

Annual Report

July 1, 2013—June 30, 2014

Gulf Coast Soil and Water Conservation District

comprising Calcasieu and Cameron Parishes



National Association of Conservation Districts

About the District

Gulf Coast SWCD was formed in 1945, and is a legal subdivision of the Louisiana State Government which is responsible for the conservation of soil and water resources. It is governed by 3 elected and 2 appointed supervisors. **Doug Miller**, **Louie Barbe III**, and **Jim Paul Dupont** are elected, while **William Hardeman, Jr.** and **Cynthia LeBlanc** are appointed by the Louisiana State Soil and Water Conservation Commission (SWCC). The Board has appointed 2 associate supervisors, **Harold Aymond** and **Dezere Richard**, who donate their time to assist the board and to give input to district activities. Dr. Harold Aymond resigned in October 2012 from the Board of Supervisors; henceforth, the Louisiana SWCC appointed Ms. Cynthia Leblanc to fill his position.

The monthly Board meetings are

Award presented to the District this fiscal year:

2012 LACD Auxiliary's 1st Place Award
for Outstanding Soil and Water Stewardship District Programs

held on the third Wednesday of each month at 9:00 a.m. in the Lake Charles Field Office located at 5417 Gerstner Memorial Drive, Lake Charles. The public is invited to attend.

The goals of the District are to coordinate conservation activities and educational programs, and to provide technical assistance to landowners and units of government on the use of soil, water, and related resources.

The District Officers for July 1, 2013—June 30, 2014 are as follows:

Doug Miller

Chairman

Louie D. Barbe III

Vice-Chairman

William Hardeman

Secretary-Treasurer

The District has four full-time employees:

Danielle Fruge

District Secretary

Celina Yentzen

Office/Program Assistant

Wesley Rentz

Josh Soileau

Vegetation Technicians



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Pictured above are Board Members and Associates: from left: Dezere Richard, Doug Miller, Billy Hardeman, Jim Dupont, Beau Barbe, Cynthia LeBlanc and Harold Aymond

District's Partnership with USDA NRCS

Since 1935, **USDA's NRCS** (Natural Resources and Conservation Service originally called the Soil Conservation Service), has provided leadership in a partnership effort to help America's private land owners and managers conserve their soil, water, and other natural resources.

Partnerships, like the one with conservation districts, expand the reach and depth of conservation on the land. Along with conservation districts like Gulf Coast SWCD, the NRCS puts cooperative conservation to work in an effort to "**Help the People Help the Land.**" The

NRCS staff providing technical assistance at the Lake Charles Field Office for this FY includes:

Frank Chapman

District Conservationist

Andrea Bridgewater

Soil Conservationist

Eric Jones

Soil Conservation Technician

Earth Team Volunteers

play an important role in helping NRCS help the people help the land. The District has recruited **20** volunteers who logged **265** hours of service this fiscal year.

Thanks Volunteers!

Conservation Statistics

"If there's one thing I'd want to be remembered for, it's passion and enthusiasm. Conservation is my life, my whole being." - Steve Irwin

The District, with technical assistance provided through the NRCS, has been active in addressing natural resource concerns with landowners and land users in Southwest Louisiana during this fiscal year. A summary of this assistance follows:

Number of District Cooperators	2234
New Cooperators	15
Number of customers assisted	3381
Number of EQIP contracts funded	17
Total EQIP dollars obligated	\$533,836
Master Farmer	3 plans

Acres of cropland with conservation applied to improve Soil Quality	160
Acres of land with conservation applied to improve Water Quality	2,733
Acres of land with conservation applied to improve irrigation efficiency	259
Acres of grazing land w/ conservation applied to protect/improve resource base	15,793
Acres of grazing land w/ conservation system applied to achieve a sustainable forage-animal balance	376
Acres of non-federal land with conservation applied to improve fish and wildlife habitat quality	1,059
Acres of forest land w/ conservation applied to protect and improve vegetative condition	128

Conservation Practices Installed to Treat Natural Resource Problems

Brush Management	1,025 acres	Prescribed Grazing	376 acres
Early Successional Habitat Development/Management	282 acres	Pumping Plant	1 ct
Fence	5,165 feet	Shallow Water Development/Management	107 acres
Forest Stand Improvement	135 acres	Watering Facilities	15 ct
Grade Stabilization Structure	4 ct	Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management	951 acres
Heavy Use Area Protection	1 acres		
Herbaceous Weed Control	118 acres		
Irrigation Land Leveling	169 acres		
Irrigation Pipeline	2,128 acres		
Livestock Pipeline	208 acres		
Pond	1 ct		
Prescribed Burning	244 acres		

Coastal Revegetation Planting Program

The District actively participated in the **2013 – 2014 District Vegetative Planting Program** with the **Office of Coastal Protection and Restoration (OCPR)** and **Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF)** in the restoration and conservation of coastal wetlands. This fiscal year the district installed four projects that consisted of planting and monitoring a total of **44,500** linear feet of shoreline protection and of interior marsh vegetative plantings which used a total of **12,500 plants**, consisted of the following plant species: 3,000 California Bulrush (*Schoenoplectus californicus*), 500 Marshhay Cordgrass (*Spartina patens*), 1,500 Saltgrass (*Distichlis spicata*), 1,500 Seashore Paspalum (*Paspalum vaginatum*), and 6,000 Smooth Cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*).

Gulf Coast SWCD Vegetative Technicians, formally **Josh Soileau** and currently **Welsey Rentz**, oversee the program.

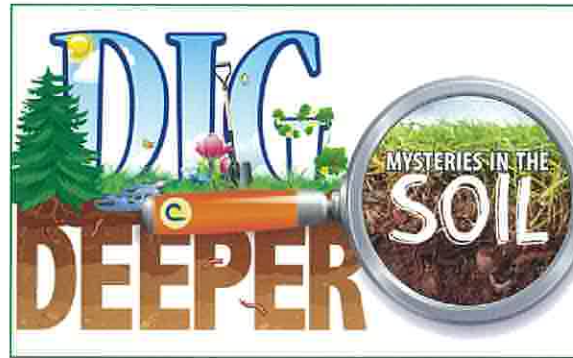


Above: North Willow Lake's (located in Cameron Parish) 2013 Vegetation Project where 9,000 linear feet of California Bulrush was planted to establish vegetation along shoreline to reduce erosion, establish wildlife habitat, and to provide a seed source for natural regeneration.



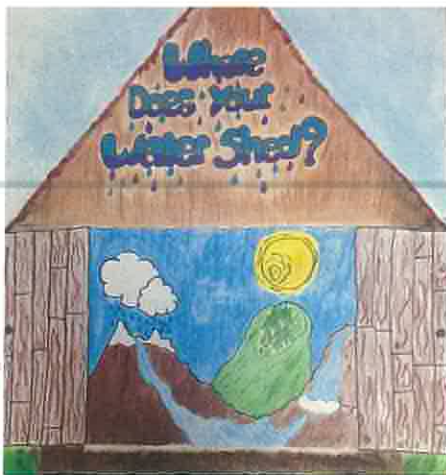
The District has a very outstanding and active Information/Education Program. During this FY, the District has sponsored 30 program activities reaching 1,471 students and 28,020 citizens many of which are educators. From April 27— May 4, 2014 the District sponsored Soil and Water Stewardship Week with the theme being "Dig Deeper: Mysteries in the Soil".

Throughout the year, the District stays active in communicating with area educators to encourage them, to keep them informed of conservation activities and to provide assistance in teaching conservation.



Other Information/Education and Outreach Projects

POSTER CONTEST—This FY the District held its 4rd Annual *Poster Contest* in November 2013 using the theme of 2013 Soil and Water Stewardship Week, "Where Does Your Shed?" Unfortunately there was only one entry this year. This poster was still an exceptional piece of artwork and express great skill and beauty.



Above: F.K. white Middle School Student, Alexandra Elizabeth Albrecht's poster is presented. She was the **1st Place Winner** in the 7th - 9th Grade Division for District Judging contest. Her poster was then sent to the State Judging Contest, where it was presented with **Honorable Mention**.



Above: The Grand Lake FFA Chapter partnered with NRCS/Gulf Coast SWCD for their 9th Annual Tree Seedling Sale. NRCS/Gulf Coast SWCD was very grateful for all







The District's 8th Annual
Tree Seedling Sale
January 22-24, 2014
More than 6,000 bare-rooted seedlings of 16 hardwood and fruit varieties were sold to 175



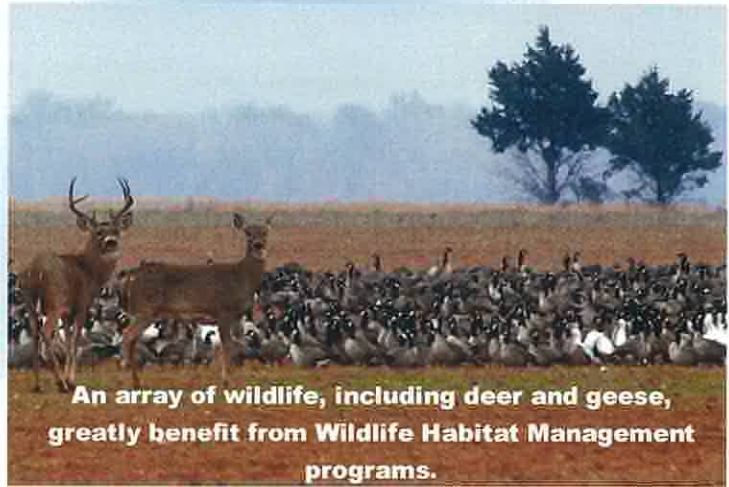




Gulf Coast Soil and Water Conservation District

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An array of wildlife, including deer and geese, greatly benefit from Wildlife Habitat Management programs.

Conservation * Development * Self-Government

We're on the Web!

www.gulfcoastswcd.org



CHECK OUT
OUR NEW
SITE!!!

"I believe sustainable use is the greatest propaganda in wildlife conservation at the moment." - Steve Irwin

Additional Accomplishments this FY

- Participated in the McNeese State University Career Days September 24, 2013 and February 25, 2014
- Sponsored and actively participated in the LACD Auxiliary Poster Contest October 2013 with 1 participant
- Coordinated with the Grand Lake FFA Chapter to organize and carryout the annual tree sale which lasted from January 22-24, 2014
- District's website reached 12,470 people
- Sent out 0 News Releases/Ads to local newspapers which reached potentially 500,000 people
- Actively participated in the LACD Convention in Lafayette, Louisiana January 8-10, 2014
- Actively cooperates with NRCS to provide necessary training to new employees
- Actively invests in and supports the NACD, National Association of Conservation Districts, as the unified voice for conservation districts at the federal level
- Actively stays informed with farm bill legislation and corresponds with legislators concerning conservation issues



OUR NEW
OFFICE

NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service



Since conservation is indeed a "team effort," it would be impossible to meet the goals of the District without the help of the District's many partners. With this in mind, the District would like to take this opportunity to thank its partners, **NRCS, Imperial Calcasieu RC&D, LDAF, LNPI, Ducks Unlimited** and other **Federal, State and Local Agencies, Cooperators, Landowners, Land Users** and area **Educators** who assist the District throughout the year to accomplish its goals for conservation.



Career Day at McNeese State University