

Trailblazer news

good for the land . . . good for the people

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Trailblazer RC&D CEO Ellzey Simmons conducting necessary Trailblazer business with Adam O'Neal of Origin Bank.

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Dear Friends,
Our thoughts and prayers are with everyone affected by the COVID-19 virus.

During this challenging time, Trailblazer RC&D has continued to move forward to address the concerns and needs of the people and communities of north Louisiana. We are excited to report new partnerships are in the works, future training opportunities are being planned, and a fresh new web presence is being developed.

We appreciate the outstanding support and firm leadership of Bob Brotherton and our board of directors. Trailblazer's board is a family—with many brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, and cousins—all pulling for the success of our communities.

We are grateful for the continued support of our partners and sponsors. Your belief and commitment to Trailblazer is a testament to your commitment to the people and communities of Louisiana.

We are thankful for our staff—Joani, April, and Holly—and our advisory committee for all they do to support Trailblazer and make sure the wheels keep turning.

Trailblazer is coming back, and we are going to be stronger and better than ever! We hope you join us as we move forward.

Ellzey Simmons
Chief Executive Officer
Trailblazer RC&D

To Our Special Friend
**Happy
Birthday!**
Don Parkman

¹⁷“You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you, Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the Lord will be with you.”

2 Chronicles 20:17
New International
Version (NIV)



2020 Survey of Louisiana Waterfowl Hunters Sent Out April 9 Responses Due by May 15


The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) is conducting an email survey of Louisiana waterfowl hunters ages 16 and older to gather information following the 2019-20 hunting season. The survey was emailed on April 9 to Harvest Information Program (HIP) registered hunters with a valid email address on file with LDWF.

The survey is being administered by the LSU Public Policy Research Lab in conjunction with the LSU School of Renewable Natural Resources.

Participation in the survey is voluntary but it will provide hunter-preference data to inform management decisions affecting Louisiana's waterfowl habitat and hunting regulations.

"This 2020 survey is an extension of a human-dimensions research program started in 2005 in cooperation with LSU and it corresponds to our opportunity to change our zones/splits option every five years," said Larry Reynolds, LDWF Waterfowl Program Manager.

This year's survey includes 30 questions covering specific options for Louisiana's geographic waterfowl-hunting zones, as well as questions on hunter activity, satisfaction, demographics and regulatory preferences. All responses will be confidential.



All hunters receiving the survey are asked to complete the survey no later than May 15, 2020—and they are being asked not to forward the survey to anyone else to complete.

For more information, contact Larry Reynolds at 225-765-0456 or lreynolds@wlf.la.gov.

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Opportunities Through Trailblazer

- ✓ Advocacy for USDA program participation
- ✓ Effective communication with USDA agencies
- ✓ Info on USDA financial/technical assistance

Contact Trailblazer to Arrange a Meeting

Call (318) 255-3554 or email ceo@trailblazer.org

Quail Forever



Quail Forever is dedicated to the conservation of quail, pheasants and other wildlife through habitat improvements, public awareness, education, and land management policies and programs.

quailforever.org



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Quail Forever, Inc., have partnered together to bring assistance to landowners seeking to improve wildlife habitat on their property. Currently, there are two wildlife biologists in north Louisiana, equipped to help landowners enroll in Farm Bill incentive programs and the Acres for Wildlife cost share program; in addition to developing and implementing plans that will benefit a wide variety of wildlife species. Wildlife biologist Sabrina Claeys serves landowners in Caddo, DeSoto, Sabine, Red River, Natchitoches, Bienville, Claiborne, Webster, Grant, and Bossier Parishes. Coordinating wildlife biologist Ashley Waguespack serves East Carroll, West Carroll, Morehouse, Union, Lincoln, Jackson, Winn, Caldwell, Ouachita, Richland, Madison, Franklin, and Tensas Parishes.

Sabrina Claeys is originally from Iowa, where she discovered her passion for wildlife, hunting, and all things outdoors. She followed her passion to study wildlife at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, where she received her Bachelor of Science in Wildlife Ecology Research and Management in 2019. In January 2020, a few weeks after graduation, she joined the Quail Forever team. In addition to her education, she has a wide background of experience in habitat management. Sabrina enjoys hunting, hiking, kayaking, and photography. Sabrina is currently stationed in the USDA Service Center in Minden. For any questions or concerns, she can be reached at (563) 221-1009 or sclaeys@quailforever.org. Her office hours are from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Ashley Waguespack joined the Quail Forever team in June 2019. She has been a great team member and has made fantastic contributions to wildlife conservation in Louisiana. Unfortunately, she is leaving the Quail Forever team for a new opportunity. She will be missed! If you are located in one of Ashley's parishes, contact Sabrina at the USDA Service Center in Minden with questions, concerns, or requests for assistance. Quail Forever will be hiring a new person for Ashley's position in the next few months.



Sabrina Claeys
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This Dial 811 message is brought to you by Enable Midstream Partners. Enable Midstream Partners is a publicly traded master limited partnership that owns, operates, and develops strategically located natural gas and crude oil infrastructure assets serving major producing basins and markets.

CONSERVATION CONVERSATION

Why should **SOIL HEALTH** be important to you?

HEALTHY SOIL

- **Reduces erosion**
- **Maximizes water infiltration**
- **Improves nutrient cycling**
- **SAVES MONEY on inputs**
- **Improves resiliency of your working land**

Are you interested in learning how to improve your soil health and ensure your operation is productive today and sustainable for future generations? Contact your local office of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. They will help you develop a management plan that supports your goals.



Four Principles of Soil Health

- 1. Minimize Disturbance:** From hooves to plows, soil is disturbed in many ways. While some disturbance is unavoidable, minimizing disturbance events across your operation is an important step to building healthier soils.
- 2. Maximize Soil Cover:** As a general rule, soil should be covered whenever possible. You can plant cover crops in both grazing and cropland operations to accomplish this goal. On grazing lands, you can also practice rotational grazing to maximize perennial grasses and forbs.
- 3. Maximize Biodiversity:** Increasing diversity across your operation can break disease cycles, stimulate plant growth, and provide habitats for pollinators and organisms living in your soil. Healthy systems are diverse systems.
- 4. Maximize Presence of Living Roots:** Living roots reduce soil erosion and provide food for organisms like earthworms and microbes that cycle the nutrients your plants need.

From: United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
Farmers.gov/conservesoil-health, viewed on 4/27/2020.

Soil Health Resources

USDA NRCS

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/soils/health/>

USDA Farmers.gov

<https://www.farmers.gov/conservesoil-health>

Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE)

<https://www.sare.org/Learning-Center/What-is-Soil-Health>

National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Soil Health Resources

<https://www.nacdn.org/about-nacd/what-we-do/soil/>

USDA Service Centers Are Open By Phone Appointment Only

Due to current COVID-19 conditions:

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) field offices in Louisiana are open by phone appointment only until further notice, and NRCS staff are available to continue to provide one-on-one, customer-specific advice to producers to help them meet their unique conservation and business goals.

All USDA Service Centers, including those with NRCS field offices, are not currently accessible to customers in person.

Online services are available to customers with an eAuth account, which provides access to the farmers.gov offsite link where producers can view USDA farm loan information and payments and view and track certain USDA program applications and payments. Customers who do not already have an eAuth account can enroll at farmers.gov/sign-in. Online NRCS services are available to customers through the Conservation Client Gateway link which can be found at www.nrcs.usda.gov. Customers can track payments, report completed practices, request conservation assistance and electronically sign documents.

For the most current updates on available services and Service Center contact information, visit farmers.gov/coronavirus.

NRCS staff are working with customers through phone, mail and online communications, and field work continues with appropriate social distancing to help producers with conservation planning and financial assistance through Farm Bill programs.

NRCS Contacts

Bienville Parish: (318) 377-3950, ext. 3	Jackson/Lincoln Parishes: (318) 255-3136, ext. 3
Bossier Parish: (318) 872-4949	Union Parish: (318) 368-8021
Claiborne/Webster Parishes: (318) 377-3950, ext. 3	Winn Parish: (318) 357-8366, ext. 3

Special Thanks to

Chad Kacir - State Conservationist
Amy Robertson - State Public Affairs Specialist
and the
USDA Natural Resources
Conservation Service Team
**for their continued support of
Trailblazer RC&D!**

LAGNIAPPE
a little something extra

“When you come to the end of your rope,
tie a knot and hang on.”

Franklin D. Roosevelt

The outbreak of COVID-19 has caused tremendous stress for everyone.

In response to COVID-19 crisis, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) developed a website that offers tips and information on how to cope with COVID-19 stress. Individuals, parents, health care providers, people coming out of quarantine, first responders, and others can benefit from the information on the CDC website. **Check out the website at: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html.**

For more information, go to:
www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html

If you need help or know someone who does; if you are feeling overwhelmed with emotions like sadness, depression or anxiety; or if you feel like you want to harm yourself or others:

- Call 911
- Visit the Disaster Distress Helpline at www.samhsa.gov/disaster-preparedness; call 1-800-985-5990; or text TalkWithUs to 66746
- Visit the National Domestic Violence Hotline at www.thehotline.org; or call 1-800-799-7233 and TTY 1-800-787-3224

SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

Trailblazer partners with a diverse group of organizations to offer quality training and outstanding events. These groups recognize the value of working with Trailblazer to encourage conservation of our natural resources, help communities address areas of concern, and achieve organizational objectives. As a result of their partnership and sponsorship of Trailblazer activities, communities across northern Louisiana have access to quality training offered by well-known experts who addressed issues identified by communities at no cost to participants.

Thank you for staying with us through these difficult times!

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Stay Safe - Stay Healthy

Take a break from watching, reading, or listening to news stories.

Take a break from social media.

Take care of your body.

Do some activities you enjoy.

Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals.

Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.

Follow us on Facebook TrailblazerRCD