

# Trailblazer news

good for the land . . . good for the people

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Dear Friends,

As this newsletter is going to press, thousands of Louisiana's citizens are clearing debris, struggling with power outages, and putting their lives back together after Hurricane Laura. Friends and neighbors—we are thinking of you and praying for a quick recovery.

In response to partner concerns regarding COVID-19, Trailblazer RC&D momentarily paused our August workshop schedule. In September, we are cautiously moving forward with workshops with emphasis on the health and safety of our participants and presenters. Participants are asked to wear face masks, and hand sanitizer will be available at all workshops. Please take a moment to check out our schedule of workshops in this newsletter. I think you will find something of interest!

Many thanks to the partners and sponsors who work with us to bring workshops and events to you! We appreciate your continued support!

*Ellzey*

Volume 10  
Issue 9  
September 2020

## All Gave Some – Some Gave All Village of Athens Honors Veterans With Monument and Flagpole



On August 29, 2020, a veterans memorial monument and flagpole were unveiled at a ceremony hosted by the Village of Athens at the community Veteran's Therapy Health Garden and Trail. This memorial recognizes and honors the brave men and women from Athens who served in the nation's armed forces.

Special guests and speakers included Dr. Ronald Key of Woody's Veteran Home; Anthony "Tony" Jaber, a World War II hero; Sherri Harris, an Army veteran; and Brother John Markley, an Air Force veteran.

Completed in 2018, the Athens Veteran's Therapy Health Garden and Trail was designed and constructed through a partnership among the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Trailblazer RC&D, Claiborne Parish Police Jury, and Village of Athens.

1"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea."

Psalms 46:1-2  
New International Version (NIV)

# Workshop Update

## September Workshops

Join us for these free workshops!

**FREE REGISTRATION!**

**TO REGISTER** or for more information:  
Call or text (318) 237-8350 and provide your name and contact information and the name of the workshop.

Date	Workshop	Location	Time	Topics
9/15/2020	<b>Fall Wildlife Food Plot</b>	Union Parish Police Jury Annex 303 East Water Street Farmerville, Louisiana	6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.	Improving Wildlife Habitat Site Selection and Development Selecting Forage Crops Soil Fertility Weed Management Technical/financial help
9/18/2020	<b>Farm Pond Construction &amp; Management</b>	Lincoln Parish Public Safety Complex 161 Road Camp Road Ruston, Louisiana	6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.	Construction basics Vegetative management Water quality Nutrient issues Pond stocking Technical/financial help
9/24/2020	<b>Fall Wildlife Food Plot</b>	Dr. Charles H. Garrett Community Center 182 Industrial Drive Jonesboro, Louisiana	6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.	Improving Wildlife Habitat Site Selection and Development Selecting Forage Crops Soil Fertility Weed Management Technical/financial help
9/25/2020	<b>Farm Pond Construction &amp; Management</b>	Red Oak Lake 1495 Potter Road Houghton, Louisiana	9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.	Construction basics Vegetative management Water quality Nutrient issues Pond stocking Technical/financial help
9/29/2020	<b>Forestry 101 for Landowners</b>	Lincoln Parish Public Safety Complex 161 Road Camp Road Ruston, Louisiana	6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.	Forest Management Marketing Forestry Consultants Tax Considerations Timber Sales and Contacts Wildlife Considerations Best Management Practices (BMPs) Technical and financial help

**Free registration for these workshops is made possible by the support of our sponsors and partners.**

See page 8 for a list of sponsors and partners.

**If you need an accommodation to participate in a Trailblazer RC&D workshop, please contact Trailblazer at (318) 237-8350 at least 3 weeks in advance of the workshop.**

## JOIN THE TRAILBLAZER TEAM

Communities, Organizations, Corporations, Individuals

**Check Out These Opportunities With Trailblazer!**

- ✓ Increase Your Community Involvement
- ✓ Increase Your Brand Visibility
- ✓ Attract New Customers

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

**Become a Trailblazer Sponsor Today!**

**Contact Trailblazer to Arrange a Meeting**

Call (318) 237-8350 or email [ceo@trailblazer.org](mailto:ceo@trailblazer.org)



# USDA News

## USDA Updates Conservation Provisions for Highly Erodible Land and Wetlands

On August 8, 2020, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) published its final rule on determining whether land is considered highly erodible or a wetland, integrating input from the public and making updates in accordance with the 2018 Farm Bill. This final rule follows a focused effort by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to improve consistency and use of science in making determinations.

"Feedback is a very important resource, and we appreciate all of those who help us improve how determinations are made," said NRCS Acting Chief Kevin Norton. "Highly erodible land and wetland determinations are the gateway to USDA programs, and we strive to

provide the highest quality technical assistance to inform decision-making by farmers and ranchers."

To be eligible for most USDA programs, producers must be conservation compliant with the highly erodible land and wetland provisions. These provisions aim to reduce soil loss on erosion-prone lands and to protect wetlands for the multiple benefits they provide.

The final rule was published in the Federal Register on August 28, 2020. This follows an interim final rule published December 7, 2018. This final rule confirms most of the changes made by the December 2018 interim final rule and makes these additional updates:

1. Adding the requirement of the 2018 Farm Bill that USDA will make a reasonable effort to include the affected person in an on-site investigation conducted prior to making a wetland violation technical determination.

2. Further clarifying how wetland hydrology is identified for farmed wetlands and farmed wetland pasture.
3. Adding clarification to the consideration of best-drained condition for wetland hydrology in keeping with the definition of prior converted cropland.
4. Relocating the provision that wetland determinations can be done on a tract, field, or sub-field basis in order to improve clarity.

NRCS has recently updated its conservation compliance webpages, adding highly erodible land and wetland determination resources for agricultural producers by state.

Learn more about conservation compliance on the NRCS website.

[www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov)

## Kevin Norton Now Serving as Acting Chief of NRCS

Yes . . . that is Louisiana's Kevin Norton who is now Acting Chief of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in Washington, DC! This appointment as acting Chief is confirmation of what people in Louisiana already know about Kevin . . . he is totally committed to conservation of our nation's natural resources. All of his hard work and dedication to the mission of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service has led to this moment in time and our nation is better for it.

Congratulations and best wishes to Kevin Norton for a very successful appointment as Acting Chief of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service!



**Attend a Trailblazer RC&D workshop to learn about conservation practices that match the goals you have for your land.**

## Videos Highlight Conservation Practices

Have you ever wanted to see how a conservation practice, such as prescribed grazing, works? NRCS now offers a new series of short videos online that highlight common conservation practices being implemented around the country.

Check out these videos at:

[farmers.gov/conserve/ConservationAtWork](http://farmers.gov/conserve/ConservationAtWork)

- Brush Management
- Cover Crops
- Forest Stand Improvement
- Grade Stabilization Structure
- Grassed Waterway
- High Tunnel
- Microirrigation
- No Till
- Nutrient Management
- Prescribed Grazing
- Sprinkler Systems
- Trails and Walkways
- Waste Storage Facility
- Water Sediment Control Basin
- Wetland Restoration



## 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](https://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](https://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](https://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.

### Local NRCS Contacts

**Bienville Parish:**  
**(318) 377-3950, ext. 3**

**Bossier Parish:**  
**(318) 872-4949**

**Claiborne/Webster Parishes:**  
**(318) 377-3950, ext. 3**

**Jackson/Lincoln Parishes:**  
**(318) 255-3136, ext. 3**

**Union Parish:**  
**(318) 368-8021**

**Winn Parish:**  
**(318) 357-8366, ext. 3**

### New USDA Survey to Measure Areas for Improvement

In August, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced a new annual survey of farmers, ranchers and private forestland owners. The survey will help USDA understand what it is doing well and where improvements are needed, specifically at the Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Risk Management Agency (RMA).

A selection of 28,000 producers will receive the survey over the next few weeks, but all farmers are encouraged to take the survey at [farmers.gov/survey](https://farmers.gov/survey).

The survey consists of 20 questions and takes approximately 10 minutes to complete. Responses are confidential, and individual responses will be aggregated. The survey will be open for at least six weeks and will be closed once USDA receives a 30% response rate. Learn more and take the survey at [www.farmers.gov/survey](https://www.farmers.gov/survey).

Call or text Trailblazer RC&D at (318) 237-8350 if you have a concern regarding your land or its resources and you are not sure which office to call. We will put you in touch with the right people to address your concerns.





# CONSERVATION CONVERSATION

## Sustainable Forestry

Building a sustainable forestry operation requires careful planning and consideration through every life phase of your operation—**site preparation, reforestation, management, harvesting**. It is critical to enlist the help of a professional forester to ensure success, as well as seek assistance from agencies such as the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). NRCS will work with you and technical service providers to develop a forest management plan and implement conservation practices outlined in your plan. In addition, NRCS may be able to provide financial assistance through Farm Bill programs.



### There are many considerations in managing forest land.

The Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972, Public Law 92-500 (and as amended by Section 319, 1986), require the management of non-point sources of water pollution from sources including forest related activities. A private-public partnership of the Louisiana Forestry Association, the Louisiana Department of Environment Quality, and the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry developed a guidebook of non-regulatory forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs) to help guide forest landowners, managers, and timber harvesters toward voluntary compliance with this act.

### SITE PREP

Proper site preparation is essential for planting success. Two major concerns associated with site preparation include soil erosion and sedimentation from runoff.

### Contributing factors to erosion include:

- Percent of the area with exposed soil
- Type of soil
- Degree of slope
- Ground cover

### Techniques for site preparation should be based on

- Soils
- Slope
- Condition of the Site
- Natural vegetation
- Crop tree species
- Cost

### Recommended BMPs for Site Preparation and Reforestation

- ▶ Clearly define boundaries of all SMZs before beginning site preparation activities.
- ▶ Ripping, shearing, windrowing, and mechanical planting should follow the contours of the land to reduce potential erosion hazard.
- ▶ On steep slopes or highly erosive soils avoid intensive site preparation. Use herbicides, hand tools, and/or prescribed fire, but be aware that extremely hot fires may significantly increase erosion potential.
- ▶ Hand plant steep, erodible sites as soon as possible after final harvesting and site preparation.
- ▶ Where accelerated erosion is likely, use methods which leave logging debris and other natural forest litter scattered over the site.
- ▶ Minimize moving soil into windrows and piles.
- ▶ The SMZ along streams should be protected by planning the use of equipment so as to minimize disturbance of these areas. Stream crossing construction should minimize disturbance of the area in which the crossing is being constructed. Such crossings should be restored promptly.
- ▶ Equipment operators should be trained, and appropriate planning done so that soil disturbance, compaction, and displacement is minimized.
- ▶ In order to minimize erosion, firebreaks should have water control structures properly installed and maintained.
- ▶ Site preparation activities should not enter SMZs and cross stream channels.
- ▶ Provide water outlets on bedded or furrowed areas at locations that will minimize movement of soil. Discharge water onto a vegetative surface.

From: Recommended Forestry Best Management Practices for Louisiana, published by the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Louisiana Forestry Association, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, The Louisiana Logging Council, <https://www.ldaf.state.la.us/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/BMP.pdf>, viewed 8/28/2020.



## Upcoming Training Opportunity for Forest Landowners Forestry 101 for Landowners Workshop

**September 29, 2020 - Ruston, LA  
FREE Registration!**

A free Forestry 101 for Landowners Workshop will be offered on September 29, 2020, at the Lincoln Parish Public Safety Complex in Ruston, Louisiana, to provide information to forest landowners on how to make their woodlands healthier, more profitable, and sustainable. Featured topics include forest management, marketing, forestry consultants, tax considerations, timber sales and contracts, wildlife considerations, best management practices, USDA assistance, web soil survey, and more.

The workshop begins at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, September 29, 2020, at the Lincoln Parish Public Safety Complex, 161 Road Camp Road, Ruston, Louisiana, and concludes at 2:00 p.m. Lunch will be provided, so it is important to pre-register for this workshop.

**To pre-register or for more information on the workshop, call or text (318) 237-8350 and leave your name and contact information plus the name of the workshop.**

Free registration for this workshop is made possible by the support of these partners and sponsors: ENABLE Midstream Partners; Mudd & Holland Consulting Foresters, LLC; Allstate Land & Timber Co., Inc.; Burnham Construction; Drax Biomass; Origin Bank; Lincoln Parish Police Jury; USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service; and Trailblazer RC&D.



July 19, 2019, Forestry 101 Workshop  
Excellent Reviews - Lots of Attendees!

**Don't Miss Your Opportunity to Attend  
the September 29, 2020,  
Workshop in Ruston!**

Trailblazer RC&D

Answers for Page 7

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David J. Moorhead, University of Georgia, Bugwood.org



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# LAGNIAPPE

a little something extra **Test Your Forestry Knowledge . . .**

## Matching Forestry Terminology

- a. Acre
- b. Annual Ring
- c. Best Management Practices (BMPs)
- d. Biltmore Stick
- e. Board Foot
- f. Buffer Strip
- g. Cambium
- h. Clinometer
- i. Conservation
- j. Cord
- k. Forest Stewardship Plan
- l. Multiple-Use Management
- m. Phloem
- n. Sawtimber
- o. Streamside Management Zone (SMZ)
- p. Tree Caliper
- q. Xylem
- r. Pulpwood
- s. Reforestation
- t. Increment Borer

Match the word with the definition by placing the letter next to the word in the blank next to the number.



- \_\_\_ 1. A hollow auger-like tool with a screw bit used to remove core samples from trees.
- \_\_\_ 2. A metal or wooden device consisting of an arm and two prongs, one of which is free to slide along a graduated scale on the arm to measure tree diameter.
- \_\_\_ 3. A narrow zone or strip of land, trees or vegetation bordering an area.
- \_\_\_ 4. A standard unit of measure equivalent to 128 cubic feet of round or split wood.
- \_\_\_ 5. Planned management and wise use of natural resources for present and future generations.
- \_\_\_ 6. A written document listing activities that enhance or improve forest resources (wildlife, timber, soil, water, recreation and aesthetics) on private land.
- \_\_\_ 7. An area adjacent to a stream in which vegetation is maintained or managed to protect water quality.
- \_\_\_ 8. An area of land measuring 43,560 square feet.
- \_\_\_ 9. An instrument used to determine the tree's height or percent grade on a slope.
- \_\_\_ 10. A unit of measure equal to a board that is 1 inch thick, 12 inches long and 12 inches wide, or 144 cubic inches.
- \_\_\_ 11. Procedures that reduce erosion and prevent or control water pollution.
- \_\_\_ 12. Reestablishing a forest by planting or seeding an area from which forest vegetation has been removed.
- \_\_\_ 13. Represents one year of growth in a tree.
- \_\_\_ 14. The management of land or forest for more than one purpose, such as wood production, water quality, wildlife, recreation, aesthetics and clean air.
- \_\_\_ 15. The narrow band of cells that is responsible for the tree's growth in circumference.
- \_\_\_ 16. The part of a tree that carries sap from the leaves to the rest of the tree. Also called inner bark.
- \_\_\_ 17. The part of a tree that transports water and nutrients up from the roots to the leaves.
- \_\_\_ 18. Tool used to measure tree trunk diameter at breast height.
- \_\_\_ 19. Wood of large enough size to be used to produce lumber for construction and furniture.
- \_\_\_ 20. Wood used in the manufacture of paper, fiberboard or other wood fiber products.

**Did you have trouble with two or more of these definitions? Perhaps it is time for a refresher workshop!**

**Register for Trailblazer's  
September 29, 2020  
Forestry 101 for Landowners  
in Ruston, Louisiana  
Call or text (318) 237-8350 to register for this  
FREE workshop.**



See page 6 for answers.

# 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.



*Friends of Trailblazer*

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

LSU AgCenter

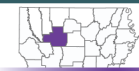
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Louisiana Forestry Association



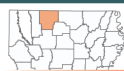
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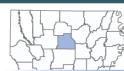
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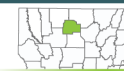
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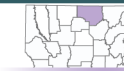
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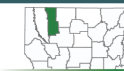
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