

## **NATIVE PLANT SOLUTIONS FOR COASTAL RESTORATION ALONG THE GULF COAST**

*Garret Thomassie<sup>1</sup>, Curt J. Riche<sup>1</sup> and Daniel Pingel<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>USDA-NRCS Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center

The mission of the Plant Materials Program is to find plant solutions to solve conservation problems. NRCS plant material activities are to provide timely and effective vegetative solutions for identified resource needs. This information is incorporated into technical documents and training products for federal and state government agencies, universities and the general public. The Program also identifies, tests and selects plants for vegetative and seed Conservation Plant Releases to provide for commercial production of plant materials to protect and conserve our natural resources.

One of twenty-five centers across the United States, the Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center is responsible for Critical Area Stabilization concerns which address coastal areas, dunes and marshes. The Center supports re-vegetation efforts along the northern Gulf Coast through development and evaluation of plant propagation and plant establishment technology for the restoration and enhancement of associated coastal habitats (e.g. coastal marshes, coastal prairies, Chenier ridges).

Coastal remediation involves identifying and evaluating plant species for coastal erosion control, marsh restoration and dune stabilization. The Center identifies and collects emergent and submersed aquatic plant species from different marsh ecosystems for 1) the re-vegetation of coastal zones affected by intense wind and water erosion; 2) the selection of robust plant varieties resilient to changing salinity and water regimes; and 3) the enhanced diversity of coastal dunes and barrier islands.

**PRESENTER BIO:** Garret Thomassie is manager at the USDA/NRCS Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center. He received his BS Horticulture from the University of Louisiana, Lafayette. With more than 19 years' of coastal wetland experience, he has been involved with coastal restoration projects dealing with Louisiana's wetland and barrier island vegetative problems.

Contact Information: Garret Thomassie, USDA - NRCS GMPMC, 438 Airport Road, Galliano, LA 70354, Phone: 985.475.5280, E-mail: [garret.thomassie@la.usda.gov](mailto:garret.thomassie@la.usda.gov)