

# Trailblazer news

good for the land . . . good for the people

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Volume 11 • Issue 3 • March 2021



Forest Best Management Practices Workshop, Red Oak Lake, near Haughton, Louisiana, October 2, 2020

Trailblazer RC&D

Dear Friends,

Trailblazer has always been successful in building coalitions and recruiting specialized teams of volunteers (foresters, wildlife biologists, conservationists, lawyers, etc.) to help people address resource concerns and bring relevant information to communities. Even in times of pandemic, we have continued to bring information and facilitate assistance—with the addition of masks and social distancing.

Our partners and sponsors have stuck with us through pandemic conditions, and their loyalty has allowed us to keep our doors open. We appreciate their support and friendship more than I can say.

In coming months, we hope to begin visiting your communities again to offer workshops and field days to promote forestry best management practices, wildlife habitat development, estate planning, and much more. In the meantime, we are continuing outreach efforts to you and your communities through video blogs, or vlogs. Please take a moment to check out our newest vlogs on no-till and cover crops. They offer inspirational words from producer Marty Earnest and irrefutable evidence that no-till and cover crops work.

Take care and stay safe. I hope to see you soon!

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

## Mark Your Calendar!

All About Hummingbirds workshops are being scheduled!  
March 18 - Farmerville (see information on right)  
March 30 - Ruston - Location/times to be determined  
Email [ceo@trailblazer.org](mailto:ceo@trailblazer.org) if you would like to see this workshop in your community.



## All About Hummingbirds

March 18, 2021, 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.  
Union Parish Police Jury Annex  
303 East Water Street, Farmerville, LA  
Call the Farmerville USDA NRCS office at (318) 368-8021 to register to attend.

# Planting Trees

Learn more about planting trees on your land at Trailblazer's next Forestry 101 workshop. Watch our newsletter and website for workshop dates.

## Are you interested in diversifying your farm by planting trees?

There are a lot of things to consider when establishing a crop of trees, including where to plant trees, what trees to plant, how to care for your trees, best management practices, and your goals for your land.

A well-managed forest will provide wildlife habitat, recreation opportunities, and ultimately, profits from timber sales.

Properly managed stands of trees can take between 25 to 40 years to mature. Unmanaged stands may take more than 50 years to mature.

Many forest landowners benefit from using a consulting forester. A consulting forester will represent you in all forestry matters from seedling to harvest and help you meet the goals you have for your land.

## Planting Season

Tree planting season begins in December and should be completed in March. The optimum period is from late December to mid-February.

## Choosing Trees

Some of the things to consider when choosing trees for planting:

- Characteristics of your planting site
- Disease and insect resistance
- Drought resistance
- Cold tolerance
- Drainage

For more information, see: **Planting Southern Pines: A Guide to Species Selection and Planting Techniques**, Publication Number P1776, Mississippi State University Extension, <http://extension.msstate.edu/publications/planting-southern-pines-guide-species-selection-and-planting-techniques>, viewed 2/27/2021.



## How many trees to plant?

Spacing (feet)    Number of Seedlings

| Spacing (feet) | Number of Seedlings |
|----------------|---------------------|
| 6 x 8          | 907                 |
| 6 x 9          | 806                 |
| 6 x 10         | 726                 |
| 6 x 11         | 660                 |
| 6 x 12         | 605                 |
| 7 x 7          | 888                 |
| 7 x 8          | 777                 |
| 7 x 9          | 691                 |
| 7 x 10         | 622                 |
| 7 x 11         | 565                 |
| 7 x 12         | 518                 |
| 8 x 8          | 680                 |
| 8 x 9          | 605                 |
| 8 x 10         | 544                 |
| 8 x 11         | 495                 |
| 8 x 12         | 453                 |
| 9 x 9          | 537                 |
| 9 x 10         | 484                 |
| 9 x 11         | 436                 |
| 9 x 12         | 403                 |
| 10 x 10        | 435                 |
| 10 x 11        | 396                 |
| 10 x 12        | 363                 |
| 12 x 11        | 330                 |
| 12 x 12        | 302                 |
| 12 x 15        | 242                 |
| 15 x 7         | 414                 |
| 15 x 8         | 363                 |
| 15 x 9         | 322                 |
| 15 x 10        | 290                 |
| 15 x 15        | 193                 |

Planting Southern Pines: A Guide to Species Selection and Planting Techniques, Publication Number P1776, Mississippi State University Extension

## Southern Pines

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>Loblolly pine</b>  | Loblolly pine grows on a wide variety of soils, but it grows best on soils that have poor to moderate surface drainage, a deep surface layer, and a firm subsoil. |
| <b>Slash pine</b>     | Natural stands of slash pine are usually on sandy soils that are underlain by a shallow, poorly drained hardpan and in narrow bands along minor drainages.        |
| <b>Longleaf pine</b>  | Longleaf pine is not competitive with other trees and grows best in pure stands on well-drained acid soils that are low in organic matter.                        |
| <b>Shortleaf pine</b> | Shortleaf pine grows on a wide variety of soils, but thrives best on fine sandy loam or silt that has good drainage.  |

From: The Southern Pines, An American Wood, U.S. Forest Service Publication FS-256, July 1985, <https://www.fpl.fs.fed.us/documnts/usda/amwood/256spine.pdf>, viewed 2/28/21

**The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offers technical and financial assistance to forest landowners. To learn about these opportunities, contact your local NRCS office.**

# Conservation CONVERSATION



## Updates to Conservation Easements Strengthens Protection for Farmlands, Grasslands and Wetlands

On February 4, 2021, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) released the final rule for its Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP). This program enables agricultural producers and private landowners to protect farmlands, grasslands, and wetlands with conservation easements. The rule updates ACEP as directed by the 2018 Farm Bill and incorporates public comments made on an interim rule.

**ACEP is USDA's premier conservation easement program, offering financial and technical assistance to help protect productive farm and ranch lands from conversion to other uses and to restore and protect the nation's critical wetlands.**

ACEP uses innovative conservation systems to support the restoration of wetland ecosystems and to protect working lands, helping to sequester carbon, trap sediment, and filter pollutants for clean water.

The wetland reserve easements (WRE) component helps landowners restore and protect wetlands in agricultural landscapes that provide benefits, including increased wildlife habitat, improved water quality, reduced impacts from flooding, groundwater recharge, and more outdoor recreation and educational opportunities. NRCS provides technical and financial assistance

directly to private and tribal landowners to restore, protect and enhance wetlands through the purchase of these easements.

NRCS received more than 570 comments on the ACEP interim rule, which was published on January 6, 2020. The final rule responds to these comments and adopts the interim rule with minor changes, including:

### Updates to ACEP:

- Revised the definitions for beginning farmer or rancher, eligible land, farm or ranch succession plan, future viability and maintenance to provide additional clarity, especially around succession planning.

### Updates to ACEP Agricultural Land Easements:

- Incorporated priority into the ACEP-ALE ranking criteria for lands enrolled in the Transition Incentives Program under the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP-TIP).
- Clarified the non-federal match requirements and added new types of costs that may be used to satisfy the non-federal match requirements.
- Modified one of the regulatory deed requirements to clarify the types of changes to the easement deed or easement area that must be approved in advance by NRCS.

- Updated the regulatory language describing the United States' inspection authority to reflect the existing right of enforcement language used in ACEP-ALE conservation easements, wherein NRCS provides the agricultural land easement holder and the landowner notice and a reasonable opportunity to participate in an inspection of the easement area.

- Revised the regulatory language to specify the minimum and maximum durations for ACEP-ALE agreements based on an eligible entity's certification status under ACEP-ALE.

### Updates to ACEP Wetland Reserve Easements:

- Incorporated priority into the ACEP-WRE ranking criteria for lands enrolled in the CRP-TIP that are farmed wetland and adjoining land that has the highest wetland functions and values and is likely to return to production after the land leaves CRP.

NRCS accepts ACEP applications year-round, but applications are ranked and funded during enrollment periods that are set locally. For more information, visit your state website from [nrcs.usda.gov](https://nrcs.usda.gov), or contact your local NRCS field office.

Meet an NRCS representative at one of Trailblazer's upcoming workshops. Watch our newsletter and website for workshop dates.

USDA NRCS

# Connections

Not sure who to contact? Get in touch with Trailblazer RC&D at [ceo@trailblazer.org](mailto:ceo@trailblazer.org), and we will put you in touch with the right people to address your resource concern.

## NRCS COVID Precautions

Due to current COVID-19 conditions, NRCS staff are working with customers through phone, mail and online communications. 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

## NRCS Online Services are Available with eAuth Account

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](http://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.



# USDA NRCS JOBS!

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Louisiana is looking for qualified individuals to fill 24 positions located throughout Louisiana:

### 2 Civil Engineering Technicians

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

### 10 Soil Conservation Technicians

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



### 3 Rangeland Management Specialists

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

### 9 Soil Conservationists

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

Scan this QR code with your smartphone to learn more about working with NRCS.



To learn more about salary, pay grade, job series, and locations for these positions and to apply for these positions, go to:

**USAJobs.gov**

and search for the job announcement number.

# NEW VIDEO Resources

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

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



Cover crops can prevent soil and wind erosion, improve the soil's physical and biological properties, supply nutrients, suppress weeds, improve the availability of water, and break pest cycles as well as many other benefits. In this segment of Trailblazer RC&D's Ecologically Speaking video series, ag producer Marty Earnest shares his success with cover crops during a Soil Health Field Day on his farm in Caldwell Parish, Louisiana. This field day was sponsored by Trailblazer RC&D and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

To view, go to: <https://youtu.be/rbVLpSPzZFE>



The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) rainfall simulator demonstration provides a first-hand look at how practices such as no-till and cover crops can benefit soil health, increase infiltration, and reduce runoff and sedimentation. In this segment of Trailblazer RC&D's Ecologically Speaking video series, Steve Nipper, Water Quality Specialist with NRCS, and Rachel Stout-Evans, Resource Soil Scientist with NRCS, demonstrate the difference no-till and cover crops can make on your farm during a Soil Health Field Day in Caldwell Parish, Louisiana. This field day was sponsored by Trailblazer RC&D and NRCS.

To view, go to: <https://youtu.be/2F-5YQQwn44>

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

[www.youtube.com/channel/UCGghA8uiafntp92cYXWI5nw](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGghA8uiafntp92cYXWI5nw)

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



Other videos available on Trailblazer's YouTube channel include:

- Estate Planning
- Web Soil Survey
- Forest Soil Health
- Wildlife Food Plots
- Farm and Ranch Pond Construction and Management
- Wildlife Habitat Development and Conservation Stewardship Program

Subscribe to our YouTube channel today and don't miss a video!

**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

|                               |                          |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Steve Ramsey, Heflin          | L. W. Nolan, Farmerville |
| Glenn Benton, Haughton        | Jerry Bates, Ringgold    |
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| Glenn Scriber, Ruston         | P. Ellzey Simmons        |
| Bob Brotherton, Elm Grove     | Chief Executive Officer  |

**Call or Text: (318) 237-8350**

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

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A LITTLE SOMETHING EXTRA!

# Lagniappe

## The GLOBE Program

The Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment (GLOBE) Program is an international science and education program that provides students and the public worldwide with an opportunity to participate in data collection and the scientific process. The data collected will help us understand the Earth's systems and our global environment. To learn more about the GLOBE Program and the data collected, visit [www.globe.gov](http://www.globe.gov). This website offers information specifically for teachers, GLOBE observers, and STEM professionals.

GLOBE's Data Entry App allows users to enter GLOBE data directly from an iOS or Android device for clouds, mosquito habitat, land cover, and trees. After an initial download of forms, users can record measurements in the field, and then choose to send the data to GLOBE when connected to the Internet.

The GLOBE Program is sponsored by NASA and supported by the National Science Foundation, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the U.S. Department of State.



Image by jcsilviu from Pixabay.

Through the GLOBE Program, data is collected around the world by citizen scientists on:

- **Clouds**
- **Mosquito Habitat**
- **Land Cover**
- **Trees**



## Use Your Smartphone to Measure Tree Height



The GLOBE Observer app provides a step-by-step guide for people to collect scientific data on their surroundings. With the GLOBE Trees feature of the app, observers record tree height by tilting their phone up and down to align the screen with the tree's top branch and base, and pace off the distance to the tree; the app does the rest to calculate the tree's height. Observers can measure one tree or hundreds of trees. The data, along with the GPS tag of the tree's location, are sent to NASA and collected in a database.

The measurements collected will help validate tree heights that NASA satellites are gathering and help to give a more complete look at the ecosystem.

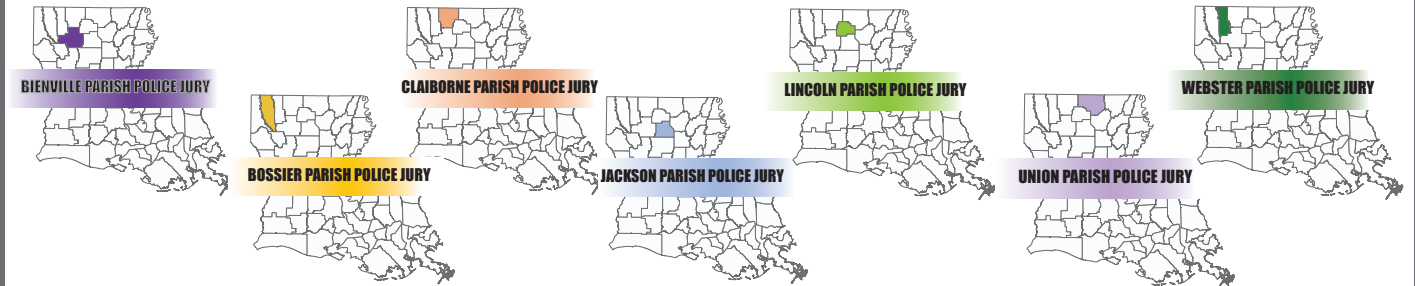
download the **GLOBE Observer App**

The GLOBE Observer App is available through the Apple App Store for iOS and Google Play for Android.

# MANY THANKS TO OUR Sponsors PARTNERS AND FRIENDS



*Friends of Trailblazer*  
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries  
LSU AgCenter  
Claiborne Parish Library  
USDA APHIS  
Minden Farm and Garden



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

“His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.”

2 Peter 1:3  
New International Version  
(NIV)



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

**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.