

# Conservation Notes

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*Thirty-five individuals participated in the 2012 Earth Team two day tour to Mississippi's gulf coast see page 4 for additional information.*



*Do you know what conservation practice structure this is? To identify this practice read "Out and About with Don". (Photo credit: Don Lackey, NRCS Soil Conservation Technician)*



*Dr. William S. Cook, Sr. has been participating in the Hinds County SWCD Tree Day for over 30 years. Read more about his tree legacy on page 3. (Photo credit: Jeff Wilson, MS Soil and Water Conservation Commission)*



## Conservation Notes

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### The Hinds County Soil & Water Conservation District

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# 2012 Annual Report

## Hinds County Soil And Water Conservation District

The Hinds County Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners and staff proudly submit the following annual report. We would like to take this opportunity to express our thanks to each of you for your continued support of the district. The district appreciates the Hinds County Board of Supervisors for appropriating funds in 2012 to the District. There are many individuals, partners, businesses and organizations that are an integral part of the district's programs and activities. Your support and assistance helps make these programs a success. To each of you THANK YOU!

This annual report covers from October 1, 2011 to September 30, 2012. The district serves all citizens of Hinds County. Services include working with farmers, landowners and land users on the plan, design and construction of conservation practices; working with homeowners on soil and drainage problems; stream bank erosion projects, conservation workshops, water quality programs, conservation education and many other conservation activities.

### Some of the 2012 highlights include:

- Conservation Technical Assistance Through USDA Farm Bill Programs (Federal and District Personnel Assisting)
- 24,982 acres planned and more than 5,000 acres applied with a variety of conservation practices that included:
  - 8,850 feet of fencing were applied to assist with pasture management/water quality
  - 1,115 acres of applied Herbaceous Weed Control
  - 860 acres of applied Integrated Pest Management
  - 15 Grade Stabilization Structures
  - 4,930 acres planned for Upland Wildlife Habitat
  - 44,741 feet of firebreaks
- Conservation cover planned on 9,688 acres
- 1,450 feet of applied diversions
- 469 acres of applied prescribed grazing
- 11 livestock ponds
- Advice and plans on High Tunnels Systems and watering facilities
- Other technical assistance provided on: cover crops, pasture/hayland improvement, prescribed burning, residue and tillage management, wildlife habitat management as well as other natural resource concerns.
- Environmental Assessments assistance

### CONSERVATION

### EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Fish Pond Management Field Day
- Project Earth Environmental Educator's Workshop- Twenty-two educators attended the three day event , June 5th -7th from central Mississippi.
- Conservation Poster and Essay Contests- 2012 theme was "Soil to Spoon". 77 essays and 282 posters were submitted from students in county, city and private schools.
- Poster & Essay reception honoring students who placed in the district's contests as well as sponsoring teachers; over 150 in attendance.
- Participated in "Read Across America"
- Participated in Waterfest 2012
- Camp Silver Eagle- Hinds Community College
- Participated in Clinton Community Nature Day
- Food, Land and People Educator Workshops held at Mississippi College
- Programs on natural resources/conservation for local schools and colleges

See "Annual Report" on page 7

# A Legacy of Trees

By Lynn Porter, District Administrator



*Crepe Myrtles, pines and oaks line Dr. Cook's fence. The variety of species planted are represented of the trees that the district offers. These trees have matured nicely and create a lovely fence line.*

The 39th Tree Day will be held Saturday, February 2nd in Hinds County. Many citizens in the county identify Tree Planting Week with the Hinds County Soil and Water Conservation District. Tree Day and the Arbor Day programs that are presented to third graders promote conservation and the importance of trees. For at least 35 years if not all of the 39 years one Hinds County resident can show the success of the program throughout his property.

Dr. William S. Cook, Sr. is leaving a legacy in several areas- the medical field, leisure carriage riding, conservation land management and trees! For over 20years, Jeff Wilson, MS Soil and Water Conservation Commission has assisted the district with Tree Day. Annually he discusses the usual crowd that starts forming at 6:30 a.m. and all of the citizens participating in the event but one name



*This crab apple tree on Dr. Cook's farm shows there no shortage of food for wildlife on his farm.*

that kept coming up was Dr. Cook. Jeff said you could count on Dr. Cook annually participating in the event and picking up pines, hardwoods as well as ornamentals.

Jeff and myself were fortunate to visit with Dr. Cook on his farm. Within the first couple of minutes of our visit I knew he was a dedicated conservationist who knows the importance of stewardship of our natural resources and passing this stewardship to the next generation.

Walking with Dr. Cook on his property he knew the species of trees he has planted throughout the years. Many individuals who participate in Tree Day are looking for an "instant" landscape and are disappointed when they receive trees from the district that are 12" – 18" tall. Foresters, horticulturists have been trying to educate the public for years that the smaller trees (seedlings) will "outgrow" the larger trees and are healthier. When trees are large and are



*Mature cypress trees enhance the natural beauty of Dr. Cook's pond.*

transplanted they go through a shock and the success rate usually decreases the larger the tree is. Dr. Cook's property is a testimony to this founded theory. The seedlings he planted over 30 years ago are majestic towering giants. His children and now his grandchildren enjoy the shade, climbing and aesthetics they provide. Dr. Cook's vision of magnificent towering giants started with seedlings he received from the district over 30 years ago. His vision is a legacy of conservation and stewardship the next generation has enjoyed and will be able to pass down.

## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

- January 23-24:** MACD Meeting (Mississippi Association of Conservation Districts)
- February 2:** Tree Day- Hinds County Conservation District/NRCS Office
- February 8:** State Arbor Day Celebration MS Museum of Natural Science
- February 4-15:** Arbor Day Programs for Third Graders
- March 1:** Read Across America
- March 19:** National Ag Day Celebration- MS Farmer's Market 10:00 a.m.
- April 9:** Poster & Essay Reception



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# 2012 Earth Team MS Coast Tour

By Lynn Porter, District Administrator



*IMMS trainers take a blood sample from a dolphin at the center for daily counts. This does not hurt the dolphin and the dolphin is trained for the procedure.*

Earth Team volunteers were up early and on the bus by 6:00 a.m. morning of Wednesday, November 14th. Thirty-five participated in the two day one night tour to Mississippi's Gulf Coast.

Our first stop was in Gulfport at the Institute for Marine Mammal Studies (IMMS). The IMMS is sometimes also known as the Center for Marine Education and Research. At the center the group was welcomed to the coast by USDA NRCS Area Conservationist Wesley Kerr. A program was presented on the purpose, research and educational outreach of the center. Two Cockatoos who were residents of the center performed. Next, the group toured the marine museum which featured interesting exhibits on how dolphins are rescued, the Gulf of Mexico Hypoxia issue, the affects that the BP oil spill is having on the gulf and a hands on fossil dig. A program was presented on endangered species of Mississippi. The group was able to enjoy hands-on encounters with horseshoe crabs, sea stars, sting rays in a large touch tank and view numerous

fish and other aquatic life species in aquariums that lined the entire discovery room. IMMS had one of the best "touch tanks" I have ever experienced.

The group then enjoyed a delicious lunch at the White Cap Restaurant overlooking the Gulf of Mexico. Joining the group for lunch was Master Sergeant Brian Lamar and Master Sergeant Jeff Stack. Master Sgt. Brain Lamar explained the role of the 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron better known as the "Hurricane Hunters." They all enjoy their jobs and have an extensive background in meteorology as well as aeronautics. Many individuals don't realize that this group of Air Force Reservists save thousands of lives and dollars every year. Their forecast allows metropolitan areas to mobilize citizens, equipment, businesses out of harms way. They work year round- when not checking on weather systems during hurricane season they fly up north to check on the severity of Northeasterners. Master Sergeant Jeff Stack is known as a Dropsonde Operator. He releases the instrument that records

numerous weather information. Master Sgt. Stack visited every table and showed the instrument as well as answered questions. After lunch we went to Keesler Air Force Base and Colonel Ragusa, a pilot with the Hurricane Hunters gave a very informative presentation on the history and operations of the squadron. Keesler is the only place in the world to be home to the Hurricane Hunters, Mississippi should be proud! There are only twelve planes worldwide that are equipped to fly into a hurricane- ten of them are located on the base. Col. Ragusa gave a demonstration of a typical crew and their individual functions through a role playing using Earth Team Volunteers. The Hurricane Hunters were formed in 1944 and started on a dare between pilots. A meteorologist overhearing what they had done ask if they could do it again realizing the valuable weather information that could be obtained. After learning about the squadron we were able to tour an actual plane- it's enormous! You can read more about this fascinating group on the web or the many publications that are available about them.

Next was a stop at the Katrina Memorial in Biloxi. It was a solemn visit with the memorial dedicated to the gulf coast victims who perished. The memorial was built as a project

*See "Earth Team" on page 5*



*It was a time of reflection at the Katrina Memorial in Biloxi. The black granite wall was built at the same height as the storm surge.*

## Earth Team

*continued from page 4*

by the television show Extreme Makeover Home Edition. A black granite wall is the height of the storm surge of the storm. There is a glass case filled with personal art from Katrina victims. A tile mural of a wave is in the background as well as a seating area around one of the large oaks that survived the storm. If you have not seen the memorial it's well worth it next time you are on the coast.

We spent the night in D'Lberville, MS. On Thursday the group was met by Mark LaSalle, Director, at the Pascagoula River Audubon Center. The Audubon Center tour consisted of two parts. One part of the visit included a history of the center and watching the PBS special "Rhythms of Nature" which was about the Pascagoula River and the individuals responsible for preserving this last free flowing river system in the contiguous United States. Repeat...the last free flowing river system in the contiguous United States! This is yet another reason Mississippi should be proud. The other half of the visit was a River Swamp and Marsh tour from McCoy's River Tours. Benny McCoy is the captain and picked up the group from the Audubon Center. Benny is an excellent tour guide and is a very knowledgeable person on the river system and the wildlife within it. We saw several species of cranes, a young bald eagle, other marsh/river wildlife as well as numerous plants species residing in this particular water



*The group enjoyed a boat tour of the marshes of the Pascagoula River.*

body. The visit at the Pascagoula River Audubon Center and to take the boat tour with Benny let's one reflect on the beauty of an untouched ecosystem.

The group then headed to Presley's Outing Boathouse Restaurant where Sandra had a home cooked meal waiting in a serene setting. She had smoked chicken, their famous smoked macaroni and cheese, vegetables, peach cobbler and homemade ice cream waiting on us. This beautiful campground is located in Moss Point, Mississippi. After a wonderful lunch we toured the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. Rick Ranew with the center toured the group and gave an excellent presentation on water quality, marine ecology and non-point source water pollution. The Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve is one of the few buildings in the United States to be officially built to the Green Standards and certified. Porous pavement is utilized in parking areas, a cistern catches and then utilizes rain water, the siding, inside flooring, bathroom counters and other items are made from

recycled materials. A ground barrier around the building is porous to catch additional rain water but to also serve as a firebreak. After the tour and lecture the group had a few minutes in the center's interpretive display area. The center has a variety of educational and outreach programs on a monthly basis, be sure to check out their website.

The group was honored to have three of our coastal district employees join us- Beth D'Aquilla, Harrison County and Kathy Hamrick and Lindsey Coleman from Jackson County. After another full day it was time to head back to Jackson. Travel time passed by quickly with a variety of games including Bingo. A special thanks to Pat Sigrest, the official Bingo commander and to Margie Sasser for being the Vanna White of the group and passing out the prizes. I also would like to thank Nancy Lau for making name tags...two days worth and presenting a devotion on Wednesday. Pat Sigrest led the devotional on Thursday. Thanks to each tour participant who brought food, games and door prizes. A special thanks to Ramon Callahan and Dale Bullock, both retired NRCS employees, whose career expertise were able to answer additional wildlife/conservation questions that participants had. Thanks to everyone behind the scenes who helped make this one of the best tours. The entire group learned additional information about the wonderful treasures along Mississippi's gulf coast.

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# The Impact of Our Forages Today in Tomorrow's Livestock Systems

Dr. Rocky Lemus, Associate Extension/Research Professor, Extension Forage Specialist, MS State University

Forage crops are of great value in Mississippi, both economically and environmentally.

Mississippi's forage industry is the one of the top six state's agricultural commodities. Forage producers utilize over 2.2 million acres of private land for grazing, hay production, wildlife habitats and conservation. Forage systems are used to sustain grazing systems for 900,000 beef cattle and over 200,000 horses in the state. Forages-livestock contribute more than \$1.8 million annually to the Mississippi's economy and provide direct income for more than 40,000 producers.

The Mississippi Forage & Grassland Conference was recently held on November 30th in Raymond at the McKenzie arena on the campus of Hinds Community College. The event kicked off with a forage tour at the Brown Loam Experiment Station on November 29th where over 60 forage/livestock producers were in attendance. Scientists with the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Experiment Station (MAFES) and the Extension Service addressed different topics related to animal behavior, nutrient management, clover/ryegrass grazing systems, bioenergy crops and weed control. Dr. Rhonda Vann (MSU Animal Scientist) discussed research related to temperamen-



*Dr. Rhonda Vann (MSU Animal Scientist) explains research related to temperamental cattle that will help with weaning strategies and feeding acclimation using the GrowSafe system. (Photo credit: Jeff Wilson)*

tal cattle that will help with weaning strategies and feeding acclimation using the GrowSafe system. Dr. Bisoodat Maccon (MSU Forage Agronomist) discussed management strategies for utilizing clover strategies for annual ryegrass grazing systems. Dr. Maccon also addressed the use of native warm-season grasses such as switchgrass as a forage crop as well as bioenergy crop. Dr. Bill Evans (MSU Extension Horticulturist) addressed the use of pelletized poultry litter in bermudagrass forage production. Ms. Matt McGowin (Dupont Chemicals) provided information on herbicide demonstrations for weed control with Pastora, Velpar and Rejuvra in bermudagrass and bahiagrass pasture systems.

Forage producers from Mississippi and adjacent states had the opportunity to hear from national leaders in forage and livestock production at the 2012 Mississippi Forage & Grassland

Conference. Speakers from eight different states with over 120 years of combined experience addressed the participants. During the morning session Dr. John Arthington [Director the Cattle Research & Education Center and animal scientist with the Univ. of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS)] highlighted the importance of mineral nutrition in grazing systems. He discussed the effect of minerals in beef cattle and how these strategies along with grazing management can help supplementation strategies. Dr. Gary Bates (Professor and Director of the Forage and Beef Center at Univ. of Tennessee) discussed the importance of warm-season native grasses as a forage crop but also as biomass source for cellulosic ethanol. His presentation highlighted the potential to double crop switchgrass with a winter annual grass to obtain both forage and a biomass crop. Dr. John Jennings (Univ. of Arkansas Extension Forage Specialist) highlighted that extending the grazing season has a strong positive impact on profitability of livestock operations through the Arkansas's 300 day grazing program. To date, 146 demonstrations have been conducted on farms in 50 counties in Arkansas with savings to those producers totaling over \$283,352. This is a significant impact considering that 80% of Arkansas beef farms have less than 50 cows (average herd size is 38 head) and most livestock farms are under 200 acres in size. Demonstrations in the 300 Days Grazing program included as few as 5 head and as many as 500 head for a single farm. Dr. Glen Aiken (Animal Scientist, USDA-ARS Forage & Animal Research Unit at Univ. of Kentucky) discussed alternatives to managing tall fescue toxicity. Seed heads of tall fescue are the most toxic

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## Forage

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plant part of the grass and cattle readily graze them as they emerge from the boot. He discussed how seed heads can be chemically suppressed with Chaparral to increase cattle performance and reduce severity of toxicosis. Dr. Don Miller (Director of Product Development, Producer's Choice) discussed how summer annuals such as forage sorghums, sudangrass, hybrids and teffgrass can be utilized during the "Summer Slump" to increase forage productivity and maintain animal performance.

During the afternoon session, Dr. Ed Twidwell (LSU Extension Forage Specialist) and expert in legume management discussed the integration of clover systems for the region. He emphasized the introduction of clovers into grass pastures often extend the grazing season and that the persistence of clovers is dictated by environmental conditions and grazing management. Fire ants are a major problem in Mississippi's forage systems. Dr. Blake Layton (MSU Extension Urban Entomologist) presented strategies to control large mounds that interfere with grazing and damage forage equipment. He indicated that products to control fire ants in hayfields, pastures, and barnyards are readily available and easy to use. The cost of a single fire ant bait treatment ranges from around \$9 to \$13 per acre. Mr. Cooper Hurst, owner of Hunt Hill Cattle Company, provided an insight to on hands experience on utilizing grazing man-

agement strategies to reduce input costs in his operation. One of his major approaches is the utilization of stockpiled grasses and high density grazing to extend the grazing season.

This successful event was a collaboration and team work between the Mississippi State University Forage Extension Program, Mississippi Grazing Lands Coalition Initiative (GLCI), Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission and USDA- NRCS. Proceedings of the conference as well as speaker presentations can be found at MSUCares.com or Mississippiforages.com. For further information contact Rocky Lemus at (662) 325-7718 or RLeMus@ext.msstate.edu.

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## Annual Report

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- National Agriculture Day- MS Forestry and Agriculture Museum
- Numerous Sammy Soil educational programs presented to schools
- Science Fairs, Garden/Civic Clubs, Career Days, Summer Environmental Camps, various field days, and Summer Library programs
- Provided assistance to schools for Outdoor Classrooms and school gardens

### 2012 TREE PLANTING WEEK-

The Hinds County Soil and Water Conservation District with assistance from NRCS, and MSWCC sponsored a successful Tree Planting Week. Over 30,000 tree seedlings were distributed to Hinds County residents through this program. County residents came by our office to obtain packets of trees. 24 programs were presented to 1,843 students. Each student received a pine seedling to take home and plant. Once again, the district helped coordinate the State Arbor Day observance held at the MS Museum of Natural Science.

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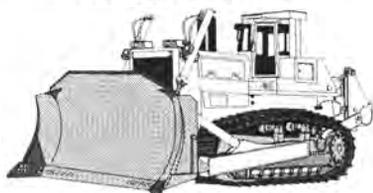
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# Out & About With Don...

Don Lackey, NRCS, Conservation Technician

## Hooded -Inlet Pipe

Pipes are an important tool used in erosion control structures and aid in water quality. A pipe directs water run-off to a reliable outlet or can control water levels in ponds. Pipes are utilized in a variety of conservation practices; with engineering technical guidelines pipes can be configured for a variety of sizes of fields and water velocity. One such configuration is a hooded pipe. This pipe was installed on

Beau Holliday's farm. The challenge on Mr. Holliday's farm was difference in elevation between the inlet or entrance of the gully and the outlet in the bottom of the creek being almost 8 feet. The problem with a pipe installed in a steep grade is the swirling of the water at the entrance of the pipe. A hooded-inlet consists of a pipe laid in the levee. The inlet or the entrance of the pipe is cut at an angle to form



*No riser is needed in a hooded-inlet structure.  
(Photo credit: Don Lackey)*

a hood. Then metal anti-vortex device or baffle is attached to the entrance of the pipe to prevent the swirling effect and to increase the hydraulic efficiency of the pipe. A major advantage of a hooded-inlet is it can be built at less cost than a drop-inlet because no riser is needed.



*Beau Holliday, landowner and contractor and Brad Mitchell, Soil Conservationist, look over the hooded pipe inlet that Mr. Holliday recently installed in one of his fields. (Photo credit: Don Lackey)*

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