

Projects . Successes . Partnerships

 **NRCS** Louisiana  
**Conservation Update**  
United States Department of Agriculture . Natural Resources Conservation Service

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August 2011



# Coastal Wetland Conservation

## Field Days in Natchitoches and Morehouse Parishes

## Partnerships, Paddles, and Plants

A cooperative partnership with local Soil and Water Conservation Districts and  
Resource Conservation and Development Councils (RC&D)

HELPING PEOPLE HELP THE LAND

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## On the Cover

Bayou Rigolettes shoreline in Jefferson Parish, Louisiana. Natural Resources Conservation Service conservationists, soil scientists, and engineers work side-by-side with private landowners to stem the loss of our coastal wetlands. See story on pages 4 and 5.



Melvin Rodrigue, Civil Engineering Technician, waves from his office on Bayou Rigolettes in Jefferson Parish, Louisiana.

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## Notes from the State Conservationist

Can you imagine trying to change the tides? Some people do.

Louisiana is losing coastal wetlands at an alarming rate. To make the loss more understandable, experts describe it in terms of football fields lost (one every 40 minutes) or states lost (land loss equal to the size of Delaware). Forty square miles of Louisiana's coastal wetlands are lost every year. Eighty percent of Louisiana's coastal wetlands are privately owned, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) works with these landowners every day to help them conserve and protect their land and its resources.



Twenty-one years ago, a federal/state partnership was formed to stem the tide of coastal wetland loss—the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act (CWPPRA) Task Force. CWPPRA projects are widely acclaimed as the standard of success for coastal wetland restoration, and NRCS has been the lead agency for many of the CWPPRA projects working with the State of Louisiana as our local partner. Supporting NRCS' projects are engineers, biologists, conservationists, and technicians armed with a vision and the technical expertise needed to make an impact.

Other tides are not as tangible as gulf tides—but present a challenge to change, just the same. For the past 10 years, the Morehouse Parish Farmers and Landowners Association has hosted an annual field day for minority farmers. This association has been instrumental in changing the tide of USDA program participation by minority producers in Louisiana. Today, the Association's challenge is to change the tide of young people leaving the farm.

At NRCS we imagine changing the tide (of coastal erosion, cropland erosion, water quality/quantity, nutrient management, wildlife habitat, production levels), then, we do it. If you have natural resource concerns on your farm or ranch, give us a call. Give us a chance to help you change the tide.

Kevin D. Norton  
State Conservationist  
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service - Louisiana

### Quote of the Month

**"Choose to chance the rapids and dare to dance that tide."**

Garth Brooks, The River

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**Quin Kinler, Resource Conservationist, Baton Rouge Water Resources Planning Staff**  
Quin develops and coordinates coastal wetland conservation projects.

## NRCS' Role in Coastal Wetland Conservation



**Michael Trusclair, District Conservationist, Boutte Field Office**  
Michael works with individual landowners in coastal areas to develop coastal wetland conservation plans.

Barataria Landbridge Shoreline Protection Project—Jefferson Parish, Louisiana

### Louisiana's Coastal Wetland Losses

Since the 1930's, one million acres of Louisiana's coastal wetlands have been lost to open water. This loss has been primarily attributed to changes in the amount of sediment available to build and maintain our coastal wetlands, construction of

canals in wetland areas, wave erosion, and subsidence. Eighty percent of Louisiana's coastal wetlands are privately owned, and this loss of coastal wetlands has meant that farms, ranches, and communities have disappeared into open water, and lives have been changed forever.

*"We draw the line in the sand."*

**Melvin Rodrigue**  
NRCS Civil Engineering Technician  
From a Barataria Landbridge construction project.



Coastal wetland areas are so fragile that wave action alone causes large pieces of the shoreline to erode every day.

### Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act (CWPPRA)

The CWPPRA Task Force is composed of the State of Louisiana and five federal agencies: the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, NOAA-National Marine Fisheries Service, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Through CWPPRA, there are currently 189 total projects authorized. Of those 189, NRCS is the federal sponsor for 63. Out of the 88 projects completed to date, NRCS has completed 40 of those valued at \$314,244,487. The total acreage affected by NRCS sponsored projects is 300,519 acres.



Eroding shoreline of Bayou Rigolettes—Jefferson Parish, Louisiana

*"Where I am standing today—may not be here tomorrow."*

**Quin Kinler**  
Resource Conservationist  
From the banks of Bayou Rigolettes



Melvin Rodrigue, Civil Engineering Technician, Thibodaux Watershed Office  
Melvin inspects construction of coastal wetlands conservation projects.

Since its beginning as the Soil Conservation Service, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has worked side-by-side with private landowners to stem the loss of Louisiana’s coastal wetlands.

Today, NRCS works in a successful collaborative process with four other federal agencies and the State of Louisiana to conserve and protect Louisiana’s

coastal wetlands—the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act (CWPPRA) Task Force. CWPPRA has proven to be an exemplary model of success on many levels—interagency coordination, grassroots involvement, speed of project implementation, and project success. NRCS has impacted over 300,000 acres of coastal wetlands through completion of 40 CWPPRA projects.

Today’s team of NRCS coastal conservationists have boats for offices. They work with private landowners to identify wetland conservation projects, collaborate with other agencies to design and implement conservation measures, stand watch as projects are constructed, and monitor completed projects. “We draw the line in the sand,” said Melvin Rodrigue, NRCS Civil Engineering Technician.

For more information on coastal wetland conservation and CWPPRA, visit: [www.lacoast.gov](http://www.lacoast.gov)



Coastal restoration projects utilize a variety of restoration techniques. One technique is shoreline protection. Eroding shorelines are protected by buttressing the land with rock berms, concrete, vegetative plantings, or by diffusing wave energy in front of the shore using breakwaters and/or fences.

Barataria Landbridge Shoreline Protection Project—Jefferson Parish, Louisiana

# Private Landowners Local, State, and Federal Partners Conservationists



**Morehouse Black Farmers and Landowners Association Field Day**

**Jul 25**

The Natural Resources Conservation Service participated as presenters at the 10th Annual Morehouse Black Farmers and Landowners Association Field Day near Bastrop, Louisiana, on July 25, 2011. The field day was hosted by the Association, Southern University, and the LSU AgCenter.

The field tour began on Harper Armstrong's farm to showcase corn, cotton, and soybean production, then moved to Odis Hill's farm to demonstrate the process of harvesting corn. The field day ended on Curtis Payton's cattle farm for a presentation on conservation practices for cattle operations. Along the way, specialists provided valuable information to producers on ways to improve their production and conserve resources.

NRCS provided information on the PHAUCET irrigation improvement program and NRCS' Pumping Plant and Irrigation System Efficiency mobile unit, as well as information on the benefits of conservation practices such as heavy use area protection pads, pipelines, and water troughs for cattle.

For more information about conservation practices for your farm or ranch, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, or the Conservation Stewardship Program, contact your local NRCS office or soil and water conservation district. A contact directory is on the last page of this publication.



# USDA's Commitment to Equality

USDA believes every farmer and rancher should be treated equally and fairly, and we are committed to resolving all cases involving allegations of past discrimination by individuals.

**Referral Guide for USDA Settlements and Claims Adjudication Process**

<p><b>Women and Hispanic Farmers and Ranchers Claims Adjudication Process</b></p> <p>If you believe that USDA improperly denied farm loan benefits to you for certain time periods between 1981 and 2000 because you are a female or because you are Hispanic, you may be eligible to apply for compensation. To request a claims package by telephone, call 1-888-508-4429. To request a claims package online, please visit <a href="http://www.farmerclaims.gov">www.farmerclaims.gov</a></p>	<p><b>Native American Farmer and Rancher Class Action Settlement (Keepseagle v. Vilsack)</b></p> <p>If you are a Native American who was denied a farm loan or loan servicing by the USDA between January 1, 1981, and November 24, 1999, you may be eligible for benefits from a Class Action Settlement. To request a claims package by telephone, call: 1-888-233-5506. To request a claims package online, or for more information, please visit: <a href="http://www.indianfarmclass.com">www.indianfarmclass.com</a></p>	<p><b>African American Farmer and Rancher Class Action Settlement (Pigford II)</b></p> <p>If you are an African American farmer (a) who submitted a request to file a late claim on or between October 13, 1999, and June 18, 2008, under the 1999 USDA settlement in the earlier class action known as Pigford v. Glickman ("Pigford") and (b) who did not receive a merits determination on your discrimination claim, you may be eligible for benefits from a Class Action Settlement. To hear information by telephone, call 1-866-950-5547 or 1-866-472-7826. To find information online, please visit: <a href="http://www.blackfarmercase.com">www.blackfarmercase.com</a></p>
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## Roque Brothers Farm Field Day

**Jul 25**

USDA agencies in Natchitoches, Louisiana, and the Natchitoches Soil and Water Conservation District coordinated a field day at Roque Brothers Farm on July 21, 2011, to promote USDA programs and assistance to minority landowners in Natchitoches Parish. It was anticipated that about 30 people would attend the field day, but 80 people attended the event (64 were landowners).

While touring the farm, NRCS representatives discussed the conservation benefits of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and the Conservation Stewardship Program.



The Roque Brothers beef cattle operation was an ideal location for the field day. The Roque Brothers have installed heavy use area protection pads and a pipeline and water trough for their cattle. In addition, they utilize prescribed grazing and brush management practices.

## Around the State

**Jul 23**

### Partnerships, Paddles, and Plants

On July 23, 2011, a team of 25 NRCS Earth Team volunteers paddled a fleet of kayaks down Bayou Teche in St. Mary Parish to plant 1,200 California bulrush plants in Louisiana's first-ever kayak-powered revegetation project. This unique Earth Team volunteer project was a partnership effort with a local business--Lafayette's Pack and Paddle--and the Lafayette Kayak Fishing Club. Volunteers on shore prepared the plants for planting, other volunteers shuttled plants to volunteers who were planting in waist-deep water, and other volunteers kept much-needed drinking water distributed to volunteers. Earth Team volunteers are an integral part of Louisiana's conservation partnership, and each Earth Team volunteer takes pride in the fact that they help maintain and improve our natural resources and environment. If you are interested in joining Louisiana's Earth Team, contact Kristen Lemoine at [kristen.lemoine@la.usda.gov](mailto:kristen.lemoine@la.usda.gov) or (318) 473-7741.



This revegetation project was sponsored by the St. Mary Soil and Water Conservation District.

## Contact Our Offices

Parish	Field Office	Soil and Water Conservation District	Address	Telephone
Acadia	Crowley	Acadia SWCD	157 Cherokee Drive, Suite C, Crowley, LA 70526	(337) 783-5823, ext. 3
Allen	Oberlin	Allen SWCD	309 North 1st Street, Suite 1, Oberlin, LA 70655	(337) 639-4850, ext. 3
Ascension	Donaldsonville	Lower Delta SWCD and New River SWCD	2274 Highway 70, Suite C, Donaldsonville, LA 70346	(225) 473-7638, ext. 3
Assumption	Donaldsonville	Lower Delta SWCD	2274 Highway 70, Suite C, Donaldsonville, LA 70346	(225) 473-7638, ext. 3
Avoyelles	Marksville	Avoyelles SWCD	313 North Monroe Street, Suite 4, Marksville, LA 71351	(318) 253-9445, ext. 3
Beauregard	DeRidder	Calcasieu SWCD	597 Mahlon Street, Suite B, DeRidder, LA 70634	(337) 463-8555, ext. 3
Bienville	Minden	Saline SWCD	216B Broadway, Minden, LA 71055	(318) 377-3950, ext. 3
Bossier	Benton	Bodcau SWCD	200 Burt Boulevard, Suite 101, Benton, LA 71006-4901	(318) 965-2185, ext. 3
Caddo	Shreveport	Caddo SWCD	1402 Hawn Avenue, Shreveport, LA 71107	(318) 676-3461, ext. 3
Calcasieu	Lake Charles	Gulf Coast SWCD	1400 Highway 14, Suite B, Lake Charles, LA 70601	(337) 436-5020
Caldwell	Columbia	Boeuf and Dugdemona SWCD	7128 Highway 165 South, Suite 2, Columbia, LA 71418	(318) 649-2651, ext. 3
Cameron	Lake Charles	Gulf Coast SWCD	1400 Highway 14, Suite B, Lake Charles, LA 70601	(337) 436-5020
Catahoula	Jonesville	Catahoula SWCD	3545 4th Street, Jonesville, LA 71343	(318) 339-4239, ext. 3
Claiborne	Minden	D'Arbonne SWCD	216B Broadway, Minden, LA 71055	(318) 377-3950, ext. 3
Concordia	Ferriday	Tensas-Concordia SWCD	8331 Highway 84, Ferriday, LA 71334	(318) 255-3136, ext. 3
DeSoto	Mansfield	DeSoto SWCD	211 Washington Avenue, Mansfield, LA 71052	(318) 872-4949, ext. 3
East Baton Rouge	Denham Springs	Capital SWCD	2191 Tower Drive, Denham Springs, LA 70726	(225) 664-1430, ext. 3
East Carroll	Lake Providence	East Carroll SWCD	406 Lake Street, Suite C, Lake Providence, LA 71254	(318) 559-2604, ext. 3
East Feliciana	Clinton	Feliciana SWCD	9752 Plank Road South, Clinton, LA 70722	(225) 683-5496
Evangeline	Ville Platte	Evangeline SWCD	205 Court Street, Ville Platte, LA 70586	(337) 369-6602, ext. 3
Franklin	Winnsboro	Northeast SWCD	616 Riser Road, Winnsboro, LA 71295	(318) 435-6743, ext. 3
Grant	Colfax	Grant SWCD	510 Main Street, Colfax, LA 71417	(318) 627-9903, ext. 3
Iberia	New Iberia	Iberia SWCD	2617 Northside Road, Suite 600, New Iberia, LA 70563	(337) 369-6623, ext. 3
Iberville	Addis	Lower Delta SWCD	7747 Highway 1 South, Addis, LA 70710	(225) 687-2184, ext. 3
Jackson	Ruston	Dugdemona SWCD	1803 Trade Drive, Ruston, LA 71270	(318) 255-3136, ext. 3
Jefferson	Boutte	Crescent SWCD	14246 US Highway 90, Boutte, LA 70039	(985) 758-2162, ext. 3
Jefferson Davis	Jennings	Jefferson Davis SWCD	2003 Port Drive, Jennings, LA 70546	(337) 824-0975
Lafayette	Lafayette	Lafayette SWCD	905 Jefferson Street, Suite 310, Lafayette, LA 70501-7913	(337) 262-6601
LaFourche	Thibodaux	LaFourche-Terrebonne SWCD	143 Laura Drive, Thibodaux, LA 70301	(985) 447-3871, ext. 3
LaSalle	Jonesville	LaSalle SWCD	3545 4th Street, Jonesville, LA 71343	(318) 339-4239, ext. 3
Lincoln	Ruston	D'Arbonne SWCD	1803 Trade Drive, Ruston, LA 71270	(318) 255-3136, ext. 3
Livingston	Denham Springs	Capital SWCD	2191 Tower Drive, Denham Springs, LA 70726	(225) 664-1430, ext. 3
Madison	Tallulah	Madison SWCD	1900 Crothers Drive, Tallulah, LA 71282	(318) 574-4158, ext. 3
Morehouse	Bastrop	Morehouse SWCD	9604 Marlatt Street, Bastrop, LA 71220	(318) 283-7626, ext. 3
Natchitoches	Natchitoches	Natchitoches SWCD	6949 Louisiana Highway 1 Bypass, Natchitoches, LA 71457	(318) 357-8366, ext. 3
Orleans	Boutte	Crescent SWCD	14246 US Highway 90, Boutte, LA 70039	(985) 758-2162, ext. 3
Ouachita	Monroe	D'Arbonne/Boeuf River SWCD	2410 Old Sterlington Road, Suite B, Monroe, LA 71203-2668	(318) 343-4467, ext. 3
Plaquemines	Boutte	Plaquemines SWCD	14246 US Highway 90, Boutte, LA 70039	(985) 758-2162, ext. 3
Pointe Coupee	New Roads	Upper Delta SWCD	180 East Main Street, New Roads, LA 70760	(225) 638-7746, ext. 3
Rapides	Alexandria	Rapides SWCD	3734 Government Street, Building C, Alexandria, LA 71303	(318) 473-7856, ext. 3
Red River	Coushatta	Red River SWCD	1311 Ringgold Avenue, Coushatta, LA 71019	(318) 932-4352, ext. 3
Richland	Rayville	Boeuf River SWCD	141 Industrial Loop, Rayville, LA 71269	(318) 728-4451, ext. 3
Sabine	Many	Sabine SWCD	570 Highway 171 By Pass, Many, LA 71449	(318) 256-3491
St. Bernard	Boutte	Crescent SWCD	14246 US Highway 90, Boutte, LA 70039	(985) 758-2162, ext. 3
St. Charles	Boutte	Crescent SWCD	14246 US Highway 90, Boutte, LA 70039	(985) 758-2162, ext. 3
St. Helena	Amite	Tangipahoa-St. Helena SWCD	805 West Oak Street, Suite 1, Amite, LA 70422-2820	(985) 748-8751
St. James	Donaldsonville	Lower Delta SWCD and New River SWCD	2274 Highway 70, Suite C, Donaldsonville, LA 70346	(225) 473-7638, ext. 3
St. John	Boutte	Crescent SWCD	14246 US Highway 90, Boutte, LA 70039	(985) 758-2162, ext. 3
St. Landry	Opelousas	St. Landry SWCD	5832 I-49 North Service Road, Opelousas, LA 70570	(337) 942-2530, ext. 3
St. Martin	Lafayette	St. Martin SWCD	905 Jefferson Street, Suite 310, Lafayette, LA 70501-7913	(337) 262-6601
St. Mary	Franklin	St. Mary SWCD	500 Main Street, Franklin, LA 70538	(337) 828-1461, ext. 3
St. Tammany	Franklinton	Bogue Chitto-Pearl River SWCD	1111 Washington Street, Franklinton, LA 70438	(985) 839-5688, ext. 3
Tangipahoa	Amite	Tangipahoa-St. Helena SWCD	805 West Oak Street, Suite 1, Amite, LA 70422-2820	(985) 748-8751
Tensas	St. Joseph	Tensas-Concordia SWCD	1223 Plank Road, St. Joseph, LA 71366	(318) 766-3502, ext. 3
Terrebonne	Thibodaux	LaFourche-Terrebonne SWCD	143 Laura Drive, Thibodaux, LA 70301	(985) 447-3871, ext. 3
Union	Farmerville	D'Arbonne SWCD	604 East Water Street, Farmerville, LA 71241	(318) 368-8021
Vermilion	Abbeville	Vermilion SWCD	3221 Veterans Memorial Drive, Suite H, Abbeville, LA 70510	(337) 893-5664, ext. 3
Vernon	Leesville	Calcasieu SWCD	1100-C South Third Street, Leesville, LA 71446	(337) 239-2193
Washington	Franklinton	Bogue Chitto-Pearl River SWCD	1111 Washington Street, Franklinton, LA 70438	(985) 839-5688, ext. 3
Webster	Minden	Dorcheat SWCD	216B Broadway, Minden, LA 71055	(318) 377-3950, ext. 3
West Baton Rouge	Addis	Upper Delta SWCD	7747 Highway 1, South, Addis, LA 70710	(225) 687-2184, ext. 3
West Carroll	Oak Grove	West Carroll SWCD	208 South Constitution Street, Oak Grove, LA 71263	(318) 428-9303, ext. 3
West Feliciana	Clinton	Feliciana SWCD	9752 Plank Road South, Clinton, LA 70722	(225) 683-5496
Winn	Natchitoches	Dugdemona SWCD	6949 Louisiana Highway 1 Bypass, Natchitoches, LA 71457	(318) 357-8366, ext. 3

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