

# Trailblazer news

good for the land . . . good for the people

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Volume 11 • Issue 2 • February 2021



USDA NRCS Agronomist Steve Nipper demonstrating the rainfall simulator at the January 26, 2021, Soil Health Field Day in Caldwell Parish.

Dear Friends,  
As we move into 2021, we continue to fight the COVID battle. Our partners, sponsors, friends, and family are vigilant in addressing health guidelines and working to ensure the safety of workshop and field day participants. Even though all precautions are being taken, many still fear public meetings and gatherings. People are afraid to attend, and sponsors are concerned about hosting events. Out of respect for these concerns, workshops that were scheduled for February have been postponed.

We are working with our partners, sponsors, and friends to develop new and exciting ways to bring information to you. Our YouTube channel offers short videos on wildlife habitat development, forestry soil health, web soil survey, pond construction, and estate planning. Upcoming videos will feature pond construction and maintenance, soil health, and cover crops. There are two easy ways to access our videos: (1) through YouTube (search Trailblazer RC&D) and (2) through our website ([www.trailblazer.org](http://www.trailblazer.org) and click on "videos"). Check us out! I know you will enjoy what you find!

Thank you for your continued support! You mean the world to us!

Sincerely,  
P. Ellzey Simmons  
Chief Executive Officer  
Trailblazer RC&D

# Field Day

## MARTY EARNEST'S FARM CALDWELL PARISH



Producer Marty Earnest at the January 26, 2021, Soil Health Field Day on his farm in Caldwell Parish.

### Soil Health Field Day Featuring Cover Crops

Thirty-nine people gathered on Marty Earnest's farm near Columbia, Louisiana, on January 26, 2021, for a Soil Health Field Day sponsored by Trailblazer RC&D and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Rachel Evans, NRCS Soil Scientist, and Steve Nipper, NRCS Agronomist, provided hands-on demonstrations of rain water runoff and infiltration and ground cover effectiveness.

Landowner Marty Earnest, producer Robbie Howard, and a host of other speakers provided insight and answered questions regarding the benefits and uses of cover crops for soil health. The field tour included stops at three soil pits to demonstrate the benefits of different seed mixtures for cover crops.

Many thanks go to the Boeuf River Soil and Water Conservation District, Louisiana Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative, LSU AgCenter, Mudd & Holland Forestry Consultants, Burnham Construction, and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service for their partnership and sponsorship of this field day.



Soil Scientist Rachel Evans at the January 26, 2021, Soil Health Field Day in Caldwell Parish.



“ I liked the . . .

Field walk and actual farmer testimonies

Discussions

Variety of speakers

Networking, lots of NRCS people to visit with ”

Comments from Field Day Participants

This field day was conducted in accordance with Louisiana Department of Health COVID-19 guidelines, and attendees were strongly encouraged to wear a face mask and practice social distancing.

# USDA NRCS JOBS!

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Louisiana has been given direct hiring authority from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to fill 24 positions in Louisiana! Direct hiring authority grants federal agencies the authority to fill vacancies in specific occupations, grade levels, and locations where there is a critical hiring need or severe shortage of candidates.

These 24 positions are great opportunities for qualified candidates to begin careers with a federal agency that is dedicated to helping people conserve and protect the natural resources of our nation. If you care about the land and would like to help agricultural producers become better stewards of the land, check out these vacancy announcements and submit your application.

All applicants who meet the minimum qualifications, to include any selective placement factors, if applicable, will be referred to the selecting official. Before a certificate is issued to the selecting official, the resume is reviewed to ensure all the qualification requirements are met. A rating will not be used; veteran's preference does not apply due to the existence of the direct hire authority for the position. These announcements will remain open until all positions are filled.

**To apply for  
these positions, go to:  
USAJobs.gov**

# Connections



## Civil Engineering Technician (2 Vacancies)

**Open and Closing Dates:** 12/23/2020 to 07/15/2021

**Salary:** \$35,265 to \$69,462 per year

**Pay scale & grade:** GS-5/6/7/8/9; **Full performance level:** GS-9

**Series:** GS-0458

**Appointment Type:** Permanent; **Work Schedule:** Full-time

**Job Announcement Number:** NRCS-21-10990602-DHA-LA-SC

**Area of Consideration:** Public

**Location:** Alexandria

## Soil Conservation Technician (10 Vacancies)

**Open and Closing Dates:** 12/23/2020 to 7/15/2021

**Salary:** \$35,265 to \$56,790 per year

**Pay scale & grade:** GS-5/6/7; **Full Performance Level:** GS-7

**Series:** GS-0458

**Appointment Type:** Permanent; **Work Schedule:** Full-Time

**Job Announcement Number:** NRCS-21-10990220-DHA-LA-SC

**Area of Consideration:** Public

**Location:** Bastrop, Bossier, Clinton, Coshatta, Franklin, Jonesville, Leesville, Many, Natchitoches, New Orleans, Oberlin, and St. Joseph

## Rangeland Management Specialist (3 Vacancies)

**Open & Closing Dates:** 01/08/2021 to 07/15/2021

**Salary:** \$35,265 to \$69,462 per year

**Pay scale & grade:** GS-5/7/9; **Full Performance Level:** GS-9

**Series:** GS-0454

**Appointment Type:** Permanent; **Work Schedule:** Full-Time

**Job Announcement Number:** NRCS-21-11001265-DHA-LA-SC

**Area of Consideration:** Public

**Locations:** Clinton, Jennings, and Ville Platte

## Soil Conservationist (9 Vacancies)

**Open & Closing Dates:** 01/08/2021 to 07/15/2021

**Salary:** \$35,265 to \$69,462 per year

**Pay Scale & Grade:** GS-5/7/9; **Full Performance Level:** GS-09

**Series:** GS-0457

**Appointment Type:** Permanent; **Work Schedule:** Full-Time

**Job Announcement Number:** NRCS-21-11001059-DHA-LA-SC

**Area of Consideration:** Public

**Locations:** Denham Springs, Jennings, Lafayette, Mansfield, Minden, New Iberia, St. Joseph, Shreveport, and Thibodaux

All of these vacancies can be found on **USAJobs.gov**. If you or someone you know is interested in one of these positions, submit an application as soon as possible in order to be considered! Scan the QR code to find out what it's like to work for NRCS in Louisiana!



# VIDEO Resources FOR

**Trailblazer's YouTube channel offers something for everyone!**



## EVERYONE

Estate planning concerns everyone. To learn more about how to protect your assets, check out our 4-part estate planning series, and make sure your spouse watches too!

Top presenters! Timely topics! Tools to use in your life, on your farm, at work, and in your community!

<p>part 4 of 4 ESTATE PLANNING <b>Prenup/Children's Inheritance</b> FARM SUSTAINABILITY</p> <p>Estate Planning: Part 4, Prenup Agreements/Children's Inheritance with Attorney Paul D. Spillers</p> <p>Estate Planning</p>	<p>part 3 of 4 ESTATE PLANNING <b>Checking/Savings Accounts</b> FARM SUSTAINABILITY</p> <p>Estate Planning: Part 3, Checking/Savings Accounts with Attorney Paul D. Spillers</p> <p>Estate Planning</p>	<p>part 2 of 4 ESTATE PLANNING <b>Retirement Accounts</b> FARM SUSTAINABILITY</p> <p>Estate Planning: Part 2, Retirement Accounts with Attorney Paul D. Spillers</p> <p>Estate Planning</p>
<p>Trailblazer part 1 of 4 ESTATE PLANNING <b>INSURANCE</b> FARM SUSTAINABILITY</p> <p>Estate Planning: Part 1, Insurance with Attorney Paul D. Spillers</p> <p>Estate Planning</p>	<p>Trailblazer farm and ranch <b>web SOIL SURVEY</b></p> <p>Web Soil Survey With Rachel Stout-Evans, USDA NRCS</p> <p>Soil Health, Web Soil Survey</p>	<p>Trailblazer farm and ranch <b>FOREST SOIL HEALTH</b></p> <p>Forest Soil Health with Rachel Stout-Evans, USDA NRCS</p> <p>Soil Health</p>
<p>Trailblazer farm and ranch <b>WILDLIFE FOOD PLOTS</b> SOIL fertility, seed, &amp; plants FULL VIDEO</p> <p>Wildlife Food Plots</p> <p>Conservation, Wildlife Habitat</p>	<p>Trailblazer farm and ranch <b>POND CONSTRUCTION AND MANAGEMENT Part 1</b></p> <p>Farm and Ranch Pond Construction and Management Part 1</p> <p>Construction, Farm Ponds</p>	<p>Trailblazer farm and ranch <b>WILDLIFE habitat development</b></p> <p>Wildlife Habitat Development and CSP</p> <p>Conservation, Wildlife Habitat</p>

## NRCS EMPLOYEES

You have a fantastic tool with the Web Soil Survey! Everyone should know about it! Watch and share this video with your customers, family, and friends! They will love you for it!

## FORESTERS

This is a quick, concise explanation of why timber producers should care for the soil under their trees. Make sure everyone has an opportunity to learn why soil and water conservation is so important.

## FARMERS

Do you want to know how to get the ball rolling to install a pond on your farm? Check out this video. It is your first step towards your own farm pond.

## WILDLIFE ENTHUSIASTS

Having trouble attracting wildlife to your land. Learn about the importance of food plots and watch your wildlife populations grow.

[www.youtube.com/channel/UCGghA8uiafmtp92cYXWI5nw](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGghA8uiafmtp92cYXWI5nw)

[www.trailblazer.org/video-gallery](http://www.trailblazer.org/video-gallery)

**Check us out on YouTube and subscribe to our channel today!**

# CONVERSATION Conservation

## FERAL SWINE

### Funding Awarded in Round 2 of Feral Swine Eradication and Control Pilot Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is investing \$11.65 million in 14 projects to help agricultural producers and private landowners trap and control feral swine as part of the Feral Swine Eradication and Control Pilot Program. This investment expands the pilot program to new projects in Alabama, Hawaii, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Texas.

This pilot program is a joint effort between USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). This

second round of funding is for partners to carry out activities as part of the identified pilot projects in select states.

**In the first round of funding, NRCS obligated more than \$16.7 million for 20 feral swine pilot projects in ten states, including Louisiana.**

**Louisiana's first-round pilot projects are located in Red River, Natchitoches, Winn, Grant, Rapides, Madison, Tensas, Concordia, Cameron, and Calcasieu Parishes.**

"These awards enable landowners to address the threat that feral swine pose to natural resources and agriculture," NRCS Acting Chief Kevin Norton said. "The projects we have identified will be key to addressing the feral swine problem."

Similar to the first round, NRCS will provide funding to partners who will provide financial assistance, education, outreach and trapping assistance to participating landowners in pilot project areas. All partner work will be closely coordinated with the APHIS operations in the pilot project areas.

Between the first and second round of funding, there will be a total of 34 active projects across 12 states for the life of the 2018 Farm Bill. Each project is unique, and additional information about the expectations for individual projects can be found at [www.nrcs.usda.gov/FSCP](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/FSCP).

These new pilot projects and areas were selected in coordination with NRCS state conservationists, APHIS state directors and state technical committees to address feral swine issues and damage in areas with high densities. Pilot projects consist broadly of three coordinated components: 1) feral swine removal by APHIS; 2) restoration efforts supported by NRCS; and 3) assistance to producers for feral swine control provided through partnership agreements with non-federal partners. Projects are planned to conclude at the end of September 2023.

Are you interested in learning more about how to control feral hogs on your land? Watch our newsletter and website for information on upcoming Trailblazer workshops and videos on feral hog management.

To learn more about the feral swine pilot project in Louisiana, contact your local office of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.



Trailblazer's Feral Hog Management Workshop  
July 28, 2020, Minden, Louisiana

**THIS IS YOUR CHANCE!**

# Join our team **CLIP AND MAIL**

## YES, I AM INTERESTED!

In learning more about how my organization and I will benefit from a Trailblazer RC&D partnership or sponsorship.

### Levels of Participation

#### PLATINUM

\$15,000 or more donation

#### GOLD

\$2,000 up to \$15,000 donation

#### SILVER

\$1,000 up to \$1,999 donation per 12 months

#### EVENT SPONSOR

\$300 donation

#### BASIC PARTNERSHIP

Less than \$300 donation and/or substantial in-kind support.

Each level comes with lots of perks such as website coverage, newsletter recognition, event recognition, signage, and much more. Contact us or visit our website to learn more to learn more!

[www.trailblazer.org](http://www.trailblazer.org)

I am interested in helping Trailblazer RC&D as a (circle choice):

Platinum Sponsor      Silver Sponsor  
Gold Sponsor          Event Sponsor

I prefer to be contacted by (circle choice):

Mail                      Email                      Telephone

Please complete this questionnaire and return it to:  
Trailblazer RC&D  
302 Reynolds Drive  
Ruston, Louisiana 71270  
or  
email to [ceo@trailblazer.org](mailto:ceo@trailblazer.org)

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Area(s) of Interest (circle all that apply)

Forestry	Feral Hogs	Other (list) _____
Farming	Waterfowl	_____
Soil Health	Wildlife Habitat	_____
Estate Planning	Whitetail Deer	_____
Livestock	Wild Turkeys	_____
Pasture	Land Leasing for	_____
Honey Bees	Minerals	_____
Water Quality	Farm Ponds	_____

Return completed questionnaire to  
Trailblazer RC&D, 302 Reynolds Dr., Ruston, LA 71270  
or email to [ceo@trailblazer.org](mailto:ceo@trailblazer.org)

### 2021 Trailblazer RC&D Board of Directors

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Mike Turpin, Claiborne Parish	
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**Call or Text: (318) 237-8350**

**Email: [ceo@trailblazer.org](mailto:ceo@trailblazer.org)**

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**A LITTLE SOMETHING EXTRA!**

# Lagniappe

## Cover Crops

Cover crops are seasonal plantings of crops and grasses that protect the ground from wind and water erosion during times when land is not adequately protected against soil erosion.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) says:

- Cover crops are most often recommended when low or fragile residue producing crops, such as wheat, are grown on erodible land.
- Many crops can be used for cover crops. Cereal rye, barley and oats are common.
- Avoid cover crops that attract potentially damaging insects.
- Kill cover crops in the spring. Mowing or herbicide application is acceptable. Tillage is not recommended because it will bury residue. Terminating your cover crop at the right time can maximize moisture available for the next crop.

For more information on cover crops for your farm or ranch, contact your local office of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

### Cover Crop: Oilseed Radish

*Raphanus sativus L.*

Common Names: forage radish, fodder radish, tillage radish®, radish ripper, daikon, Japanese radish



**Improves soil structure with plant roots.**

**Aggressive tap root that penetrates deep into the soil.**

**The root decomposes in the spring, leaving large holes in the soil. These holes create channels in the soil making water infiltration easier for subsequent crops.**

**Provides good ground cover and controls weeds.**

**Enhances microbial populations in the soil by increasing air and water movement in the soil.**

**Provides grazing opportunities.**

For more information on oilseed radish, see Oilseed Radish Plant Fact Sheet, produced by USDA NRCS Booneville Plant Materials Center, at [https://plants.usda.gov/factsheet/pdf/fs\\_rasa2.pdf](https://plants.usda.gov/factsheet/pdf/fs_rasa2.pdf) (viewed on 1/31/2021).

## 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

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.

## COVID PRECAUTIONS

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](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov). Customers can track payments, report completed practices, request conservation assistance and electronically sign documents.

## 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**

# MANY THANKS TO OUR Sponsors PARTNERS AND FRIENDS



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Tim Holland (318) 286-2802



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Department of  
Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service



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



**SOUTHERN PINE**

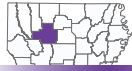


*Friends of  
Trailblazer*

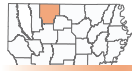
Louisiana Department  
of Wildlife and Fisheries

LSU AgCenter

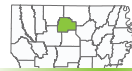
Claiborne Parish Library



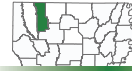
BIENVILLE PARISH POLICE JURY



CLAIBORNE PARISH POLICE JURY



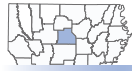
LINCOLN PARISH POLICE JURY



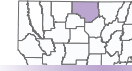
WEBSTER PARISH POLICE JURY



BOSSIER PARISH POLICE JURY



JACKSON PARISH POLICE JURY



UNION PARISH POLICE JURY



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

"Let all that you do  
be done in love."

1 Corinthians 16:14  
English Standard  
Version (ESV)



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

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