

Projects . Successes . Partnerships

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

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May 2012

Wet Feet in Sabine Parish

**Wildlife and
Longleaf Pine
EQIP Sign-Ups
End June 1**

**4 Louisiana
Watersheds
in National
Water Quality
Initiative**

A cooperative partnership with local Soil and Water Conservation Districts and
Resource Conservation and Development Councils (RC&D)
HELPING PEOPLE HELP THE LAND

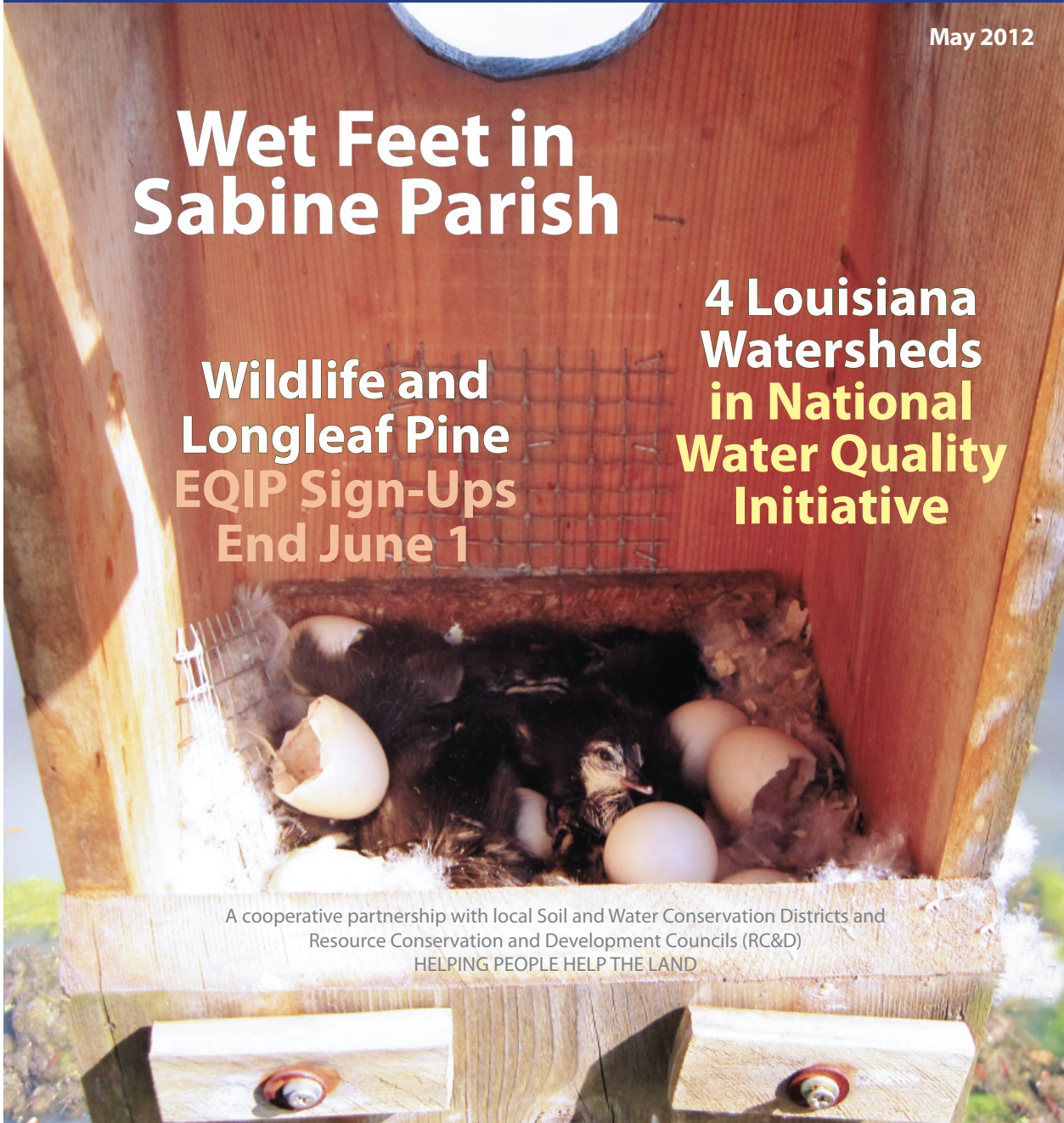


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Looking to increase his grazing land, Sabine Parish cattle producer Conrad Cathey bought a 105-acre tract of land near Many, Louisiana. He moved his cattle to his new pastures only to discover the land was too wet the majority of the year to be suitable for grazing. Go to pages 4 and 5 to find out what he did to turn this bad situation around.



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Notes from the Acting State Conservationist

May is American Wetlands Month.

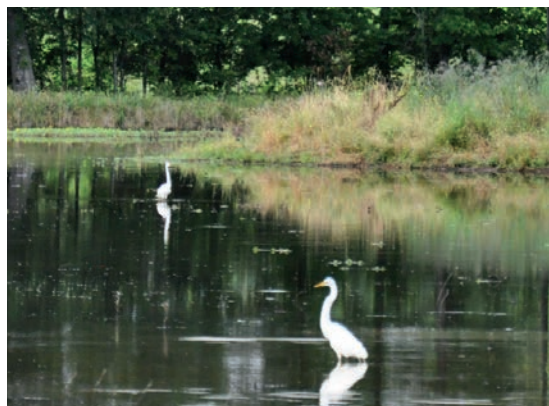
The Natural Resources Conservation Service manages a program to help landowners restore, protect, and enhance wetlands—the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP). In Louisiana, landowners have enrolled over 250,000 acres of marginal agricultural land in the Wetlands Reserve Program to restore its natural wetland functions.

I imagine you have seen some of this marginal land. When it rains, it usually floods. For the farmer, it is difficult to cultivate and yields little profit. We work with a landowner to develop and implement a plan to restore the natural hydrology of the land.

With the water, comes the wildlife. In this issue, you will read about a successful Wetlands Reserve Program tract in Sabine Parish. Where there were no ducks before, now—baby wood ducks abound. There were three settings of wood duck eggs on this Wetlands Reserve Program acreage this spring! Amazing success.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service and our partner soil and water conservation districts are working with landowners through the Wetlands Reserve Program to help improve water quality, increase water storage and supply, reduce flooding, and provide critical habitat for wildlife, fish, and plants all across Louisiana. Contact our offices if you are interested in the Wetlands Reserve Program for your farm or ranch.

Sarah Haymaker
Acting State Conservationist
Louisiana



Quote of the Month

“Without habitat, there is no wildlife. It is that simple.”

Wildlife Habitat Canada

Office contact information can be found on the back page of this publication.

State Conservationist Kevin Norton is on detail assignment to Washington, DC, to work on Senator Debbie Stabenow’s staff to help draft the language of our nation’s next Farm Bill.



USDA NRCS
United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

May is WETLANDS Month

Wetlands-
reduce soil erosion
prevent flooding
protect wildlife habitat
preserve biological diversity
reduce cropland damage
recharge groundwater
filter sediment, chemicals and nutrients

Ask Us About Ways to Incorporate Wetlands on Your Land

www.la.nrcs.usda.gov

Conservation is Peace of Mind

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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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Conservation Service
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Wetlands Reserve Program

Enrollment Options

- Permanent Easement
- 30-Year Easement
- Restoration Cost-Share Agreement

Acceptance In the Program

Acceptance in the program is based on a score derived from an environmental ranking and the preliminary restoration plan for offered acres.



May is American Wetlands Month

Wetlands Conservation



Wet Feet in Sabine Parish



Looking to increase his grazing land, Sabine Parish cattle producer Conrad Cathey bought a 105-acre tract of land near Many, Louisiana. He moved his cattle to his new pastures only to discover the land was too wet the majority of the year to be suitable for grazing.

“Water was up to my hip at certain times of the year,” said Cathey. “There was no way to make it work—wet feet and cows don’t mix.”

After moving his cattle from his new pastures, he was stumped as to what to do with the land—until he heard about NRCS’ Wetlands Reserve Program.

“It was just a stroke of luck,” said Cathey. “I was listening to the radio one day and heard about the Wetlands Reserve Program. It seemed a natural fit.”

Cathey worked with District Conservationist John Rogers to develop a plan to restore his cattle pasture to its natural wetland state. So far, he





There was very little game before . . . and certainly no ducks."

Conrad Cathey

has created shallow water areas, established food and pollinator plots, and installed wood duck nesting boxes. He is planning to install water control structures to control the water height of the pool stage of his shallow water areas, and he will be planting trees that enjoy wet feet—such as cypress, various oaks, and buttonbush shrubs.

Bald eagles have been spotted flying over the farm, along with hawks, herons, egrets, and other shorebirds—birds who like wet feet! Turkey and deer have been photographed in abundance by game cameras, and Cathey's wood duck nesting boxes have yielded baby ducks throughout the spring.

"There was very little game before, and certainly no ducks," said Cathey. "Since we started the WRP restoration, we have had an unusual amount of duck settings—three this spring!"

"I just love watching them," said Cathey. "I still hunt, but now I shoot with a camera!"

The Wetlands Reserve Program is a voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands on their property. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides technical and financial support to help landowners with their wetland

restoration efforts. The NRCS' goal is to achieve the greatest wetland functions and values, along with optimum wildlife habitat, on every acre enrolled in the program. This program offers landowners an opportunity to establish long-term conservation and wildlife practices and protection.

To find out more about the Wetlands Reserve Program, contact your local NRCS office or visit: <http://www.la.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/WRP/index.html>.



Conrad Cathey Conservationist



For watershed maps, go to:
<http://www.la.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/EQIP/nwqi.html>

Commissioner Strain and DEQ Secretary Hatch Join USDA NRCS to Announce National Water Quality Initiative in Louisiana

On May 9, 2012, Agriculture and Forestry Commissioner Mike Strain, D.V.M., Department of Environmental Quality Secretary Peggy Hatch, and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Acting State Conservationist Sarah Haymaker announced the launch of a new National Water Quality Initiative committed to improving impaired waterways in Louisiana.

"Louisiana's farmers and ranchers have always had a deep appreciation and respect for the environment," said Strain. "This new initiative will focus sound science resources and financial incentives to address critical water quality issues in four targeted watersheds."

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will manage the initiative by making funds available to farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners in four watersheds:

- **Indian Bayou Watershed**
Acadia, Lafayette, and Vermilion Parishes
- **Lake Louis Watershed**
Catahoula Parish
- **East Fork Big Creek Watershed**
Tangipahoa Parish
- **Big Creek Watershed**
Tangipahoa Parish

These watersheds were identified with help from state agencies, partners, and the NRCS State Technical Committee. Eligible producers in these watersheds will have an opportunity to invest in voluntary conservation actions to help provide cleaner water for their neighbors and communities

"In Louisiana, the National Water Quality Initiative is being implemented as a partnership effort among the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, and local Soil and Water Conservation Districts to focus resources in areas facing significant natural resource challenges," said Haymaker. "As part of this partnership effort, NRCS is offering financial and technical assistance to farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners in priority watersheds who are interested in implementing conservation practices to improve water quality."

Using funds from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, NRCS will provide funding and advise to producers to install conservation practices such as cover crop, residue and tillage management, grade stabilization structure, nutrient management, prescribed grazing, and animal waste treatment in watersheds with impairments where the federal investment can make a difference to improve water quality.

"The waters of Louisiana are the best they have been since the Clean Water Act was enacted

more than 40 years ago," said DEQ Secretary Peggy Hatch. "However, there will always be a need for continued improvements. With programs like the National Water Quality Initiative, we will see those improvements throughout the state."

"American farmers are good stewards of the environment, especially when they have the tools they need to protect or improve fish and wildlife habitat and water quality," said NRCS Chief Dave White. "We look forward to collaborating with producers in key watersheds to help them have a positive impact on streams with impaired water quality."

NRCS accepts applications for financial assistance on a continuous basis throughout the year; however, there are two application ranking periods this fiscal year for the National Water Quality Initiative. The first application pool closed on May 18, 2012. To be considered in the second ranking application pool, applications must be received by June 15, 2012. This summer, NRCS will notify all applicants of the results and begin developing contracts with selected applicants.

For more information on the National Water Quality Initiative in Louisiana, visit your local NRCS office or <http://www.la.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/EQIP/nwqi.html>.

USDA is celebrating its 150th anniversary during 2012. Abraham Lincoln signed a bill in 1862 to create the Department because he recognized the potential of America's farmers and ranchers to provide a safe, ample food supply for our nation and the world.

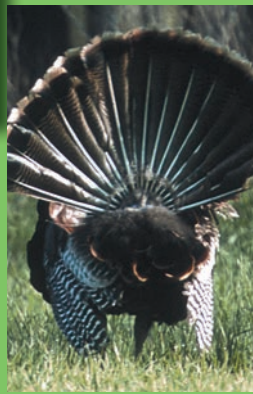
For more information on USDA's 150th Anniversary, visit <http://www.usda.gov/USDA150> to sign-up for daily email alerts and fun facts about USDA's history. You can view photos from the USDA gallery and the National Archives and Records Administration that represent USDA's 150 years of service. Follow @USDA on Twitter #USDA150 to learn more about what is scheduled to commemorate USDA's 150 years of service.



Sign-Up Ends June 1

For Special EQIP Wildlife and Longleaf Pine Funding

Special Environmental Quality Incentives Program funding pools were established in Louisiana to help meet fish and wildlife habitat conservation needs, as well as meet restoration, enhancement, and management needs of longleaf pine in Louisiana's historic longleaf pine areas. The first application period for this special funding ended on April 30, 2012. The second application period for this funding ends on June 1, 2012. If you are interested in learning more about this conservation opportunity, please contact your local NRCS office as soon as possible. Applications will be accepted through Friday, June 1, 2012, for this funding.



Tunica-Biloxi Pow-Wow



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>Women and Hispanic Farmers and Ranchers Claims Adjudication Process</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 www.farmerclaims.gov</p>	<p>Native American Farmer and Rancher Class Action Settlement (Keepseagle v. Vilsack)</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: www.indianfarmclass.com</p>	<p>African American Farmer and Rancher Class Action Settlement (Pigford II)</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: www.blackfarmercase.com</p>
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The Marksville Field Office—with assistance from the Alexandria State Office, Rapides Parish Soil and Water Conservation District, and Many Field Office—participated in the 17th Annual Tunica-Biloxi Pow-Wow on May 19, 2012. The Tunica-Biloxi Tribe invited the Natural Resources Conservation Service to host a booth and provide information about conservation programs. The hit of the NRCS booth was Alphonse the Alligator. Alphonse is a six-foot paper mache' alligator who helps volunteers tell how Louisiana's farmers and ranchers are establishing wildlife habitat on farms and ranches for animals like Alphonse. Coloring books featuring a Louisiana farmer and Alphonse were distributed to booth visitors along with Backyard Conservation materials and conservation program materials.

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) 757-2455, ext. 3
DeSoto	Mansfield	DeSoto SWCD	211 Washington Avenue, Mansfield, LA 71052	(318) 872-4949, ext. 3
East Baton Rouge	Denham Springs	Capital SWCD	1291 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) 363-6602, 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	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 Sterling 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	205 North 5th 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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