

Projects . Successes . Partnerships

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

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February 2012

**Conservation Plan
Guides Producer's
Success**

Unique Cover Crop:
Tillage Radish

**Conservation
Begins With
Making
Connections**

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

HELPING PEOPLE HELP THE LAND

The **Conservation Update** is distributed monthly by mail and e-mail.

If you would like to receive monthly issues of the **Conservation Update**, please send your mailing address or e-mail address to:

Holly Martien
 State Public Affairs Specialist
 USDA Natural Resources
 Conservation Service
 3737 Government Street
 Alexandria, Louisiana 71302
 or
 holly.martien@la.usda.gov

USDA
 Natural Resources
 Conservation Service
 3737 Government Street
 Alexandria, Louisiana 71302
 (318) 473-7751

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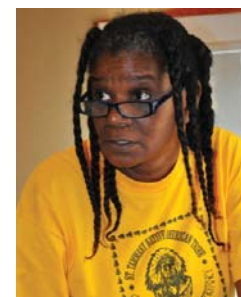


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Marty Wooldridge is a young, enthusiastic, hardworking beef cattle producer in north Caddo Parish where he operates three ranches of approximately 2,300 acres. See page 4.

Queen Chief Warhorse Gillum of the Tchefuncta Nation Chahta Tribe in St. Tammany Parish was raised in a family who depended solely on the soil for food. See page 5.

Ty Rogers farms corn and soybeans in West Carroll Parish—and radishes! See page 6.





State Conservationist Kevin Norton recently returned to Washington, DC, to continue his assignment on Senator Debbie Stabenow's staff to help draft the language of our nation's next Farm Bill. Sarah Haymaker will serve as Acting State Conservationist in Kevin's absence.

Notes from the Acting State Conservationist

This issue of the **Conservation Update** features three agricultural producers with very different—but very similar stories. Each has faced natural resource challenges, searched for ways to address these challenges, and found answers and solutions working with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Our professional conservationists use a systematic, nine-step planning process to develop and implement conservation plans that are specific to each producer/farm. They work with the producer to: 1) identify problems and opportunities; 2) determine stakeholder objectives; 3) inventory resources; 4) analyze resource data; 5) formulate alternatives; 6) evaluate alternatives; 7) make decisions; 8) implement the plan; and 9) evaluate the plan.

If you have natural resource concerns on your farm or ranch, give us a call. We would like to help you develop a conservation plan that will address your concerns and enhance the natural resources of your farm or ranch.

Sarah Haymaker
Acting State Conservationist - Louisiana

Contact information for NRCS offices is included on the back page of this publication.

Quote of the Month

“There is no such thing as a worthless conversation, provided you know what to listen for.”

James Nathan Miller, “The Art of Intelligent Listening,”
Reader's Digest, September 1965

Important Upcoming Dates!

Conservation Innovation Grants Proposals Due March 2, 2012

On January 13, 2012, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced a funding opportunity that will bring states, USDA, and other stakeholders together to enhance the effectiveness of water quality credit trading. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service is providing up to \$10 million in Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) for these projects. Proposals for CIG projects are due March 2, 2012.

Mississippi River Basin Partnership Project Proposals Due March 19, 2012

Proposals for conservation projects addressing water quality and wetland conservation in the Mississippi River Basin are due to NRCS by March 19, 2012. This call for project proposals includes two new priority watersheds in Louisiana. The new watersheds will make the land between Mississippi River levees eligible for conservation easements in an area extending from southern Illinois to the Gulf of Mexico.

Ranking Dates Announced for Four Major Conservation Initiatives

USDA has announced the ranking dates for the On-Farm Energy, Organic, Seasonal High Tunnel and Air Quality conservation initiatives. All four initiatives offer technical and financial assistance through NRCS' Environmental Quality Incentives Program. There will be three ranking periods for the Organic, On-Farm Energy and Seasonal High Tunnel initiatives, all ending on February 3, March 30 and June 1, 2012. Ranking periods for the Air Quality Initiative end February 3 and March 30, 2012. At the end of a ranking period, NRCS ranks all submitted proposals for funding consideration. NRCS will notify all applicants of the results of the rankings and begin developing contracts with selected applicants.

For more information on these conservation opportunities and more, contact your local office of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service or visit www.la.nrcs.usda.gov



Conservation Plan Guides Producer's Success

Working to Meet the Producer's Objectives

NRCS listens

"Marty is a great person, and he really cares about natural resources—not only on his farm, but everywhere in the US, and he works hard to help people understand the importance of conservation efforts and the benefits as well."

Candis Voorhies
Soil Conservationist
Shreveport Field Office

Marty Wooldridge is a young, enthusiastic, hardworking beef cattle producer in north Caddo Parish where he operates three ranches of approximately 2,300 acres. Unfortunately, all three ranches were suffering a severe infestation of honey locust trees, a shortage of livestock water, and soil and water quality concerns generated by heavily trafficked gate openings, water troughs, and winter feeding areas. The result was scarce and unreliable livestock water, insufficient forage quality and quantity, and issues relating to water and soil quality. Marty knew he could improve his operation with a little help.

In 2007, Marty came to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for assistance. NRCS and Marty were able to work together to develop and implement a conservation plan that met Marty's objectives by providing livestock water, improving available forage, and improving the overall productivity of the operation.

The conservation plan has been in effect since 2007 and has accounted for increased forage health, productivity, and vigor through the completion of 400 acres of chemical brush management of honey locust trees and other undesirable woody vegetation, 2,300 acres of prescribed grazing, and 5,778 feet of cross fence.

Rotational grazing has been facilitated by establishing adequate water in an increased number of pastures through installation of six ponds, five watering facilities with heavy use area protection pads, three

water wells, and 5,433 feet of PVC pipeline to convey water.

A grade stabilization structure with critical area planting has been installed to control soil erosion and stabilize an advanced gully. Soil quality and water turbidity concerns due to runoff from heavily traveled gate openings, winter feeding areas, and water facilities have been addressed by installation of five heavy use area protection rock pads in gate openings, five heavy use area protection pads under and around watering facilities, and two heavy use area protection winter feeding pads with an access control fence to protect an adjacent drainage channel.

Furthermore, 40 acres of wetland wildlife habitat management has been implemented to improve the quality and availability of food and cover for non-game wetland birds, migrating waterfowl, small mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and deer.

Submitted by: Candis Voorhies



Marty Wooldridge Conservationist



Conservation Begins With Making Connections

“She was already doing great things on her land, but not really understanding why she was doing those things.”

Kevin Stilley, District Conservationist, Franklinton



Queen Chief Warhorse Gillum of the Tchefuncta Nation Chahta Tribe in St. Tammany Parish

was raised in a family who depended solely on the soil for food. She watched her father plant gardens, raise cattle and hunt wild hogs for eating, and she gained a keen appreciation for the land, wildlife, and conservation of our natural resources.

For several years, Chief Warhorse looked for ways she could connect with someone or some organization who could give her advice and assistance on her land. Then, a chance encounter by a tribal member providing audiovisual support for a conference in New Orleans led to a meeting with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

“NRCS knows a lot about farming. They provided me with the technical expertise I was looking for,” said Chief Warhorse. “I can go straight to the source; I pick up the phone and call and talk to my District Conservationist.”

The chance encounter led to a connection with the Natural Resources Conservation Service that has resulted in a partnership that will benefit the environment and the Chahta Tribe for many generations to come.

Through NRCS’ Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), Queen Chief Warhorse Gillum will implement prescribed burning on 22 acres of forest land. Prescribed burning will recycle nutrients tied up in old plant growth, control many woody plants and herbaceous weeds, improve poor quality forage, increase plant growth, and improve wildlife habitat.

Chief Warhorse will also construct a high tunnel or hoop house on her land to lengthen the time frame for local marketing of produce. She already sells produce to the local community, but once the high tunnel is constructed, she will be able to offer fresh vegetables during winter months.

She recently signed an Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contract for fencing and water development for her goats. These conservation practices will result in improved forage and healthier pasture land. NRCS will provide technical assistance for installation of these practices.

In addition to working with the local NRCS field office, Chief Warhorse is working with NRCS’ Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center to learn better propagation methods for traditional medicinal plants.



Conservation of our natural resources begins with making connections--making connections with the land, the people, and the resources.

Tchefuncta Nation—Chahta Tribe Conservationist

Unique Cover Crop Tillage Radish



NRCS listens



Workshop leads to innovative cover crop in West Carroll Parish

Ty Rogers farms corn and soybeans in West Carroll Parish—and radishes!

The radishes that Rogers grows are not destined for your dinner salad (although Rogers says they taste great). These radishes are tillage radishes—planted to improve soil quality.

Farmers have been planting tillage radish in the mid-west and northeast for some time now, as a way to naturally help alleviate soil compaction. In March 2011, this unique cover crop was introduced to Louisiana conservationists during a Natural Resources Conservation Service Soil Quality Workshop hosted at Louisiana Tech University.

The tillage radish intrigued Oak Grove District Conservationist Jerry Shows, and he proposed testing the tillage radish to Ty Rogers, a West Carroll Soil and Water Conservation District

board member. Shows and Rogers located an area of Rogers' farm that had definite soil compaction issues, and Rogers planted tillage radish on a ten-acre test plot in this area.

The tillage radish penetrates compacted soil with a large taproot that grows over a foot long, creating vertical holes that break up soil compaction. This process is called "bio-drilling," and it provides multiple benefits, including: reducing the need for deep tillage, suppressing weeds, building organic matter, controlling erosion, reducing run-off and conserving rainwater, and releasing nitrogen early and increasing topsoil fertility.

So far, the results of Rogers' test plot are good, and he is looking forward to planting this cover crop again.

Rogers is no stranger to conservation. He has worked with NRCS through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and the Conservation Stewardship Program on such conservation practices as land-leveling, pipe drops, grassed waterways, pipelines, and nutrient management.



Ty Rogers Conservationist

Around the State

Oct 27

On October 27, 2011, the Capital Soil and Water Conservation District, Capital RC&D Council, and Denham Springs NRCS MLRA Soil Survey and Field Office sponsored the Sixth Annual East Baton Rouge Soil Judging Contest which was hosted by Northeast High School of East Baton Rouge Parish on the



East Feliciana High School campus in East Feliciana Parish. Over 152 FFA members on 38 teams participated. First place honors were won by the FFA team from South Lafourche High School Team Blue. Aaron Eppinette of Springfield High School Team Sliver won High Individual Score.

Jan 11-13

The Louisiana Association of Conservation Districts met in Lafayette, Louisiana, January 11-13, 2012, for their 66th Annual Meeting. Record numbers of soil and water conservation district board members attended the meeting. Featured speakers included Dr. Mike Strain, Commissioner of



Agriculture and Tom Christensen, Regional Conservationist, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service-Washington, DC. Other speakers from the Environmental Protection Agency, LSU AgCenter, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, Ducks Unlimited, Louisiana Forestry Association, Helena Chemical, and Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries provided valuable information on a wide range of subjects from forestry issues to innovations in irrigation efficiency. During the meeting, 11 agricultural producers were recognized as newly Certified Master Farmers by Commissioner Strain.

Jan 29 - Feb 1

During the recent National Association of Conservation Districts Annual Meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada, Becky Livaudais of Meraux, Louisiana, received the NACD Auxiliary Outstanding Service Recognition Award. Livaudais has served the Louisiana

Association of Conservation Districts Auxiliary for many years and was recently appointed to the Crescent Soil and Water Conservation District Board. Congratulations to Becky Livaudais on receiving this prestigious award!

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

Women and Hispanic Farmers and Ranchers Claims Adjudication Process

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 www.farmerclaims.gov

Native American Farmer and Rancher Class Action Settlement (Keepseagle v. Vilsack)

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: www.indianfarmclass.com

African American Farmer and Rancher Class Action Settlement (Pigford II)

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: www.blackfarmercase.com

Check out our exhibit and visit with our staff at the following upcoming events:

Louisiana Agricultural Technology and Management Conference, Marksville, LA, February 15-17, 2012

Police Jury Association Convention, Houma, LA, February 23-25, 2012

State of the Coast Conference, New Orleans, LA, June 25-27, 2012

Farm Bureau Convention, New Orleans, LA, June 28-30, 2012

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	629 Tunica Drive West, 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, ext. 3
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, ext. 3
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) 357-8366, 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, ext. 3
Evangeline	Ville Platte	Evangeline SWCD	205 Court Street, Ville Platte, LA 70586	(337) 363-6020, 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	1412 Celebrity 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, ext. 3
Lafayette	Lafayette	Lafayette SWCD	905 Jefferson Street, Suite 310, Lafayette, LA 70501-7913	(337) 262-6601, ext. 3
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	1412 Celebrity 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, ext. 3
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, ext. 3
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, ext. 3
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, ext. 3
Winn	Natchitoches	Dugdemona SWCD	6949 Louisiana Highway 1 Bypass, Natchitoches, LA 71457	(318) 357-8366, ext. 3

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