



United States Department of Agriculture

Louisiana Conservation Update

May 2015

**Doing More
With Less**
in Bossier Parish

**Soils Support
Buildings and Infrastructure**

**Saving the "Teddy Bear"
in Louisiana**

Projects • Successes • Partnerships



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Alice Boyer owns a 7-acre farm in Bossier Parish. Find out how she is doing more with less on pages 4 and 5.

The Conservation Update is distributed monthly by mail and e-mail.

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Notes from the State Conservationist

On April 22, 2015, over 2,000 people witnessed a celebration of our natural resources, heritage, and patriotism at the Riverfront Center in downtown Alexandria. The USDA Forest Services' Kisatchie National Forest was honored by having a U.S. Mint quarter launched as a part of the America the Beautiful Quarters Collection. This is quite an honor for our sister USDA agency and all the Forest Service personnel, present and past, that have worked the Kisatchie. Our hats are off to you, our friends and colleagues, for the recognition of this wonderful Louisiana resource. The program you and the local sponsors provided was a perfect reflection of the Kisatchie's importance and integration into the very fabric of central Louisiana life.



Caroline Dorman, a Natchitoches Parish educator, botanist and preservationist, spearheaded a campaign to establish a national forest in Louisiana. Largely because of her personal sacrifice and individual effort, the national forest was established in 1930 by President Hoover and now spans over 600,000 acres. There is a lot that could be said about the mixed stand forests, varied recreational opportunities, woodpecker habitat and other benefits of the Kisatchie. However, while on a tour in the Calcasieu district with several federal and state agencies, local citizens, the Louisiana Forestry Association and individuals representing national forest and wildlife interest, the comment was offered by a person from Georgia who said, "I have traveled the longleaf pine range from Virginia to Texas. We are standing today in the most beautiful longleaf savannah I have ever witnessed."

Statements such as these can invoke an overwhelming sense of pride about our great state, the people and our public lands. It also speaks volumes regarding the sincere dedication of the U.S. Forest Service personnel working on the Kisatchie National Forest. Their long days, weekends and years of reforestation work, exercising proper forest stewardship practices, conducting prescribed burning and adapting management plans to meet the resource needs has produced a national forest worthy of "America the Beautiful" recognition.

From all the Louisiana Natural Resources Conservation Service employees, we extend a hearty congratulations and thank you for your model of public lands stewardship.

Kevin D. Norton
State Conservationist



Bossier Parish Ag Facts

There are 472 farms in Bossier Parish
81,300 acres of land is in farms
41.7% is in pastureland and 17.7% is forestland
Cattle is the #1 commodity of the parish

From: www.agcensus.usda.gov



Doing More With Less in Bossier Parish

Farming wasn't Alice Boyer's first career. However, she woke up one morning and knew that she wanted to be a farmer. Once she made the decision to pursue her calling, she hasn't looked back.

Boyer spent over a year looking for land that she could farm so that she could make her vision a reality. Finally in 2012, she found the perfect place in rural Bossier Parish. That's when the work really began. The place she purchased needed a lot of work before it would be suitable to farm.

"I worked 12 to 14 hour days, six days a week through 2013 to get this place looking like it does today," said Boyer.

Once it was cleaned up, Boyer contacted a contractor to give her an estimate on constructing a pond on part of her land. While he was there, he told her she should visit the

local Natural Resources Conservation Service office to learn about financial and technical assistance opportunities. She made an appointment for the district conservationist to visit her property and a conservation plan was developed.

Boyer raises chickens, turkeys, and Nubian and Nigerian dwarf goats on her seven-acre farm. She sells the chickens and goats she raises and eggs she collects daily.

Goats are milked daily for Boyer's personal consumption. She not only uses the milk for drinking, she also makes cheese, yogurt and kefir.

She also has a greenhouse, raised-bed gardens planted with herbs and vegetables and has planted fruit trees in another area on the farm. The raised beds are equipped with a micro-irrigation system for efficient watering and a seasonal low tunnel system to prolong the growing season.

Through conservation technical assistance and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Boyer has

been installing conservation practices on her farm since 2013.

Fencing has been installed so that she can apply rotational grazing practices. A livestock water well, pipeline and water facilities provide an ample water supply for the goats and common bermudagrass was planted to provide erosion control and forage. Heavy use protection areas were installed to protect areas of high traffic and curb erosion.

Although a lot has been done, Boyer is not finished. She is interested in aquaponics and would like to find an outlet to sell her herbs and vegetables.

Boyer recently hosted a field day at her farm to show others that you can achieve your goals, even on a small-scale farming operation.

Boyer's objective was to grow more food on less land. Boyer said, "NRCS educated me on what I needed to do to have a more productive farm and more importantly, why I needed to do it."



"Farming is the path I was meant to go on." Alice Boyer





2015
International
Year of Soils

Soils Support Buildings and Infrastructure

The International Year of Soils theme for the month of May is “Soils Support Buildings and Infrastructure”. Immediate thoughts of foundations for homes, offices, schools or other buildings and the roads to travel to and from spring to mind. The second thought are those times we have seen poor choices in building sites based on soil properties -- think Leaning Tower of Pisa, doors that stick or won't close and cracks across the brick facade of a home on a concrete foundation.

But how else do soils support buildings and infrastructure? Likely in more ways than initially came to mind. For a person that was raised in the Great Plains, sod

houses may come to mind. Sod houses were constructed on the prairies that lacked conventional building materials and the thickly rooted prairie grass made a pretty good brick of sorts. But although the days of sod houses have long passed, current homes or buildings are still largely made of soil.

It's not a far stretch of the imagination to think of a brick home and recognize that indeed, the bricks are made of soil -- in fact, they are clay with other soil based components that are fire-hardened or air dried. But other parts of the home including adobe, glass, ceramic, concrete, masonry, thinset (used to set the ceramic tile), terracotta and plaster are all primarily soil. In fact according to Wikipedia there are 41 common building materials that are soil based. These were just the most recognizable ones used in the Americas. And of course although it is not soil, there

would be no lumber without the trees that grow in the soil.

These days soils support buildings beyond construction materials and a growing medium for the trees -- the soils provide heating and cooling for home and offices. Geothermal HVAC systems (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) use the constant temperature of the soil about 20 feet or so below the soil surface to dispel heat from the home when cooling is needed, and draw from the warmth of the earth to heat in colder months. In fact, many of these systems burn no fossil fuels for heat, emit no greenhouse gases and utilize only the amount of electricity required to run the fan, compressor and pump.

Soils certainly do support our building and infrastructure, but it may be more accurate to say soils are our buildings and infrastructure.

StrikeForce Initiative



for Rural Growth and Opportunity

Louisiana
Update

StrikeForce Visits Greater New Orleans Area

Submitted by: Dexter Sapp, Louisiana NRCS StrikeForce Coordinator

The Louisiana StrikeForce team was joined by local and national USDA personnel including the Assistant Secretary of Civil Rights on March 30 - 31, 2015, in the greater New Orleans area. NRCS, FSA and RD engaged in open discussions with area farmers about needs and opportunities.

Daniel Nguyen, Executive Director of the Mary Queen of Vietnam Communities Development Corporation (MQVN), summarized the following needs of the local farmers:

- Enhanced access to capital funding and grants for programmatic and expansion cost
- Language access resources - provided by cooperative - especially important to bridge the gap between markets and farmers in the form of

- collective marketing and distribution
- Insurance - crop, product and liability insurance
- Tax technical assistance
- Equipment
- StrikeForce inclusion regarding designation of communities

In the afternoon of the first day, the group participated in a tour of the VEGGI Farmers Cooperative Operation. VEGGI is a community member owned and operated farmer's cooperative. Based out of New Orleans East, VEGGI is comprised of local farmers and fisherfolk dedicated to providing the highest quality local produce and seafood to the Greater New Orleans area and beyond.

VEGGI was established to provide



sustainable economic opportunities in urban agriculture following the BP oil spill when many Vietnamese community members lost their jobs. Their produce is grown naturally without use of chemical pesticides, using both traditional in-ground farming as well as aquaponics.

Sandy Ha Nguyen, Executive Director of the Coastal Communities Consulting, Inc. (CCC) hosted the second day, which included a tour of lower Plaquemines Parish to view affected areas, rural communities and local businesses. Via Cambodian and Vietnamese interpreters, USDA representatives were able to introduce the various program to a packed house.

Since these meetings, USDA has been assisting targeted producers establish farm records and eligibility for Season High Tunnel structures. Additional assistance opportunities with crawfish ponds, microloans and solar energy conversion are being actively explored and addressed by USDA.

Helping People Help the Land

Saving the “Teddy Bear” in Louisiana

On the brink of extinction in 1992, the Louisiana black bear was added to the threatened and endangered species list. Affectionately named the “Teddy Bear” after President Theodore Roosevelt refused to shoot one on a south Mississippi hunting trip, the Louisiana black bear is one of 16 subspecies of American black bears.

At the time of listing, more than 80 percent of suitable Louisiana black bear habitat was lost. The bottomland hardwood forests of the Louisiana Delta had been cleared for row crop production; roads, homes and towns were built; and humans began encountering the shy, but curious Louisiana black bear more often. The habitat fragmentation, or isolation of suitable patches of hardwood bottoms, affected the bears’ ability to travel for food, to find mates or simply to relocate to a more desirable spot to live.

Sadly there were only three black bear breeding populations left in Louisiana and they were isolated from each other with perhaps as few as 200 bears left. With the vast majority of land in the critical Louisiana black bear habitat being privately owned, the fate of the “Teddy Bear” would lie in hands of private individuals committed to voluntary

protection and restoration of the historic bottomland hardwood ecosystem.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s (FWS) Louisiana Black Recovery Plan recognized the critical role USDA conservation programs would play in restoring, reconnecting and protecting the habitat, calling USDA NRCS a “major contributor to habitat restoration and protection via its WRP program.” In the 23 years since the listing of the Louisiana black bear, NRCS has worked with private landowners who have voluntarily enrolled and restored over 215,000 acres in wetland easements in the prime habitat areas for the bears. Add to that over 232,000 acres in the Conservation Reserve Program as well as additional habitat management activities by these landowners in the 14 parishes or counties, and nearly half a million acres have been restored and reconnected in 23 short years.

On May 20, 2015, the results of efforts made by numerous conservation groups to restore and reconnect this habitat, including USDA, were announced at the Louisiana’s Governor’s mansion. The primary habitat corridors have been reconnected, there are as many as 1,000 Louisiana black bears roaming the hardwood bottoms of the state and four breeding populations exist with 99% chance of persistence. And now the process has begun to remove the

Louisiana black bear from the threatened and endangered species list.

FWS Deputy Director Steve Guertin thanked the partners involved with the recovery efforts. “What we’re really talking about here today is the power of partnerships. The power of a shared vision for conservation,” he said. “The national wildlife refuge system has been an anchor to the larger effort, but we focused on increasing the ability of these animals to move across the landscape. The USDA NRCS did the lion’s share of habitat restoration and protection on private lands.”



Around the State

April 22

Kisatchie Quarter Launch:

On April 22, 2015, representatives from the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Mint officially introduced the new Kisatchie quarter to the public. This is the 27th quarter to be released in the America the Beautiful Quarters Program.

The U.S. Mint launched the program in 2010. Each year, five new quarter designs

will be launched, with one final design in 2021.

The Kisatchie National Forest spreads across seven parishes in Louisiana that total more than 604,000 acres of public lands. The Kisatchie National Forest was one of five national forests to be chosen for the quarter series. The other sites chosen are national parks and monuments.

Speakers included the Chief of the U.S. Forest Service, Tom Kidwell and B.B. Craig, Associate Director of the U.S. Mint’s department of Environment, Safety and Health. Attendees were able to purchase rolls of the uncirculated coins and those

under the age of 18 were given one quarter in a commemorative case.

The quarter features a wild turkey in flight over blue stem grass with a long leaf pine in the background.



Rolls of these coins can still be purchased at Red River Bank.



United States Department of Agriculture

Contact Our Offices

Visit our web site at:
www.la.nrcs.usda.gov

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	2259 Business Park Boulevard, Donaldsonville, LA 70346	(225) 473-7638, ext. 3
Assumption	Donaldsonville	Lower Delta SWCD	2259 Business Park Boulevard, 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	5417 Gerstner Memorial Drive, Lake Charles, LA 70601	(337) 474-1583, 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	5417 Gerstner Memorial Drive, Lake Charles, LA 70601	(337) 474-1583, 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	332 Lake Road, Mansfield, LA 71052	(318) 872-4949, ext. 3
East Baton Rouge	Denham Springs	Capital SWCD	907 Florida Boulevard, SW, Denham Springs, LA 70726	(225) 665-4253, 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	New Orleans	Crescent SWCD	1041 Rue La Cannes, Luling, LA 70070	(985) 331-9084
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	907 Florida Boulevard, SW, Denham Springs, LA 70726	(225) 665-4253, 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	New Orleans	Crescent SWCD	1041 Rue La Cannes, Luling, LA 70070	(985) 331-9084
Quachita	Monroe	D'Arbonne/Boeuf River SWCD	2410 Old Sterling Road, Suite B, Monroe, LA 71203-2668	(318) 343-4467, ext. 3
Plaquemines	New Orleans	Plaquemines SWCD	1041 Rue La Cannes, Luling, LA 70070	(985) 331-9084
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	New Orleans	Crescent SWCD	1041 Rue La Cannes, Luling, LA 70070	(985) 331-9084
St. Charles	New Orleans	Crescent SWCD	1041 Rue La Cannes, Luling, LA 70070	(985) 331-9084
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	2259 Business Park Boulevard, Donaldsonville, LA 70346	(225) 473-7638, ext. 3
St. John	New Orleans	Crescent SWCD	1041 Rue La Cannes, Luling, LA 70070	(985) 331-9084
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	501 Glory Road, 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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