

# Locally Led Conservation Initiative



Scott Edwards

State Resource Conservationist

NRCS

## Locally Led Conservation



## Public Involvement

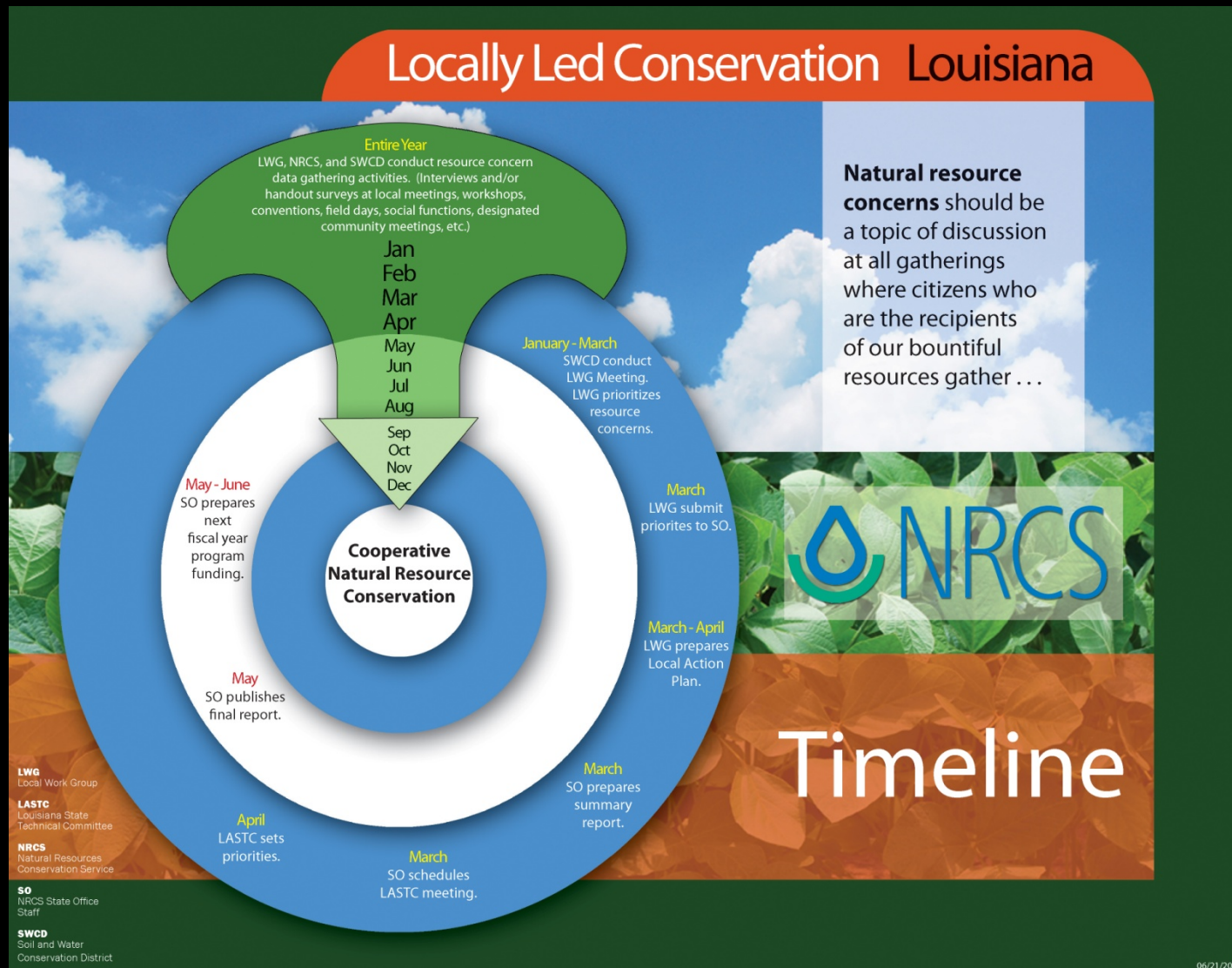
An essential element of the locally led conservation is input from a broad range of agencies, organizations, businesses, and individuals in the local area that have an interest in natural resource management and are familiar with local resource needs and conditions.

These representatives should reflect the diversity of the residents, landowners, and land operators in the local area.

# Locally Led Conservation



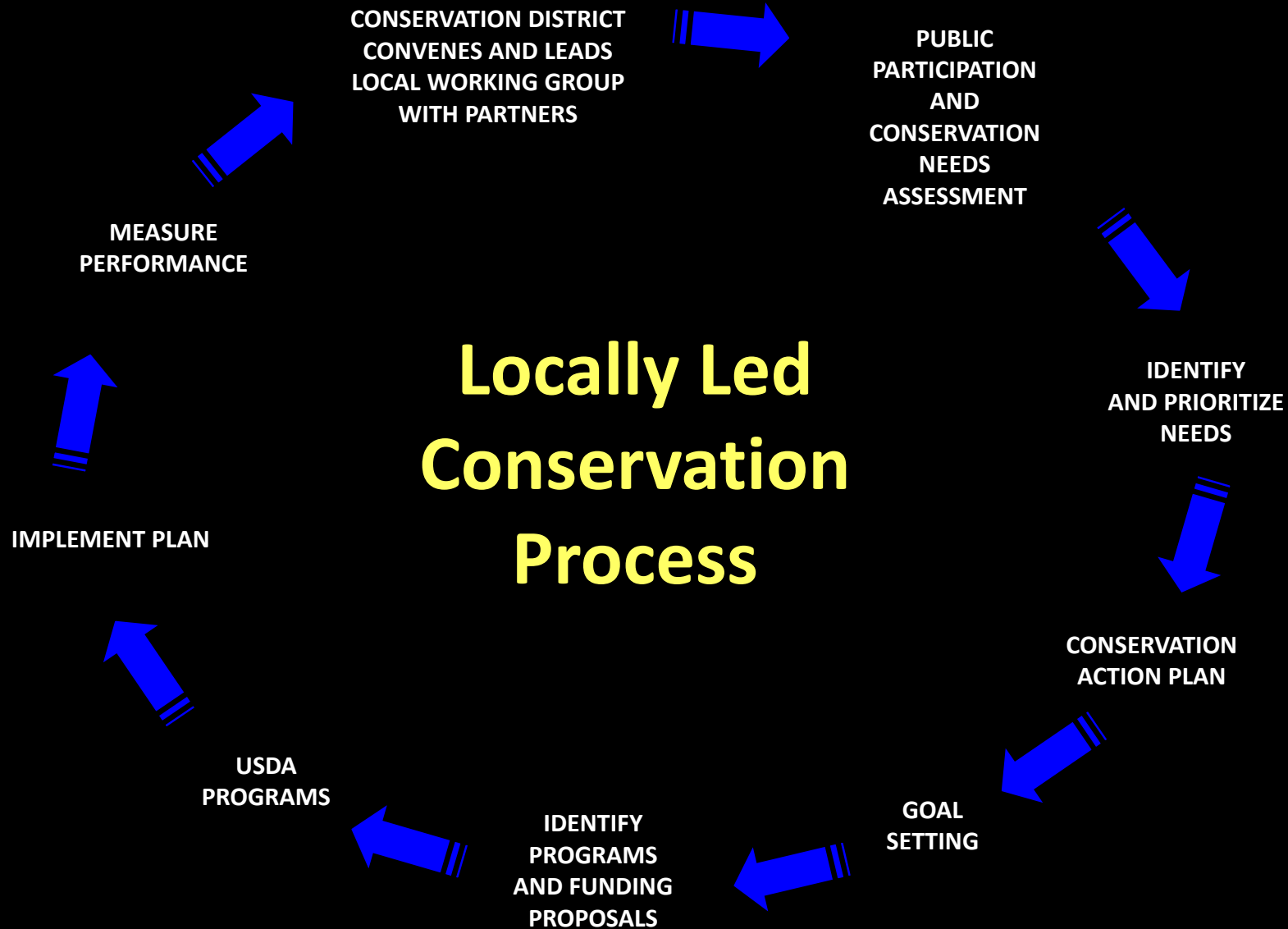
## Process



# Locally Led Conservation



## Process



# Locally Led Conservation



## 2013 Data Collection

| 2013 Resource Concern   | Total Score | Number of Votes |
|---|-------------|-----------------|
| Soil - Soil Erosion - Sheet, rill and wind erosion  | 43          | 25              |
| Water - Insufficient Water - Inefficient use of irrigation water                                  | 42          | 18              |
| Soil - Soil Erosion - Concentrated flow erosion   | 39          | 21              |
| Water - Water Quality Degradation - Excessive sediment in surface waters                          | 39          | 22              |
| Plant - Degraded Plant Condition - Undesirable plant productivity and health                      | 36          | 20              |
| Animal - Livestock Production Limitation - Inadequate feed and forage                             | 33          | 18              |
| Plant - Degraded Plant Condition - Excessive plant pest pressure                                  | 33          | 18              |
| Animal - Inadequate Habitat for Fish and Wildlife - Habitat degradation                           | 30          | 18              |
| Water - Excess Water - Ponding, flooding, seasonal high water table, seeps, and drifted snow      | 24          | 13              |
| Water - Water Quality Degradation - Excess nutrients in surface and ground waters                 | 21          | 12              |
| Soil - Soil Quality Degradation - Organic matter depletion  | 19          | 11              |
| Animal - Livestock Production Limitation - Inadequate livestock water                             | 16          | 12              |
| Soil - Soil Erosion - Excessive bank erosion from streams shorelines or water conveyance channels | 16          | 9               |



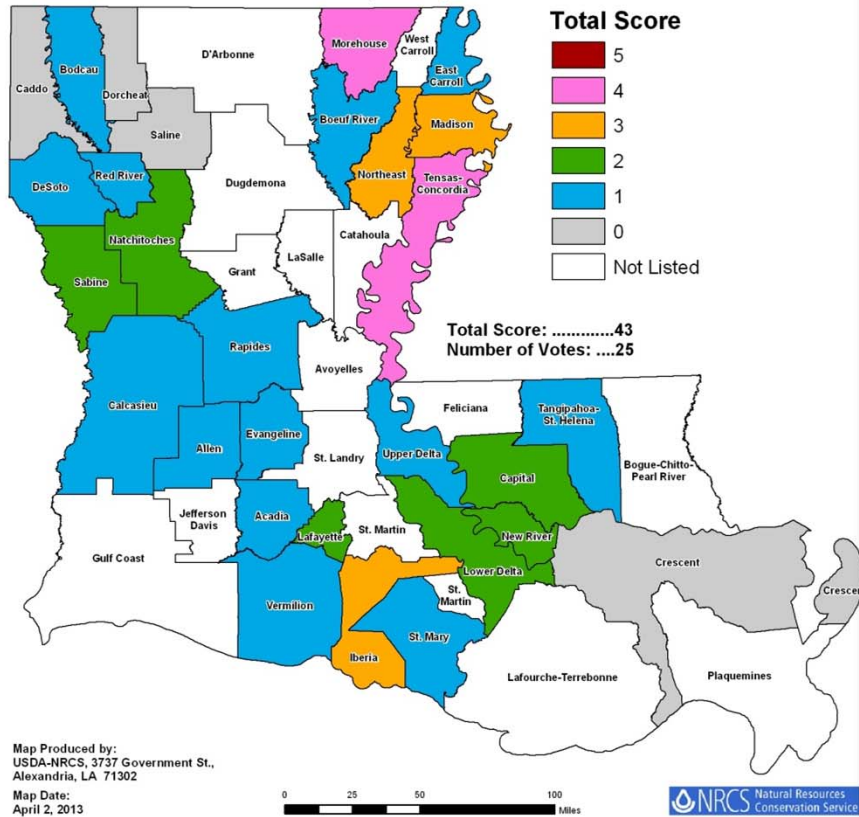
# Locally Led Conservation



# 2013 Data Collection

## 2013 Resource Concern # 1 Soil Erosion - Sheet, Rill and Wind Erosion

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs)



| Total Score | Geographic Area            |
|-------------|----------------------------|
| 4           | Morehouse SWCD             |
| 4           | Tensas Concordia SWCD      |
| 3           | Iberia SWCD                |
| 3           | Madison SWCD               |
| 3           | Northeast SWCD             |
| 2           | Capital SWCD               |
| 2           | Lafayette SWCD             |
| 2           | Lower Delta SWCD           |
| 2           | Natchitoches SWCD          |
| 2           | New River SWCD             |
| 2           | Sabine SWCD                |
| 1           | Acadia SWCD                |
| 1           | Allen SWCD                 |
| 1           | Bodcau SWCD                |
| 1           | Boeuf River SWCD           |
| 1           | Calcasieu SWCD             |
| 1           | DeSoto SWCD                |
| 1           | East Carroll SWCD          |
| 1           | Evangeline SWCD            |
| 1           | Rapides SWCD               |
| 1           | Red River SWCD             |
| 1           | St. Mary SWCD              |
| 1           | Tangipahoa St. Helena SWCD |
| 1           | Upper Delta SWCD           |
| 1           | Vermilion SWCD             |

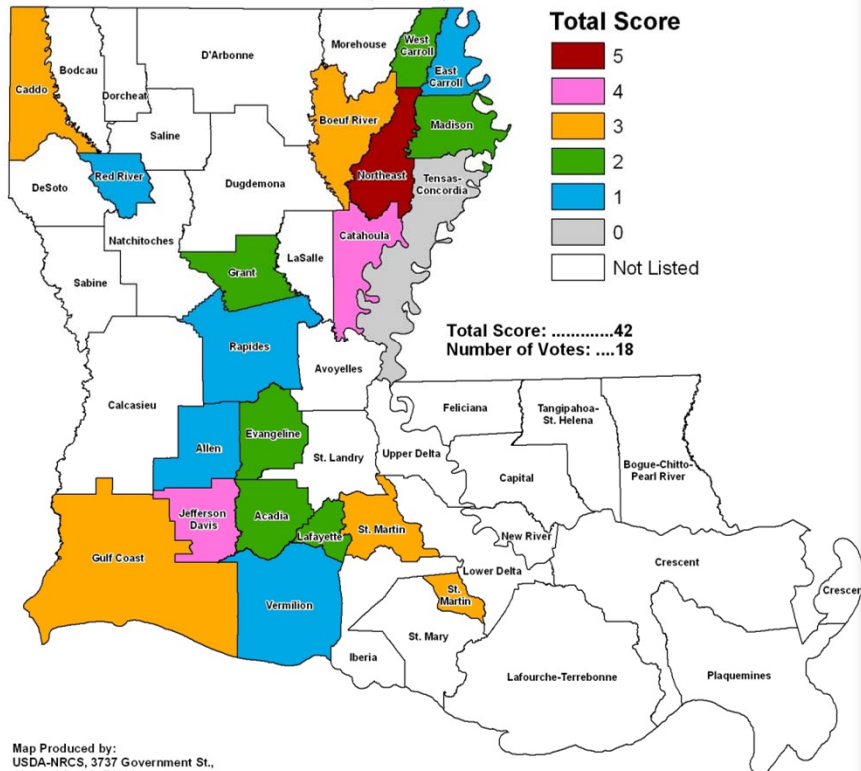
# Locally Led Conservation



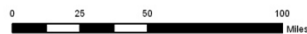
## 2013 Data Collection

### 2013 Resource Concern # 2 Insufficient Water - Inefficient Use of Irrigation Water

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs)



Map Produced by:  
USDA-NRCS, 3737 Government St.,  
Alexandria, LA 71302  
Map Date:  
April 2, 2013

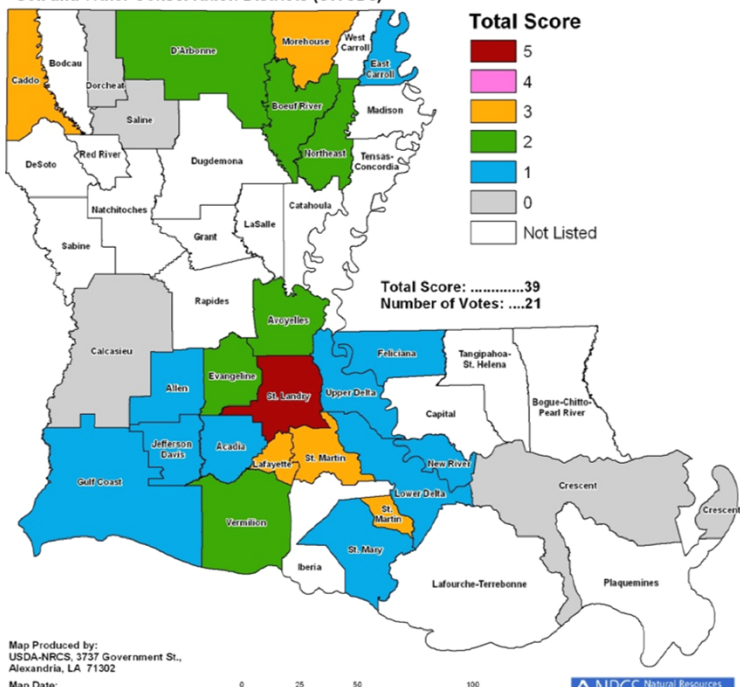


| Total Score | Geographic Area      |
|-------------|----------------------|
| 5           | Northeast SWCD       |
| 4           | Catahoula SWCD       |
| 4           | Jefferson Davis SWCD |
| 3           | Boeuf River SWCD     |
| 3           | Caddo SWCD           |
| 3           | Gulf Coast SWCD      |
| 3           | St. Martin SWCD      |
| 2           | Acadia SWCD          |
| 2           | Evangeline SWCD      |
| 2           | Grant SWCD           |
| 2           | Lafayette SWCD       |
| 2           | Madison SWCD         |
| 2           | West Carroll SWCD    |
| 1           | Allen SWCD           |
| 1           | East Carroll SWCD    |
| 1           | Rapides SWCD         |
| 1           | Red River SWCD       |
| 1           | Vermilion SWCD       |

### 2013 Resource Concern # 3 Soil Erosion - Concentrated Flow Erosion

(Tied with Water Quality Degradation - Excessive Sediment in Surface Waters)

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs)

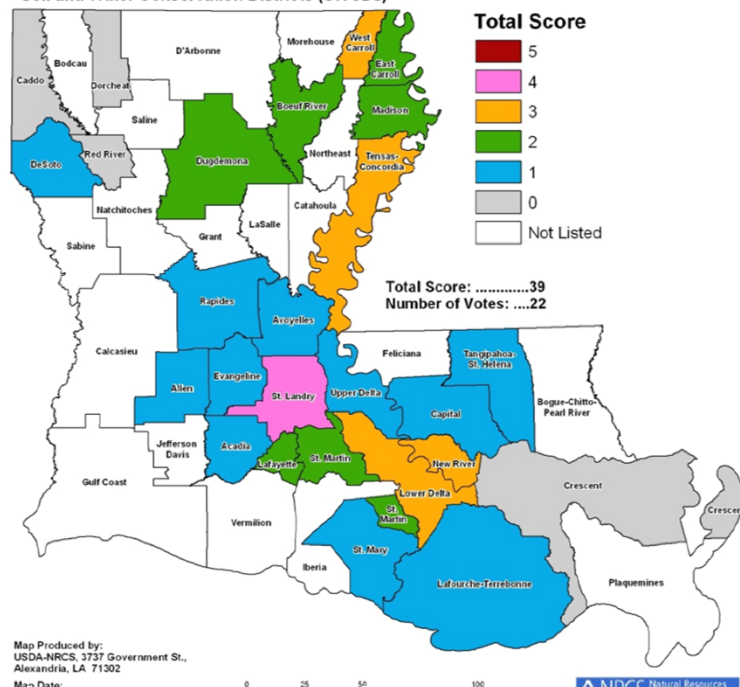


| Score | Geographic Area  | Score | Geographic Area      |
|-------|------------------|-------|----------------------|
| 5     | St. Landry SWCD  | 1     | Acadia SWCD          |
| 3     | Caddo SWCD       | 1     | Allen SWCD           |
| 3     | Lafayette SWCD   | 1     | East Carroll SWCD    |
| 3     | Morehouse SWCD   | 1     | Feliciana SWCD       |
| 3     | St. Martin SWCD  | 1     | Gulf Coast SWCD      |
| 2     | Avoyelles SWCD   | 1     | Jefferson Davis SWCD |
| 2     | Boeuf River SWCD | 1     | Lower Delta SWCD     |
| 2     | Darbonne SWCD    | 1     | New River SWCD       |
| 2     | Evangeline SWCD  | 1     | St. Mary SWCD        |
| 2     | Northeast SWCD   | 1     | Upper Delta SWCD     |
| 2     | Vermilion SWCD   |       |                      |

### 2013 Resource Concern # 3 Water Quality Degradation Excessive Sediment in Surface Waters

(Tied with Soil Erosion - Concentrated Flow Erosion)

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs)



| Score | Geographic Area       | Score | Geographic Area       |
|-------|-----------------------|-------|-----------------------|
| 4     | St. Landry SWCD       | 1     | Acadia SWCD           |
| 3     | Lower Delta SWCD      | 1     | Allen SWCD            |
| 3     | New River SWCD        | 1     | Avoyelles SWCD        |
| 3     | Tensas Concordia SWCD | 1     | Capital SWCD          |
| 3     | West Carroll SWCD     | 1     | DeSoto SWCD           |
| 2     | Boeuf River SWCD      | 1     | Evangeline SWCD       |
| 2     | Dugdemona SWCD        | 1     | Lafourche Terrebonne  |
| 2     | East Carroll SWCD     | 1     | Rapides SWCD          |
| 2     | Lafayette SWCD        | 1     | St. Mary SWCD         |
| 2     | Madison SWCD          | 1     | Tangipahoa St. Helena |
| 2     | St. Martin SWCD       | 1     | Upper Delta SWCD      |

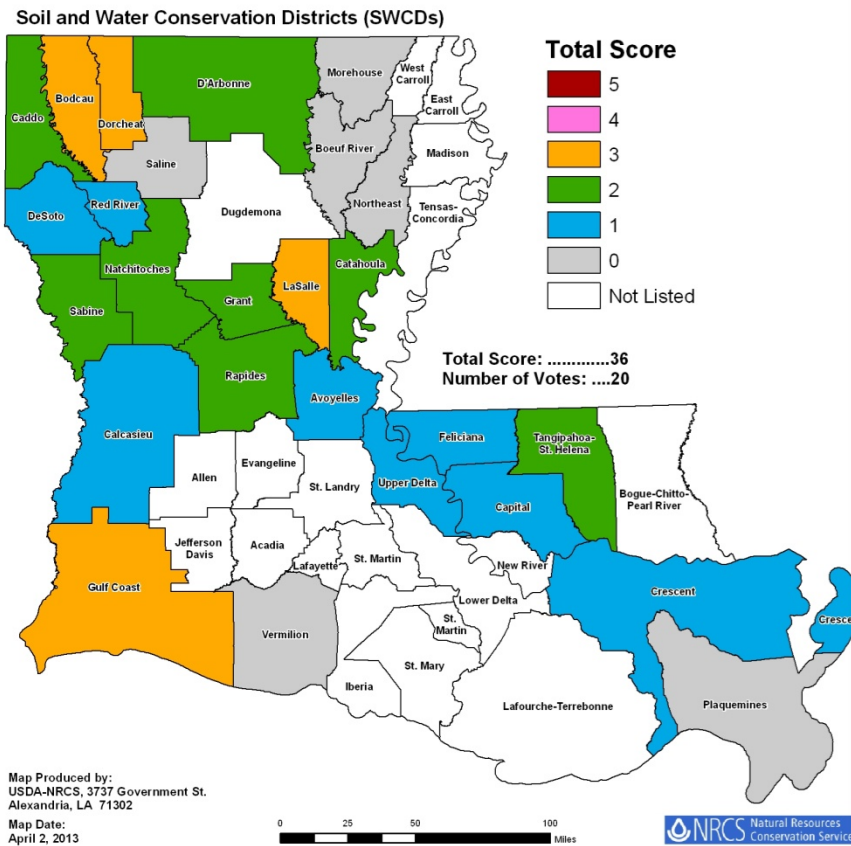


# Locally Led Conservation



## 2013 Data Collection

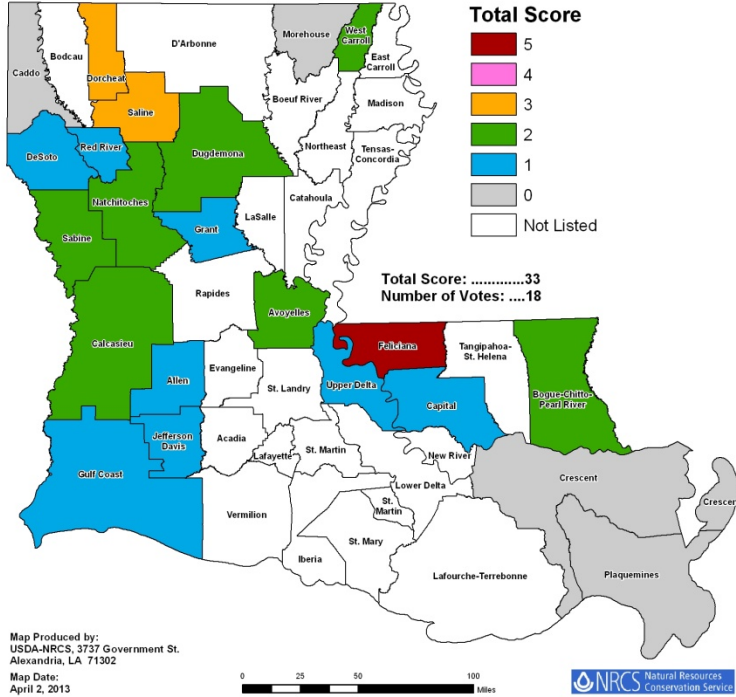
### 2013 Resource Concern # 4 Plant - Undesirable Plant Productivity and Health



| Total Score | Geographic Area            |
|-------------|----------------------------|
| 3           | Bodcau SWCD                |
| 3           | Dorcheat SWCD              |
| 3           | Gulf Coast SWCD            |
| 3           | LaSalle SWCD               |
| 2           | Caddo SWCD                 |
| 2           | Catahoula SWCD             |
| 2           | Darbonne SWCD              |
| 2           | Grant SWCD                 |
| 2           | Natchitoches SWCD          |
| 2           | Rapides SWCD               |
| 2           | Sabine SWCD                |
| 2           | Tangipahoa St. Helena SWCD |
| 1           | Avoyelles SWCD             |
| 1           | Calcasieu SWCD             |
| 1           | Capital SWCD               |
| 1           | Crescent SWCD              |
| 1           | DeSoto SWCD                |
| 1           | Feliciana SWCD             |
| 1           | Red River SWCD             |
| 1           | Upper Delta SWCD           |

**2013 Resource Concern # 5**  
**Animal - Livestock Production - Inadequate Feed and Forage**  
 (Tied with Degraded Plant Condition - Excessive Plant Pest Pressure)

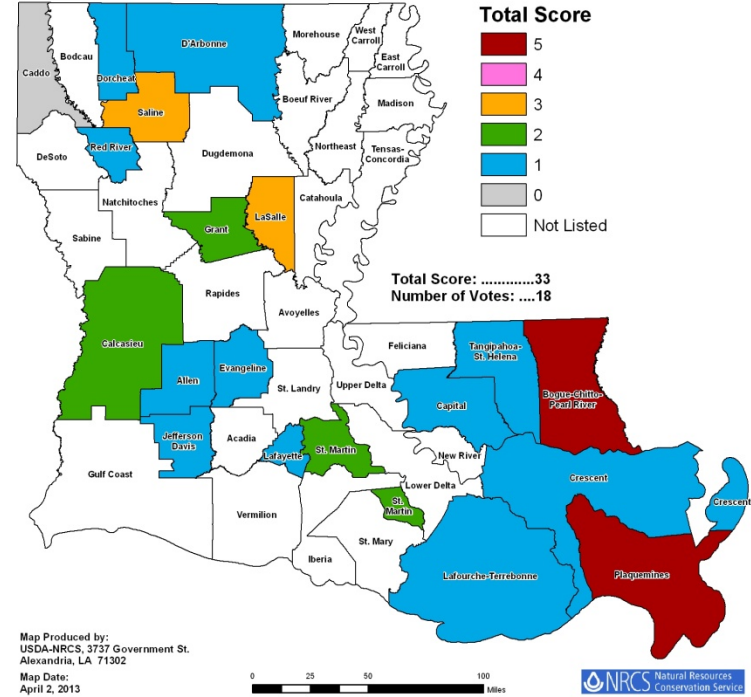
Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs)



| Score | Geographic Area          | Score | Geographic Area      |
|-------|--------------------------|-------|----------------------|
| 5     | Felician SWCD            | 2     | West Carroll SWCD    |
| 3     | Dorcheat SWCD            | 1     | Allen SWCD           |
| 3     | Saline SWCD              | 1     | Capital SWCD         |
| 2     | Avoyelles SWCD           | 1     | DeSoto SWCD          |
| 2     | Bogue Chitto Pearl River | 1     | Grant SWCD           |
| 2     | Calcasieu SWCD           | 1     | Gulf Coast SWCD      |
| 2     | Dugdemona SWCD           | 1     | Jefferson Davis SWCD |
| 2     | Natchitoches SWCD        | 1     | Red River SWCD       |
| 2     | Sabine SWCD              | 1     | Upper Delta SWCD     |

**2013 Resource Concern # 5**  
**Degraded Plant Condition - Excessive Plant Pest Pressure**  
 (Tied with Animal - Livestock Production - Inadequate Feed and Forage)

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs)



| Score | Geographic Area          | Score | Geographic Area       |
|-------|--------------------------|-------|-----------------------|
| 5     | Bogue Chitto Pearl River | 1     | Crescent SWCD         |
| 5     | Plaquemines SWCD         | 1     | Darbonne SWCD         |
| 3     | LaSalle SWCD             | 1     | Dorcheat SWCD         |
| 3     | Saline SWCD              | 1     | Evangeline SWCD       |
| 2     | Calcasieu SWCD           | 1     | Jefferson Davis SWCD  |
| 2     | Grant SWCD               | 1     | Lafayette SWCD        |
| 2     | St. Martin SWCD          | 1     | Lafourche Terrebonne  |
| 1     | Allen SWCD               | 1     | Red River SWCD        |
| 1     | Capital SWCD             | 1     | Tangipahoa St. Helena |

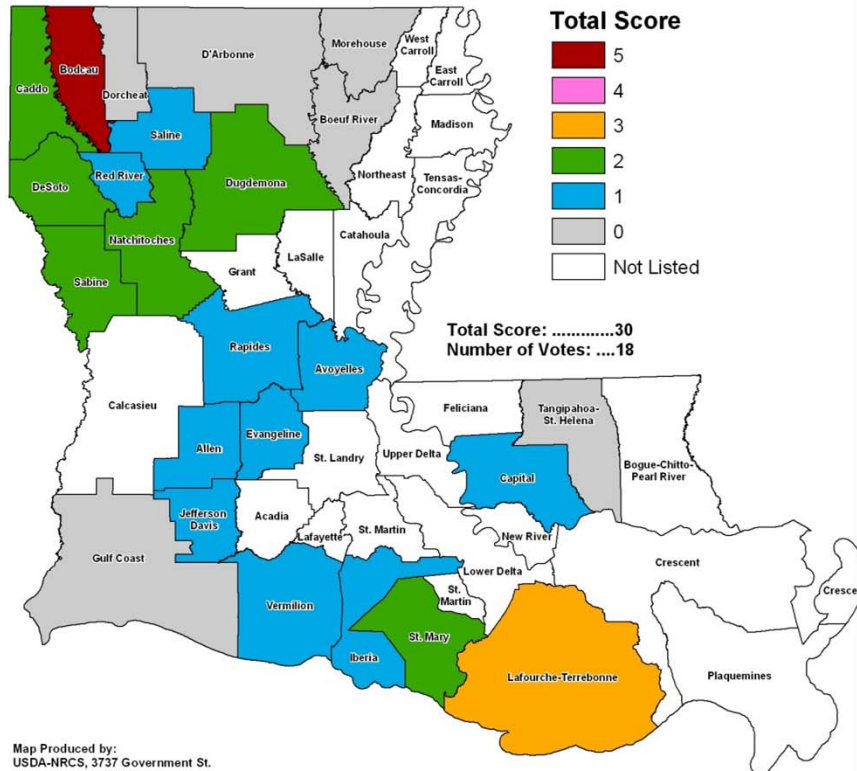
# Locally Led Conservation



## 2013 Data Collection

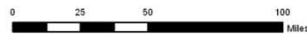
### 2013 Resource Concern # 6 Animal - Inadequate Habitat for Fish and Wildlife Habitat Degradation

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs)



Map Produced by:  
USDA-NRCS, 3737 Government St.  
Alexandria, LA 71302

Map Date:  
April 2, 2013



| Total Score | Geographic Area           |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| 5           | Bodcau SWCD               |
| 3           | Lafourche Terrebonne SWCD |
| 2           | Caddo SWCD                |
| 2           | DeSoto SWCD               |
| 2           | Dugdemona SWCD            |
| 2           | Natchitoches SWCD         |
| 2           | Sabine SWCD               |
| 2           | St. Mary SWCD             |
| 1           | Allen SWCD                |
| 1           | Avoyelles SWCD            |
| 1           | Capital SWCD              |
| 1           | Evangeline SWCD           |
| 1           | Iberia SWCD               |
| 1           | Jefferson Davis SWCD      |
| 1           | Rapides SWCD              |
| 1           | Red River SWCD            |
| 1           | Saline SWCD               |
| 1           | Vermilion SWCD            |

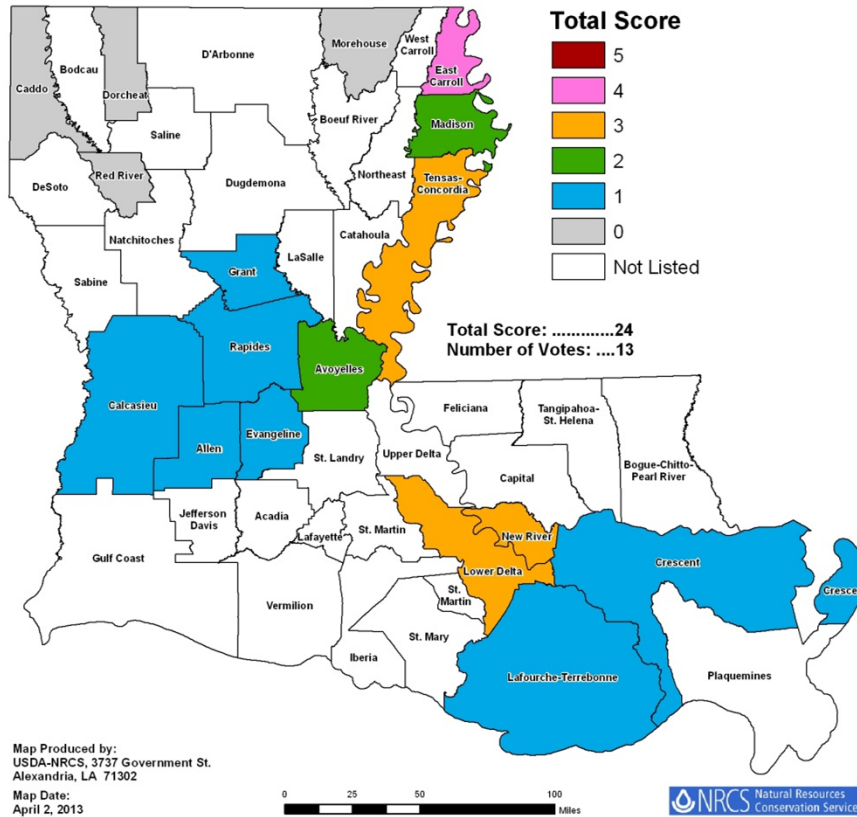
# Locally Led Conservation



# 2013 Data Collection

## 2013 Resource Concern # 7 Water - Excess Water - Ponding, Flooding, Seasonal High Water Table, Seeps, and Drifted Snow

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs)



| Total Score | Geographic Area           |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| 4           | East Carroll SWCD         |
| 3           | Lower Delta SWCD          |
| 3           | New River SWCD            |
| 3           | Tensas Concordia SWCD     |
| 2           | Avoyelles SWCD            |
| 2           | Madison SWCD              |
| 1           | Allen SWCD                |
| 1           | Calcasieu SWCD            |
| 1           | Crescent SWCD             |
| 1           | Evangeline SWCD           |
| 1           | Grant SWCD                |
| 1           | Lafourche Terrebonne SWCD |
| 1           | Rapides SWCD              |

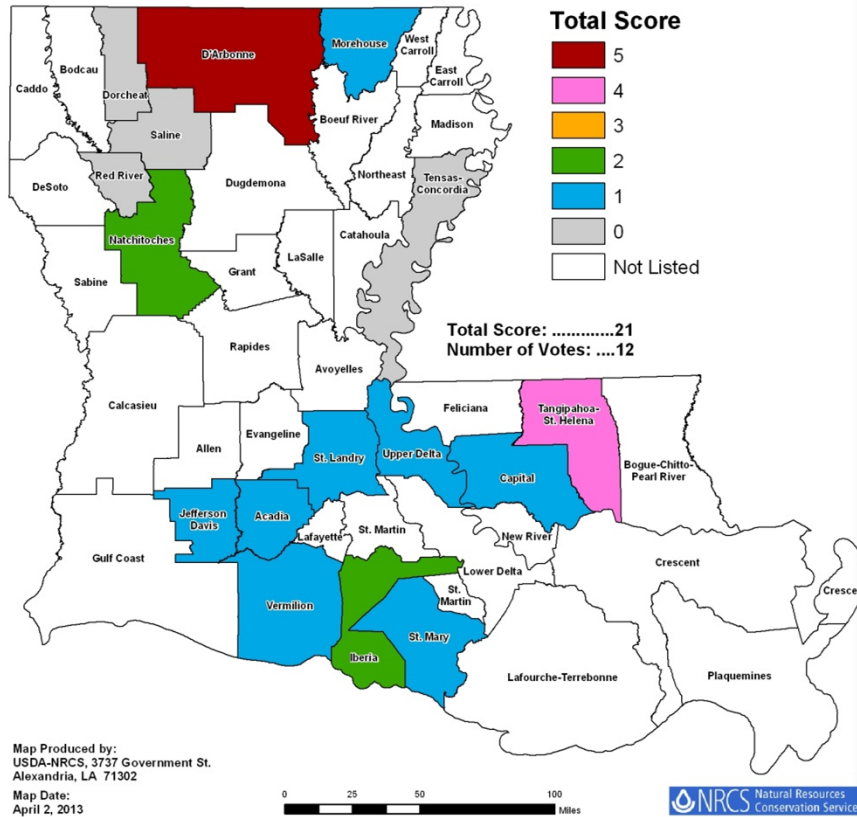
# Locally Led Conservation



## 2013 Data Collection

### 2013 Resource Concern # 8 Water Quality Degradation - Excess Nutrients in Surface and Ground Waters

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs)



| Total Score | Geographic Area            |
|-------------|----------------------------|
| 5           | Darbonne SWCD              |
| 4           | Tangipahoa St. Helena SWCD |
| 2           | Iberia SWCD                |
| 2           | Natchitoches SWCD          |
| 1           | Acadia SWCD                |
| 1           | Capital SWCD               |
| 1           | Jefferson Davis SWCD       |
| 1           | Morehouse SWCD             |
| 1           | St. Landry SWCD            |
| 1           | St. Mary SWCD              |
| 1           | Upper Delta SWCD           |
| 1           | Vermilion SWCD             |



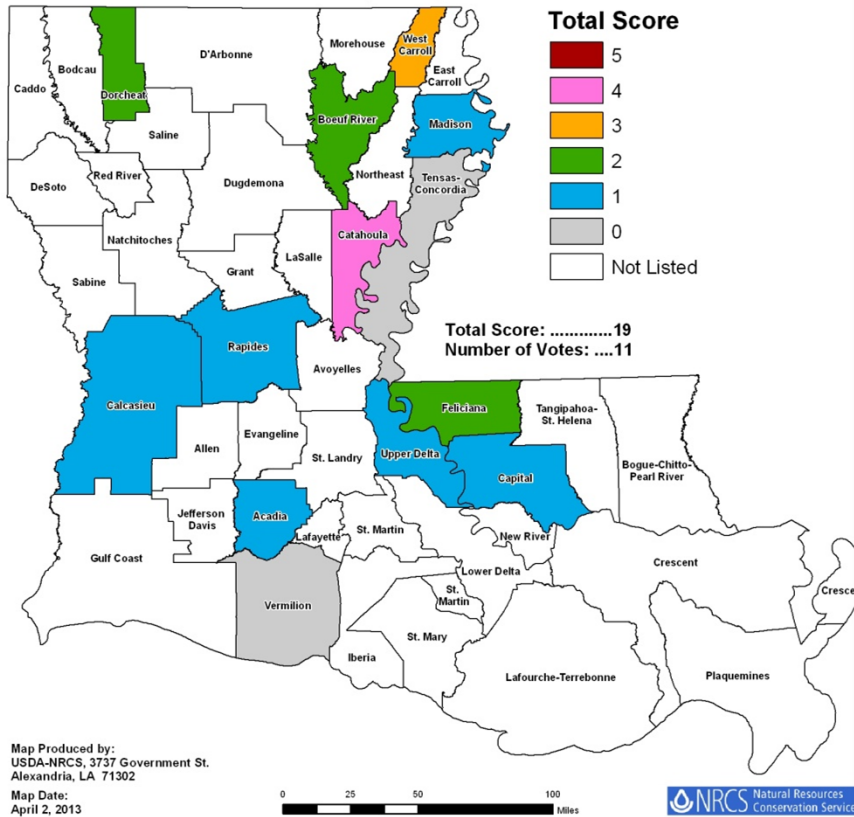
# Locally Led Conservation



## 2013 Data Collection

### 2013 Resource Concern # 9 Soil Quality Degradation - Organic Matter Depletion

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs)

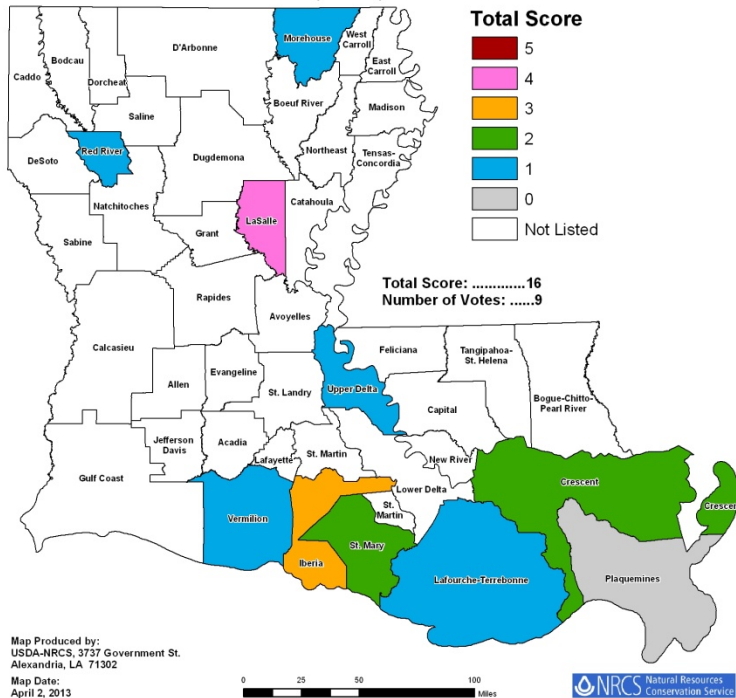


| Total Score | Geographic Area   |
|-------------|-------------------|
| 4           | Catahoula SWCD    |
| 3           | West Carroll SWCD |
| 2           | Boeuf River SWCD  |
| 2           | Dorcheat SWCD     |
| 2           | Feliciana SWCD    |
| 1           | Acadia SWCD       |
| 1           | Calcasieu SWCD    |
| 1           | Capital SWCD      |
| 1           | Madison SWCD      |
| 1           | Rapides SWCD      |
| 1           | Upper Delta SWCD  |
| 1           | Vermilion SWCD    |

# Locally Led Conservation: 2013 Data Collection

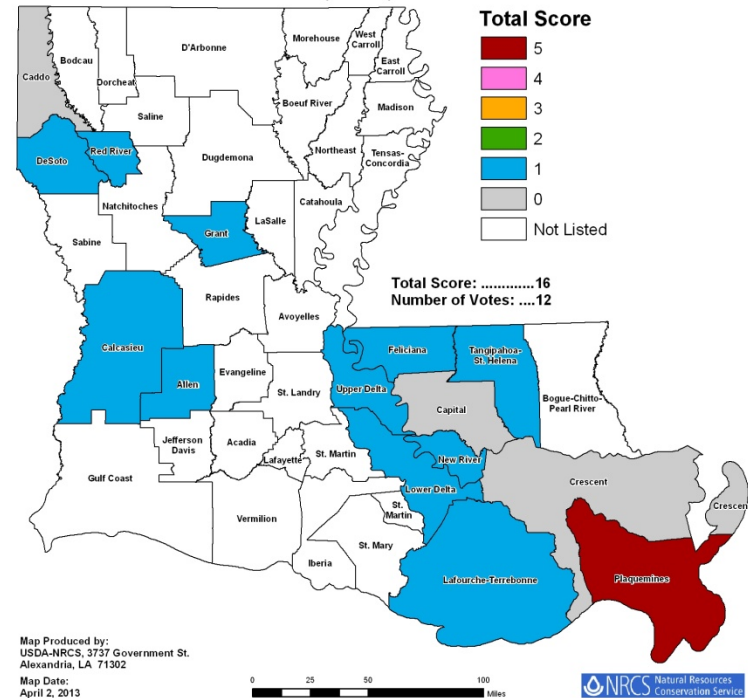
## 2013 Resource Concern # 10 Soil Erosion - Excessive Bank Erosion from Streams Shorelines or Water Conveyance Channels (Tied with Animal - Livestock Production - Inadequate Livestock Water)

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs)



## 2013 Resource Concern # 10 Animal - Livestock Production - Inadequate Livestock Water (Tied with Soil Erosion - Excessive Bank Erosion from Streams Shorelines or Water Conveyance Channels)

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs)

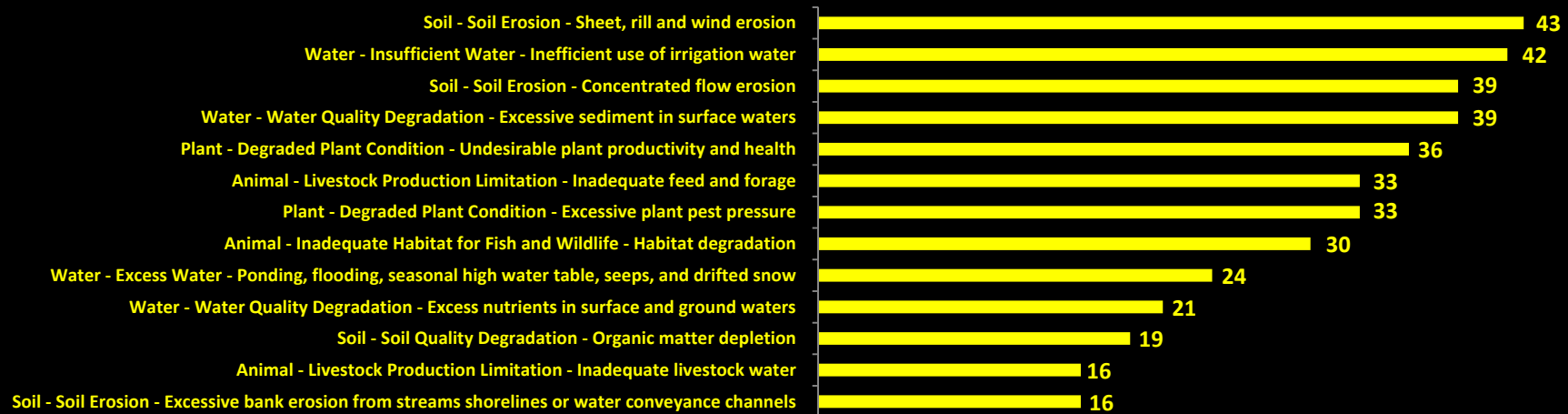


| Score | Geographic Area  | Score | Geographic Area       |
|-------|------------------|-------|-----------------------|
| 5     | Plaquemines SWCD | 1     | Lafourche Terrebonne  |
| 1     | Allen SWCD       | 1     | Lower Delta SWCD      |
| 1     | Calcasieu SWCD   | 1     | New River SWCD        |
| 1     | DeSoto SWCD      | 1     | Red River SWCD        |
| 1     | Feliciana SWCD   | 1     | Tangipahoa St. Helena |
| 1     | Grant SWCD       | 1     | Upper Delta SWCD      |

| Score | Geographic Area      | Score | Geographic Area  |
|-------|----------------------|-------|------------------|
| 4     | LaSalle SWCD         | 1     | Morehouse SWCD   |
| 3     | Iberia SWCD          | 1     | Red River SWCD   |
| 2     | Crescent SWCD        | 1     | Upper Delta SWCD |
| 2     | St. Mary SWCD        | 1     | Vermilion SWCD   |
| 1     | Lafourche Terrebonne |       |                  |



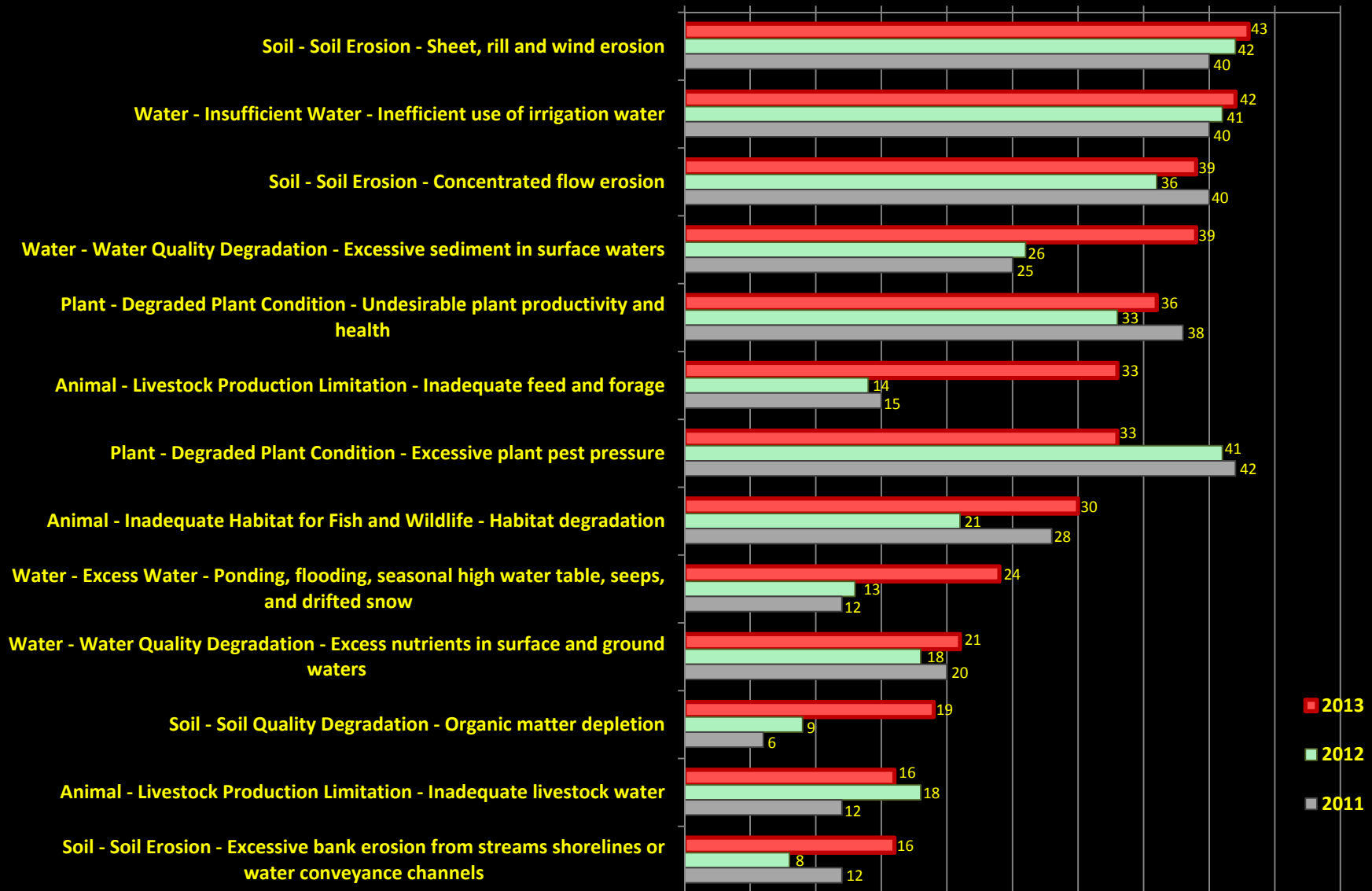
## 2013 Resource Concerns

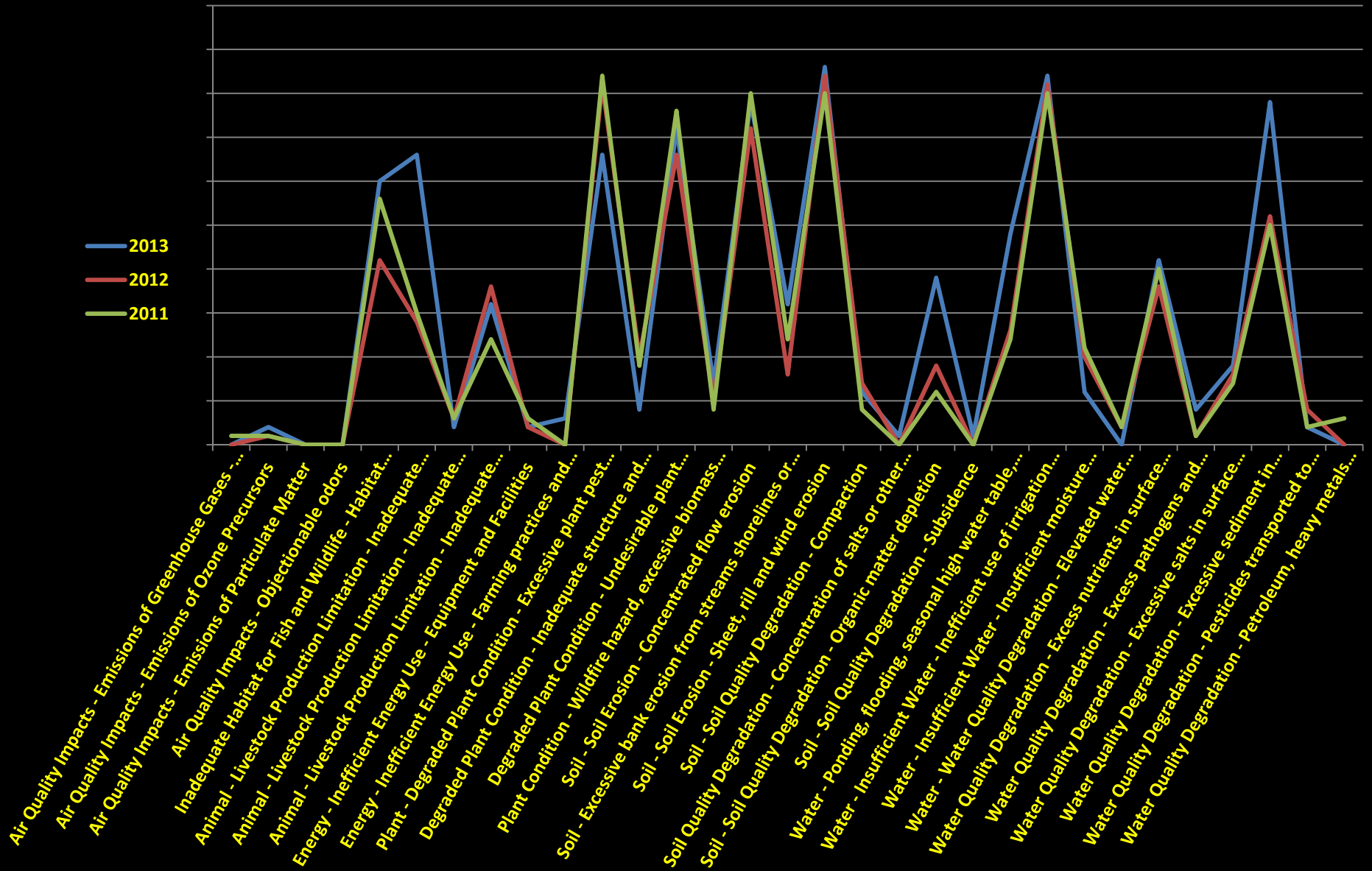


## 2012 Resource Concerns



**Top 13 Resource Concerns for 2013  
Compared to 2012 and 2011**









Locally Led Conservation consists of a series of phases which involve community stakeholders in:

- natural resource planning
- implementation of solutions
- evaluation of results



"Locally Led Conservation" is community stakeholders:

1. Assessing their natural resource conservation needs
2. Setting community conservation goals
3. Developing an action plan
4. Obtaining resources to carry out the plan
5. Implementing solutions
6. Measuring their success



These actions can be grouped into four major activities for the purpose of this process:

- Conservation needs assessment
- Conservation Action Plan
- Action Plan implementation
- Evaluation of results

## Locally Led Conservation



## Principle

Locally Led Conservation begins with the community itself, working through the local conservation district.

It is based on the principle that community stakeholders are the best suited to deal with local resource problems.

Thus, community stakeholders are keys to successfully managing and protecting their natural resources.

# Locally Led Conservation



Local?

Local can mean...

- parish
- portion of a parish
- watershed
- multi-parish region
- other geographic area

...whichever is best suited to address the resource conservation needs identified.



## Locally Led Conservation



**Not New**

The need for local leadership in natural resources management was one of the most important factors leading to the establishment of conservation districts nearly 60 years ago.

Following the creation of the federal Soil Conservation Service, conservation districts were created as a local focal point for coordinating and delivering technical assistance and funding to private land managers.

## Locally Led Conservation



**Not New**

Over the years, federal, state, and local governments have channeled assistance through conservation districts to address virtually every aspect of natural resource conservation.

Districts have focused on setting priorities and carrying out programs based on local conditions and needs.

## Locally Led Conservation



## Shifting Priorities

Legislation such as the 1985 and 1990 farm bills, the 1987 Clean Water Act amendments, and the 1990 Coastal Zone Act, however, have significantly changed the way NRCS and conservation districts address conservation and natural resource management needs.

## Locally Led Conservation



## Shifting Priorities

These and other programs, driven largely by national priorities, focused federal conservation efforts on a narrow range of natural resource concerns.

State and local conservation leaders were often left on their own to balance limited program resources against growing conservation needs.



The Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 – The 1998 Farm Bill – signaled a shift back to the original district approach of locally led conservation.

Congress emphasized the need for a close working relationship among conservation districts, the NRCS, the FSA, and other government agencies.



## Locally Led Conservation



## Shifting Priorities

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To facilitate this, conservation districts are being asked to bring together local stakeholders to provide input to USDA's local Farm Bill work groups in order to guide program implementation and integration of the Farm Bill with other local initiatives.



An essential element of the locally led conservation is input from a broad range of agencies, organizations, businesses, and individuals in the local area that have an interest in natural resource management and are familiar with local resource needs and conditions.

These representatives should reflect the diversity of the residents, landowners, and land operators in the local area.



While there is a wide range of groups that may be in position to lead a local conservation effort, Conservation Districts, under state and tribal law, are charged with

- facilitating cooperation and agreements between agencies, landowners and others
- Developing comprehensive conservation plans
- Bringing those plans to the attention of landowners and others in the district

# Locally Led Conservation



# Leadership

Conservation Districts are experienced in assessing resource needs, determining priorities, and coordinating programs to meet those needs and priorities.

Therefore, conservation districts are the logical group to coordinate locally led conservation.

## Locally Led Conservation



## Local Work Group

Conservation Districts will be active participants in the locally led meetings.

Conservation Districts will chair the Local Work Group. However, this is not a conservation district meeting.

The Local Work Group is a subcommittee of the State Technical Advisory Committee (STAC).



A conservation needs assessment, with input and resource data from all interested parties, should provide a comprehensive evaluation of the condition of the area's natural resource base.

It will be the platform for making decisions about local priorities and policies for conservation programs delivered at the local level.



## Locally Led Conservation



## Conservation Action Plan

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Using the conservation needs assessment, the Conservation District involves community stakeholders to develop and agree on a conservation action plan.



## The Conservation Action Plan will:

- Identify natural resource conservation priorities
- set measurable conservation goals and objectives
- Identify conservation technology needed to achieve the goals and objectives
- Identify responsibility for action and create a time schedule for completion of elements
- Identify federal, state, tribal, local, and non-government programs and services needed to address specific conservation needs
- Identify a need to develop new programs or processes to address those problems not covered by existing programs



During implementation of the Conservation Action plan, community stakeholders:

- coordinate existing assistance, available through private organizations, federal, state, tribal, and local agencies, including USDA;
- ensure appropriate program application processes are followed;
- develop detailed proposals for new programs;
- seek financial, educational, and technical assistance as necessary.



Locally led conservation does not end when the conservation action plan has been implemented. The effectiveness of the plan implementation should be evaluated to ensure community stakeholders' planned goals and objectives are achieved.

An evaluation should be made to determine where the actual results differ from those anticipated.

The difference may result in retracing one or more of the steps in the locally led conservation effort.



As a process, locally led conservation goes beyond the Farm Bill or any other individual program.

There are a number of program resources available through USDA, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Fish and Wildlife service, the Forest Service, and other federal agencies that can be tapped for assistance in carrying out a local conservation program.



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There are also many resources available through state and local sources.

District leadership will be critical in marshaling these resources to increase the visibility and effectiveness of local conservation efforts.



Locally led conservation creates new opportunities, but also poses significant challenges to districts to step in as conservation leaders in their communities.

Districts need to take the lead in planning and carrying out all conservation programs at the local level.



# Locally Led Conservation Initiative



**Community Stakeholders coming together  
for the common natural resource good**