little as three bites can kill an adult human. Grazing animals also are in danger when lower pastures become home to Water Hemlock. There is another family member to this plant called Poison Hemlock. This plant is not native to North America but is becoming a pest here as well. It has a resemblance to our native hemlock with the main identification difference being a reddish mottled stem instead of the green stem of the Water Hemlock. The Poison Hemlock is also very toxic and can cause painful blisters to the skin of anyone unlucky enough to pick one without protective clothing.

Most of the deadly toxins in Water Hemlock lies in their root system. Cattle are most affected in the early spring when the plant is pulled from soft wet ground and ingested whole. Time to death is as short as 1 to 5 minutes. Control of this plant can be achieved in several ways. It is best dealt with in early spring



when the plant is young. While generally not toxic to insects, bees that collect nectar from the flowers can contaminate the hives honey making it toxic. There are plenty of resources that can help the landowner to decide the best course of action with Water Hemlock. They range from removal of the plant with the root system to chemical control. Remember to wear protective clothing and gloves. Also refrain from mowing the plants, especially while flowering. The spreading of the seeds will just make the problem worse.

Watch out for this pretty plant. You don't want to end up like Socrates in 399 B.C. He died of Hemlock poisoning after being condemned.

MDEQ Environmental Education

Funding is now available for all Mississippi elementary schools public & private, church & library events, day camps, and youth groups or adult meetings for the MDEQ Environmental Education & Outreach Mobile Classroom programs. These programs educate and inspire students concerning water quality stewardship. Programs align with the science standards for the Mississippi Department of Education for Kindergarten through 6th grade.

Programs include: (K-2nd grades) The River Town Story musical puppet theater; (3-6th grades) All the Water in the Word interactive water unit PowerPoint presentation; Youth or Teacher Water Quality Steward workshop with hands-on lab.

To see videos and information about these programs or to schedule an event, please visit bayoutown.com or contact Cherie Schadler @ 228-586-0479 or bayoutown@att.net.



Lime/Litter Spreader

The District has available a CL-HYD-PUL Adams 16-ft pull type Lime/Litter Spreader with lime baffle and 4" center double bar kit for lease. Equipment is available to lease by Harrison County landowners by filling out a lease agreement and making an equipment deposit. Rental fee is \$5 per acre. Call 228-234-1779 to schedule use. Pickup and dropoff at Second Chance Farm, 16241 Northrup Cuevas Road, Lizana. Lease agreement form is available at hcswcd.co.harrison.ms.us.



Seed Grain Drill

The District has available a 7 ft Sunflower Seed Grain Drill for lease to Harrison County landowners. To lease the grain drill, a lease agreement and equipment deposit must be made. Rental fee is \$5 per acre. For details and to schedule use call 228-234-1779. Pickup and dropoff at Second Chance Farm, 16241 Northrup Cuevas Road, in Lizana. Lease agreement form available at hcswcd.co.harrison.ms.us.

Three Basic Needs of Wildlife For a Backyard Habitat

Tim Ray, Mississippi State University

Creating your backyard habitat can be very easy once you understand that wildlife, just like people, have three basic needs. These needs: food, water, and cover; promote use and provide the lifecycle needs of wildlife. A successful backyard habitat must include all three needs. It takes only a small investment of time to make your yard or garden “wildlife friendly” by adding these essentials.

FOOD – You can provide food in two ways, artificial feeding - bird feeders, squirrel feeders, etc. and the preferred, natural vegetation - planting a variety of native trees, shrubs, grasses, and flowering plants that provide nuts, seeds, nectar, fruit, and other sources of nourishment. It provides a seasonal approach that is enjoyable from a gardening and recreational wildlife standpoint. This will encourage a wider range of creatures already accustomed to using these plants. Using natural vegetation, compared to providing artificial feed, is less costly over time and is easier to maintain. Remember that including plants that provide foraging opportunities in the winter offers an almost year-round supply of food.

WATER – Providing water for both drinking and bathing is vital to wildlife. You can include it by having birdbaths, drippers, or small ponds. Garden ponds that are large enough to include water animals (fish, frogs, toads, salamanders, snails), as well as water plants, add beneficial elements that complement most backyard habitat settings. Surrounding the pond with plants adds to the attraction for wildlife. Be sure the water source is dependable year-round.

SHELTER/REPRODUCTIVE AREAS – Nesting and shelter areas where wildlife are protected from the weather and predators is essential. Various species require different landscape features for these needs. Providing a diversity of plant material that includes evergreen and deciduous trees, vines, shrubs, herbaceous plants, grasses, and ground covers lets wildlife select the right areas for their feeding, nesting, and shelter needs. Ideal habitats include plants of various sizes, densities, and types. Evergreens are particularly valuable for winter cover. Grouping plants close to sources of food and water provides the cover wildlife need to feel safe while feeding or drinking. Of course, proper selection of plants includes those that provide food as well as good cover and nesting.

Living plants are only one way to provide shelter and nesting areas. Using bat houses, bird houses, toad houses, and other artificial shelters is an easy way to meet this basic need. Providing shelter areas is especially valuable if you have a new landscape where trees and shrubs are not large enough to provide the necessary habitat. Old tree stumps, fallen logs, and brush and rock piles can also provide a great habitat for wildlife. Learning to appreciate these features (the dead tree snag or the pile of brush) for their natural artistry and wildlife benefits is helpful when creating the backyard habitat

Tim Ray contact information: (228) 865-4227 or tim.ray@msstate.edu



Biloxi High School Students Plant Dunes On Harrison County Beaches



Eric Sparks, PhD., Mississippi State University and Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant

In late April, the Biloxi High School Environmental Club with help from Ecological Asset Management, LLC, Harrison County Sand Beach Authority, Mississippi State University, Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant, and the Mississippi Student Naturalist Program planted over 1,000 plugs of sea oats (*Uniola paniculata*) on Biloxi Beach.

The purpose of the project was to build sand dunes while also learning about the benefits of developed sand dunes and the importance of environmental stewardship. The primary purpose of the sand dunes and dune fences you see on some areas of the beach as you drive down Highway 90 is to help keep sand on the beach. Moving sand off the road is costly!

As winds blow across the beach, sand is picked up and moved. Dune plants and dune fencing work by intercepting some of that sand as it blows up against

the plants or slats. Once that happens, the sand drops down to the surface. As this process continues, piles of sand (or dunes) are formed. As more and taller dunes form, their ability to trap sand also increases. Dune plants, such as sea oats, are great at creating these dunes that provide a barrier to sand being blown along Highway 90. An additional benefit of dune plants is that they also provide habitat for a variety of animals. The next time you visit a beach in Harrison County or drive along Highway 90, take a moment to observe the critters running around the dunes and that there is generally less sand on the road where dunes are present.

If your school is interested in learning more about dune plants and other coastal vegetation, please contact me at eric.sparks@msstate.edu.

District 2021 Stewardship Poster Winners

Healthy Forests - Healthy Communities



1st Place: Lola Bentz, 2nd-3rd Grade
North Woolmarket Elementary



1st Place: Isabel Blosser, 4th-6th Grade
St. Vincent de Paul School



2nd Place: Carley Jouthier, 2nd-3rd Grade
North Woolmarket Elementary



2nd Place: Kayla Storey, 4th-6th Grade
St. Vincent de Paul School



3rd Place: Addison Corbitt, 2nd-3rd Grade
St. Vincent de Paul School



3rd Place: Brooks Barber, 4th-6th Grade
North Woolmarket Elementary

Forest Management Plan

By Jim Barnes,

Natural Resources Conservation Service

A forest management plan is a site-specific plan developed for a client, which addresses one or more resource concerns on land where forestry-related conservation activities are planned. A forest management plan is required for participation in the National Quality Incentive Program and must be developed by certified technical service providers. A list of these providers can be found at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/technical/tsp/>

The purpose of these plans is to offer private landowners an opportunity to receive a comprehensive forest management plan from a professional forester. These plans will address existing conditions and practices, identify resource concerns, and evaluate stands based on past harvest history. This information will be generated from a forest inventory of the property, (timber cruise). The inventory typically includes forest management unit and stand boundaries, site index, basal area, species,

size class, wood product potential, soil conditions, slopes, topography, aspect, natural and cultural features, roads, wildfire risk (surface and crown fires), risk of insect and disease infestation, fish and wildlife species and habitat elements, noxious and invasive species, water quality and other important features as applicable.

The information derived from the forest inventory will assist the landowner in planning for certain goals. Stocking, basal area, species composition, wildlife, pollinator habitat and protection, recreation, are examples of these goals. Recommended NRCS practices should be included in the plan to assist the landowner with planning for future cost-share opportunities.

Plan development criteria can be located in Section III in each state's eFOTG, or can be found at <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/d>



**SAVE
THE DATE**

**VIRTUAL
MISSISSIPPI
RESTORATION
SUMMIT**

NOVEMBER 9, 2021
MISSISSIPPI COAST CONVENTION CENTER AND
VIRTUAL BROADCAST

JOIN MDEQ FOR AN UPDATE ON DEEPWATER
HORIZON RESTORATION EFFORTS IN
MISSISSIPPI, INCLUDING THE MISSISSIPPI TIG
ANNUAL MEETING.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
VISIT WWW.MDEQ.MS.GOV/RESTORATION



ARBOR DAY
in Mississippi is
the second Friday
in February.
February 11, 2022

Biloxi Bay Potato Salad



- 1 lb. Medium boiled Mississippi Gulf Shrimp, cleaned and peeled
- 6 to 8 Medium potatoes, boiled
- 5 to 6 Green onions, chopped
- 2 Stalks celery, finely chopped
- 4 to 5 Eggs, boiled and chopped
- 1 cup Sweet relish
- 1 tbsp. Prepared mustard
- 1 cup Salad dressing
- Cajun seasoning (to taste)
- Salt and pepper (to taste)

Boil potatoes whole, peel and cut into pieces, but not too small. Mix all ingredients and serve.

Get Hooked on Mississippi Gulf Shrimp
shrimp.mississippi.gov

ConservationNews

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Beth D'Aquilla, Editor & District Coordinator
Tyree Harrington, District Conservationist

The Harrison County Soil and Water Conservation District holds a regular monthly board meeting on the first Thursday of each month. This board meets to administer the program of soil and water conservation in Harrison County.



Harrison County Soil & Water
Conservation District Mississippi

MISSISSIPPI

Soil & Water Conservation Commission

EARTH GREEN - WATER CLEAN