

# Trailblazer news

good for the land . . . good for the people

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## Coming in 2021

Workshops featuring  
Soil Health  
Wildlife Habitat  
Pollinators  
Farm Ponds  
Forestry  
Estate Planning  
USDA Opportunities  
and much more!



**“<sup>10</sup>When they saw the star, they were overjoyed.”**

Matthew 2:10, NIV

*Trailblazer wishes you and your family  
a Joyous Christmas and a Happy New Year!*

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your continued support in 2020! As this year comes to a close, we are looking forward with excitement to next year's possibilities. We hope you will join us in our journey through 2021 by attending workshops, subscribing to our YouTube channel and watching our videos, giving us feedback on what type of things you would like to see offered by Trailblazer, and possibly becoming a Trailblazer sponsor. We need your help and support to continue our mission.

May God bless you and your family  
during the coming year.

*Ellzey*



Jake and Ellzey Simmons,  
November 2020 Hunt

Volume 10  
Issue 12  
December 2020

<sup>8</sup> He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

<sup>9</sup> After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup> When they saw the star, they were overjoyed.

Matthew 2:8-10  
New International  
Version  
(NIV)



## Feral Hog Management Workshop

Bastrop, Louisiana  
November 10, 2020

A fantastic BBQ dinner provided by the Morehouse Soil and Water Conservation District kicked off the November 10 Feral Hog Management Workshop in Bastrop. After opening remarks from Morehouse SWCD Supervisor Chris Carter and Trailblazer CEO Ellzey Simmons, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) District Conservationist Scott Breedlove provided information on technical and financial assistance available through NRCS. The featured speaker for the workshop was Walter Cotton, Supervisory Wildlife Biologist in the Monroe, Louisiana, district office with USDA/APHIS/Wildlife Services. Participants said they enjoyed the clear, organized way Cotton presented the information and the depth of his knowledge.

Five lucky participants went home with door prizes provided by local sponsors. COVID precautions were taken, and attendees were offered hand sanitizer and face masks.

Special thanks go to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Morehouse Soil and Water Conservation District, LSU AgCenter, Canfor Southern Pine, Mudd & Holland Consulting Foresters LLC, Enable Midstream Partnership, Walter Cotton-USDA APHIS, and other local sponsors for making this free workshop possible!



## Feral Hogs

From:  
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries  
<https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/page/feral-hogs>  
viewed 11/30/2020

Statisticians have estimated that due to the feral hog's high reproductive rate, 70 to 75% of the population must be harvested to control the population.

In Louisiana, hunter harvest numbers are less than half that so populations are growing. Feral hogs are found in all 64 parishes in Louisiana, and Louisiana's feral hog population is currently estimated at 700,000.

Feral hog control methods used in Louisiana include recreational hunting and trapping as well as daylight and nighttime shooting by private landowners and aerial gunning via helicopter for nuisance wildlife control.

If you hold a valid Louisiana Basic Hunting License, you may take feral hogs (where legal) year-round during legal daylight shooting hours. See current regulations for more information, including taking feral hogs on wildlife management areas and other public lands. Go to:  
<https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/page/seasons-and-regulations>

According to a mail survey of deer hunters in Louisiana, 213,300 feral hogs were harvested during the 2019/2020 hunting season. These numbers do not include agency harvest of hogs or those trapped or shot by farmers or professional trappers.

For more information, contact Jim LaCour of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries at [jlacour@wlf.la.gov](mailto:jlacour@wlf.la.gov) or (225) 765-0823.



# Because of You



**Paul D. Spillers**  
 Senior Counsel  
 Theus, Grisham, Davis & Leigh, LLC  
 3139 Mercedes Drive  
 Monroe, Louisiana 71201

Estate Planning Workshop  
 November 17, 2020, Minden

**Because of Paul Spillers**, people throughout north Louisiana have learned about the value of estate planning, farm and timber tax laws, mineral rights, and much more. Your educational presentations always cover a tremendous amount of information and offer a multitude of practical ideas that are beneficial to most people.

**Thank you!** Your partnership with Trailblazer RC&D has given people from all walks of life access to information that will help them in many aspects of their life. We appreciate your loyal partnership and your dedication to the Louisiana's people and communities.

Paul Spillers is Board Certified by the Louisiana Board of Legal Specialization as a specialist in tax law and as a specialist in estate planning and estate administration. He earned his LLM tax degree from Southern Methodist University and his Juris Doctorate from Indiana University. He has 40 years of experience in tax litigation and tax planning and is highly qualified to provide advice and handle nearly any matter of small business tax planning, large corporate tax planning, complex individual tax planning, and assisting with wills, trusts, successions, and estate planning. He has represented timber owners and mineral interest owners, large and small, for over 40 years. He has developed expertise in all areas of acquisition, ownership and management.

Paul Spiller's educational presentations are not legal advice. The presentations are intended to provide information to participants to use in consultation with their own financial advisors.



## Estate Planning Workshop

Minden, Louisiana - November 17, 2020

On November 17, Trailblazer hosted an estate planning workshop featuring Attorney Paul Spillers. All attendees agreed Spillers is a great speaker, and the information he presented was very valuable to them. They particularly appreciated the real-life situations covered and the time Spillers spent in discussions with the audience.

Trailblazer CEO Ellzey Simmons offered information to participants on USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) technical and financial assistance. He also provided an opportunity for participants to request assistance from NRCS.

Three lucky participants went home from the workshop with cash door prizes provided by Trailblazer partners and sponsors!

COVID precautions were taken, and attendees were offered hand sanitizer and face masks.



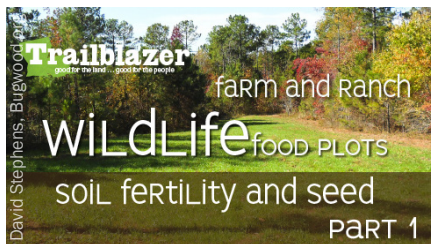
Estate Planning Workshop  
 November 17, 2020, Minden

Special thanks go to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Webster Parish Police Jury, Canfor Southern Pine, Mudd & Holland Consulting Foresters LLC, Enable Midstream Partnership, Attorney Paul Spillers, and other local sponsors for making this free workshop possible!





Check out these featured videos on Trailblazer's YouTube channel:



**Go to:**  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGghA8uiafntp92cYXWI5nw>  
**Or search**  
 "Trailblazer YouTube" on your web browser.



**Veterans Festival**  
Athens, Louisiana  
November 21, 2020

A celebration honoring area veterans of the armed forces was hosted by the Village of Athens on November 21 in their Veteran's Therapy Health Garden and Trail. Trailblazer participated in the event and provided information on Trailblazer activities and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service technical and financial assistance opportunities.



The garden and trail was completed in 2018 through a partnership among the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Trailblazer RC&D, Claiborne Parish Police Jury, and Village of Athens.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov). USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.



# CONSERVATION CONVERSATION

## USDA Announces Updated Conservation Practice Standards

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has completed and published updates to its set of **National Conservation Practice Standards**, which include 58 standards that have been updated or revised since August. The 2018 Farm Bill required USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to review all 169 of its national conservation practices to seek opportunities to increase flexibility and incorporate new technologies.

NRCS's **National Conservation Practice Standards** provides guidelines for planning, designing, installing, operating, and maintaining conservation practices. The 58 revised standards cover a wide range of practices, including irrigation water management, heavy use area protection, and composting facilities. During the review process, NRCS is adding two new conservation practices dealing with wastewater treatment and wildlife habitat planning, along with maintaining an additional 18 interim conservation practice

standards that are being tested to establish and document natural resource benefits.

These updated practices include changes in technology and add criteria to address emerging concerns such as soil health, water conservation, drought tolerance, and resiliency. They contribute to the USDA Agriculture Innovation Agenda's goal of reducing the environmental footprint of U.S. agriculture in half by 2050. Earlier this year, Secretary Perdue announced the department-wide initiative to align resources, programs, and research to position American agriculture to better meet future global demands.

For more information on the National Conservation Practice Standards, visit [nrcs.usda.gov](http://nrcs.usda.gov) or contact your local NRCS field office. To learn about the benefits of conservation practices directly from the farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners applying them, check out the Conservation at Work video series on the NRCS website.

"NRCS is committed to efficiently and effectively implementing the Farm Bill and delivering on our promise to America's farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners," NRCS Acting Chief Kevin Norton said. "These practices are the building blocks of conservation, and they are science based and site specific. We took a hard look at our existing practices on the books, looking for opportunities to improve flexibility and integrate technology."

Find them here: [efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov](http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov)



**Section IV of the Field Office Technical Guide contains Conservation Practice Standards that define each practice and where it applies.**

**Practice specifications are detailed requirements for installing each practice in each state.**

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

## 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,

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 USDA Service Centers Directory

Across the nation, USDA Service Centers provide access to the services of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, and Rural Development. To make it easy to locate a service center near you, USDA offers an online Service Center Locator.

With a very user-friendly click through map, this website provides the address and contact information for all USDA Service Centers.

**Check the USDA Service Center Directory out at:**  
[www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/contact/local](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/contact/local)

## COVID PRECAUTIONS

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](http://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](http://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](http://farmers.gov/coronavirus).

## 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**

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.

## 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

**Become a Trailblazer Sponsor Today!**

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

**Contact Trailblazer to Arrange a Meeting**

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

Trailblazer is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



# LAGNIAPPE

a little something extra

## Holiday Gift Giving Tips for 2020



This year may be financially different from last year for you or other family members due to COVID closures. **Get organized, make a budget, and stick to it.**

The National Retail Foundation launched a **“Shop safe, shop early”** ad campaign this year to encourage holiday shoppers to shop earlier to avoid overcrowding in stores.

A lot of people are doing their **holiday shopping online** this year to avoid crowds in stores. As a result, shipping companies will be overwhelmed with packages. Shop early to allow enough time for gifts to arrive on time.

**Shop local.** Small, locally owned businesses in your community have taken terrible hits from COVID closures. Keep your holiday dollars in your community by supporting small businesses. Find out if your favorite local stores have an online presence.

**Instead of giving gifts, send donations to non-profit organizations** that support your local community. **Trailblazer RC&D** offers you a great opportunity to promote conservation and good stewardship through your donation on behalf of a special family member.

**Spread some joy.** Tell people how much they mean to you. Drop off some cookies or pizza at your local fire department or police station. Give an unexpected compliment to someone every day.

Check out the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for holiday celebrations and small gatherings to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 at [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html)

## 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.



**MUDD & HOLLAND**  
CONSULTING FORESTERS, LLC  
Tim Holland (318) 286-2802



**ENABLE**™  
MIDSTREAM PARTNERS



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service



Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



SOUTHERN PINE



*Friends of Trailblazer*

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

LSU AgCenter

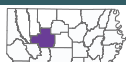
Claiborne Parish Library

Louisiana Forestry Association

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pspillers@theuslaw.com (318) 388-0100  
LAW OFFICES  
THEUS, GRISHAM, DAVIS & LEIGH  
MONROE, LOUISIANA

**MOREHOUSE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

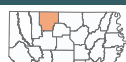
**BUDDY BURNHAM**  
(318) 548-0363  
BURNHAM CONSTRUCTION INC.  
3490 Highway 67  
Dubach, Louisiana 71235



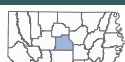
BIENVILLE PARISH POLICE JURY



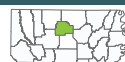
BOSSIER PARISH POLICE JURY



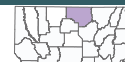
CLAIBORNE PARISH POLICE JURY



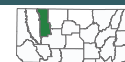
JACKSON PARISH POLICE JURY



LINCOLN PARISH POLICE JURY



UNION PARISH POLICE JURY



WEBSTER PARISH POLICE JURY

**Count me in!**

Name

Street Address

City State Zip

Check level of sponsorship:

- Gift - \$25 - \$299  
Amount: \_\_\_\_\_
- Event Sponsor - \$300
- Vlog Sponsor - \$400
- Silver Sponsor - \$1,000 up to \$1,999  
Amount: \_\_\_\_\_
- Gold Sponsor - \$2,000 up to \$15,000  
Amount: \_\_\_\_\_
- Platinum Sponsor - \$15,000 or more  
Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

**PICK A TAG**  
AND JOIN THE  
TRAILBLAZER TEAM!

Complete the  
"Count me in!" box,  
and return this page  
with your donation to:

Trailblazer RC&D  
302 Reynolds Drive  
Ruston, Louisiana 71270

**THANK YOU FOR JOINING  
OUR TEAM!**



**WE NEED YOUR HELP TO PROMOTE STEWARDSHIP OF THE LAND**

Your help will encourage conservation of our natural resources, help communities address areas of concern, and achieve conservation objectives of your organization.



302 REYNOLDS DRIVE  
RUSTON, LOUISIANA 71270  
(318) 255-3554  
ceo@trailblazer.org

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

This Dial 811 message is brought to you by Enable Midstream Partners.

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