

Projects . Successes . Partnerships

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

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June 2011

It's all about . . . *Plants!*
Louisiana Native Plant Initiative

Learn how you can . . .
Participate in the
Regulatory Process

USDA
Commitment to Equality

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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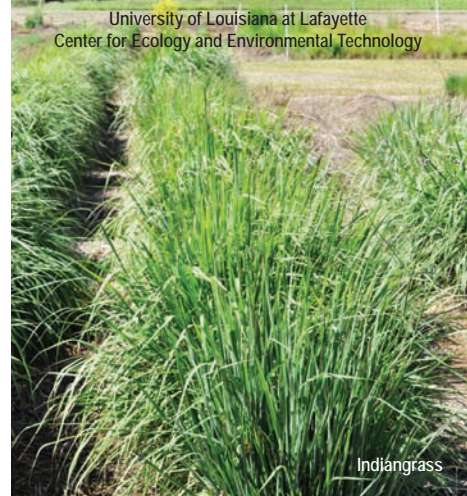
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It's All About . . . Plants! In May 2011, partner agencies met in Lafayette to sign a Memorandum of Understanding to work together as part of Louisiana's Native Plant Initiative to help conserve Louisiana's native plants. See story on pages 4 and 5.



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Notes from the State Conservationist

Native plants are important to Louisiana and the nation. They provide biological diversity that is essential to maintain a healthy ecosystem. However, because of land use changes, many of Louisiana's native plants are beginning to disappear from our landscape.

A consortium of conservationists in Louisiana—the Louisiana Native Plant Initiative—banded together to identify native plant resource areas, develop native plant species lists for seed collection, establish native plant seed increase sites, and develop partnership relationships to promote commercial native plant production. This group recently met in Lafayette to sign a Memorandum of Understanding to renew their commitment to help conserve Louisiana's native plants (see story on pages 4 and 5).

Louisiana's Native Plant Initiative began with a couple of partners working on a coastal prairie restoration project. It blossomed into a nineteen-partner working group that has seen great success in seed collection and plant propagation—with prospects for development of a native plant industry in Louisiana.

If you are interested in learning how native plants can be used on your farm or ranch, contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service or Soil and Water Conservation District office.

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

Louisiana's native plants include Indiangrass, switchgrass, big bluestem, little bluestem, smooth cordgrass, eastern gamagrass, partridge pea, ash sunflower, and rattlesnake master.

Native plants can reduce soil erosion, improve water quality, enhance wildlife habitat, and enhance rural economic development.

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:

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Quote of the Month

“Study nature, love nature, stay close to nature. It will never fail you.”

Frank Lloyd Wright
American Architect and Writer

It's all about . . . *Plants!*



Louisiana's Native Plant Initiative Marks Milestone

On May 27, 2011, partner agencies came together at the University of Louisiana-Lafayette Center for Ecology and Environmental Technology to sign an agreement that marks renewal of an important initiative for Louisiana—Louisiana's Native Plant Initiative. This multi-agency initiative is dedicated to helping conserve a vanishing natural resource in Louisiana—our native plants.

"Native plants adapted to Louisiana are essential for restoring naturally-functioning endangered ecosystems," said Phil Turnipseed, Director of the U.S. Geological Survey National Wetlands Research Center in Lafayette. "These ecosystems are resilient and sustainable because they provide better quality

habitat for native pollinators, grassland birds, and our partners' conservation goals."

In Louisiana, native plants such as longleaf pine, switchgrass, big bluestem, little bluestem, smooth cordgrass, eastern gamagrass, and partridge pea exist and are part of various unique ecosystems.

"Native plants maintain the biological diversity necessary to keep a healthy ecosystem," said Kevin Norton, State Conservationist for USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. "A healthy ecosystem will help protect water quality, prevent soil erosion, and provide wildlife habitat for resident and migratory species."

Native plants are important because they evolved naturally—adapting to soils and local climates. Because native plants have adapted to local conditions, they are vigorous and hardy, require no fertilization or irrigation, are long lived, good pollinators, resistant to pests and diseases, and provide abundant nutritional forage for livestock.

Public and private land managers around the state are using locally adapted native plants for restoration, conservation, and re-vegetation projects—but there are limited native plant materials available. LNPI partners are working together to collect, increase, and release native plants for commercial production.

19 Agencies Sign Agreement to Work Together to Conserve Louisiana's Native Plants



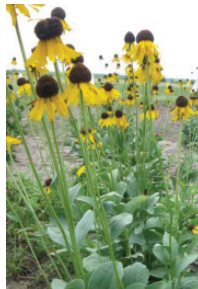
East Texas PMC
Harvesting Native Plants



Golden Meadow PMC
Submersed Aquatic
Vegetation



McNeese State University - Lanceleaf Coreopsis



Nicholls State University
Rough Coneflower



University of Louisiana at Lafayette CEET - Ashy Sunflower Production Block

LNPI Partners

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
 U.S. Geological Survey—National Wetlands Research Center
 McNeese State University
 Nicholls State University
 University of Louisiana at Lafayette
 Acadiana RC&D Council
 Barataria Terrebonne National Estuary Program
 Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry
 Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
 Coastal Plain Conservancy
 Louisiana Wildlife Federation
 The Nature Conservancy—Louisiana Chapter
 Southern University
 USDA Forest Service—Kisatchie National Forest
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 Bayouland RC&D Council
 Imperial Calcasieu RC&D Council
 Twin Valley RC&D Council
 Capital RC&D Council



LNPI Partner Spotlight

<p>USDA NRCS Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center</p>	<p>East Texas Plant Materials Center</p>	<p>Stuart Seed Orchard Catahoula Ranger District Kisatchie National Forest</p>	<p>University of Louisiana at Lafayette Center for Ecology and Environmental Technology</p>	<p>Coastal Plains Conservancy Kayouchee Prairie</p>	<p>McNeese State University Louisiana Environmental Research Center</p>	<p>Nicholls State University Farm</p>
<p>Seedling Production</p> <p>This center develops plants and procedures targeted to reverse the loss of coastal wetlands.</p>	<p>Seed Increase for Ashy Sunflower</p> <p>This center specializes in developing native plant materials for conservation practices and wildlife benefit.</p>	<p>Stuart Seed Orchard</p> <p>Established in 1934 to produce and replant pine seedlings over clear-cut areas.</p>	<p>Green House Production</p> <p>This center supports research, education, and community outreach in ecology and environmental biology with emphasis on sustainable resources.</p>	<p>Yellow Wild Indigo</p> <p>Regional non-profit land trust dedicated to preserving the lands that define the coastal plains distinct landscape.</p>	<p>Harvesting Rattlesnake Master</p> <p>This center was established to conduct research and provide information focused on environmental problems of the Gulf Coast.</p>	<p>Switchgrass Breeders Block</p> <p>The farm is used for academic research, graduate and undergraduate classes, and houses the Nicholls State University Maritime Forest Preserve.</p>

Louisiana Native Plant Initiative Partners Conservationists



Working to Improve Program Delivery

Visit: USDA.gov/open to give us your comments.

In accordance with Executive Order 13563, "Improving Regulation and Regulatory Review," issued January 18, 2011, the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is reviewing its existing regulations to evaluate their continued effectiveness.

The Executive Order requires that agencies:

- Use the best available techniques to quantify anticipated present and future benefits and costs;
- Provide the public with an opportunity to participate in the regulatory process;
- Attempt to coordinate across agencies, simplify and harmonize regulations, and promote innovation;
- Use flexible approaches where possible that reduce regulatory burdens;

- Ensure the objectivity of scientific and technological innovation used to support the agency action; and
- Consider how best to promote retrospective analysis of rules that may be outmoded, ineffective, insufficient, or excessively burdensome, and to modify, streamline, expand, or repeal them accordingly.

To support this effort, the Natural Resources Conservation Service is considering a review of its regulations consistent with its other ongoing streamlining efforts to improve the processes that deliver technical and financial assistance to program users.

An initial request for public comment was published in the Federal Register on April 20, 2011, with a due date for comments by May 20, 2011.

Stakeholders who could not get comments in by May 20, 2011, can still submit comments on the USDA.gov/open website, which will remain open to receive comments on retrospective regulatory review. Once you enter the USDA.gov/open website, select "The Plan" tab to be directed to the appropriate area to submit comments.

NRCS welcomes comments on approaches that will allow the agency to enhance its delivery of technical assistance and streamline the application process and participation in financial assistance programs. NRCS is interested in comments on such approaches as allowing customers to apply for programs or services online 24/7, reducing the number of office visits required through the use of mobile technologies, accelerating payments to clients after a practice is applied, and simplifying conservation plan documents.



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



CONSERVATION *in Action*

Boutte Field Office
Crescent Soil and Water
Conservation District
Bayouland RC&D
Golden Meadow Plant Materials
Center



BAYOU Beginning Agricultural Youth Opportunities Unlimited

For more information about the BAYOU program or the Louisiana Chapter of the National Organization for Professional Black NRCS Employees, contact Michael Trusclair at (985) 758-2162 or michael.trusclair@la.usda.gov. For more information about the Plant Materials Program, contact your local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service office or soil and water conservation district. Contact information can be found on the back page of this publication.

Around the State

May 4

Summer Intern Workshop

On May 4, 2011, Members of the Louisiana Chapter of the National Organization of Professional Black NRCS Employees held a work shop with NRCS summer interns at Southern University. Organization members in attendance were Michael Trusclair, Sam Willis, Burnell Muse, Mac Parker, Lawrence Sanford, and USDA Liaison Officer and member Allison Johnson. Students were briefed on the standard operating procedures for NRCS employees in Louisiana and provided guidance on employee conduct and behavior. A peer-to-peer network was established among interns and mentoring relationships were discussed.

May 24

Forest Management Field Day

On May 24, 2011, the NRCS Farmerville Field Office and D'Arbonne Soil and Water Conservation District conducted a Forest Management Field Day at Paul Spiller's farm in Farmerville, Louisiana. 26 people attended. Conservation program information was provided to attendees.



Jun 9-10

BAYOU Students - On June 9-10, 2011, the Louisiana Chapter of the National Organization for Professional Black NRCS Employees, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Bayouland RC&D, and Crescent Soil and Water Conservation District sponsored conservation activities for over 60 minority students and five NRCS interns in support of Southern University's BAYOU Program. The BAYOU (Beginning Agricultural Youth Opportunities Unlimited) Program is the umbrella program for all student services and professional development activities within Southern University's College of Agricultural, Family and Consumer Sciences. NRCS employees provided BAYOU students with information about NRCS programs and operations and information on professional career opportunities with NRCS. Students participated in a beach dune planting (2,000 bitter panicum and 750 seashore paspalum plants), a tour of the Golden Meadow Plant Material Center in Galliano, Louisiana, and an interactive presentation by Jennifer Robert of Bayouland RC&D on Louisiana Native Coastal Plants.

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	290 Pico Street, Many, LA 71449-3077	(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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