

# Trailblazer news

Volume 12 • Issue 3 • March 2022

good for the land . . . good for the people

February 1, 2022  
Soil Health and Your Garden  
Ruston



February 3, 2022  
Soil Health Farm Field Day  
Caddo Parish



February 10, 2022  
Inglewood Farm High Tunnel  
Ribbon Cutting, Rapides Parish

## WOW Great Presentation!

**February events featured the SOIL.**

**Feb 1:** Soil Health and Your Garden - Ruston

**Feb 3:** Soil Health Farm Field Day - Caddo Parish

Participants at Trailblazer's February events learned that healthy soil is the foundation for productive and sustainable agriculture, as well as a productive and sustainable garden. Our key speaker, Rachel Stout-Evans, Soil Scientist with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, shared practical tips to support the four principles to improve soil health: minimize disturbance; maximize soil cover; maximize biodiversity; and maximize the presence of living roots. Rachel offered a quick easy-to-understand study of the biology of soil and gave everyone a peek into what it takes to have healthy, productive soil.

Many thanks to Rachel Stout-Evans for her great presentations and demonstrations at our February events. You knocked it out of the park!

Dear Friends,

We love seeing you at our events and using our online resources! During February, you braved cold and rainy days and joined us at the Lincoln Parish Library to learn about garden soil health and visited us on a farm in Caddo Parish to learn about the impact of cover crops to the soil—and you rated both events as outstanding! Thank you for your support!

Check out our calendar of events for March and mark your calendar to attend. We are holding a seat for you and can't wait to see you!

Sincerely,

P. Elzey Simmons  
Chief Executive Officer  
Trailblazer RC&D



## Inglewood Farm High Tunnel Ribbon Cutting

On February 10, 2022, Trailblazer had the honor to work with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to mark the completion of construction of a new high tunnel on Inglewood Farm in Rapides Parish. With technical and financial assistance from USDA NRCS,

Inglewood Farm constructed the high tunnel to ensure year-round production of food, as well as provide a teaching environment for other farmers and gardeners. It was a fantastic event, supported by the Central Louisiana Chamber of Commerce and attended by a large group of farming and gardening enthusiasts! Congratulations Inglewood!

## Upcoming Events

Visit [www.trailblazer.org](http://www.trailblazer.org) for more information on these events.

**March 1 - 6 p.m.**  
**Hummingbirds & Your Garden**  
Lincoln Parish Library  
Ruston, LA

**March 8 - 6 p.m.**  
**Spring Gardening Workshop**  
Bossier Parish  
Libraries-History Center  
Bossier City, LA

**March 15 - 6 p.m.**  
**Estate Planning Workshop**  
Union Parish Police  
Jury Meeting Room  
Farmerville, LA

**March 17 - 6 p.m.**  
**Soil Health in Your Garden**  
Claiborne Parish  
Library - Homer, LA

**March 29 - 6 p.m.**  
**Wild Turkey Management**  
Bossier Parish Sheriff's  
Substation-Viking Dr.  
Bossier City, LA

**TO REGISTER FOR THESE EVENTS:**

**Call or text (318) 237-8350 and provide your contact information and name of workshop.**

# Community Please join us in March!



**Hummingbirds and Your Garden**

**March 1 2022**

Lincoln Parish Library  
910 North Trenton Street  
Ruston, Louisiana  
6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.  
Join us at 5:15 p.m. for pizza!

Featuring a Special Guest Speaker from Irrigation-Mart



**Spring Gardening Workshop: SOIL HEALTH**

**March 8 2022**

Bossier Parish Libraries  
History Center  
2206 Beckett Street  
Bossier City, Louisiana  
6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.  
Join us at 5:15 p.m. for pizza!

FEATURING  
**LSU AgCenter**  
Research · Extension · Teaching  
**HORTICULTURE SPECIALISTS**



**ESTATE PLANNING**

**March 15 2022**

Union Parish Police Jury  
Meeting Room  
303 East Water Street  
Farmerville, Louisiana  
6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Featured Speaker  
Attorney Paul Spillers

This presentation is educational and is not intended as legal or tax advice.

Wills and Trusts  
Community vs. Separate Property  
What does probate mean?  
What are probate vs. non-probate assets?  
Can my assets be protected from creditors?



**SOIL HEALTH in Your Garden**

**March 17 2022**

Featured Speaker  
Rachel Stout-Evans  
Resource Soil Scientist  
USDA NRCS

- Composition of your soil
- How soils function
- Indicators of soil health
- Ways to manage soil health

Claiborne Parish Library  
909 Edgewood Dr.  
Homer, Louisiana  
6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Free Workshop!  
TO REGISTER:  
Call the Claiborne Parish Library at (318) 927-3845

- March Workshop Sponsors/Partners**
- Energy Transfer
  - Mudd & Holland Consulting Foresters, LLC
  - Weyerhaeuser
  - Allstate Land & Timber Co., Inc.
  - National Wild Turkey Federation
  - Burnham Construction
  - Canfor Southern Pine
  - Louisiana Forestry Association
  - Irrigation-Mart
  - Whitetails Unlimited, Lincoln Parish Chapter
  - Lincoln Parish Police Jury
  - Lincoln Parish Library
  - Lincoln Parish Whitetails Unlimited
  - LSU AgCenter
  - Bossier Parish Police Jury
  - Bossier Parish Libraries
  - Union Parish Police Jury
  - Irrigation-Mart 800-SAY-RAIN
  - Claiborne Parish Police Jury
  - Claiborne Parish Library
  - Trailblazer RC&D
  - USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

**NEW EVENT JUST ADDED TO CALENDAR!**  
March 29, 2022 - Wild Turkey Management - Bossier City, LA with the Louisiana Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation  
Check our webpage for more information.

**TO REGISTER FOR THESE EVENTS:**  
Call or text (318) 237-8350 and provide your contact information and name of workshop.

Persons with disabilities who anticipate needing reasonable accommodations or who have questions about physical access may contact Trailblazer RC&D at (318) 237-8350 or ceo@trailblazer.org prior to the meeting or event.

Trailblazer RC&D events are conducted in accordance with Louisiana Department of Health COVID-19 guidelines. If you are not feeling well or you have been exposed to COVID-19, please stay home.

**Check our website to learn more about these and other upcoming events:**  
[www.trailblazer.org](http://www.trailblazer.org)



# Conservation Conversation

## Nesting Boxes Help Bluebirds Recover From Population Decline

Woodlands provide an ideal habitat for bluebirds, as they naturally nest in the cavities of trees. In the second half of the twentieth century, increased urbanization, fewer forests and trees, and increased competition from other cavity-nesting birds caused a decline in bluebird populations.

During the 1960s, an innovative group of people began building bluebird nesting boxes to make up for habitat loss. These bluebird enthusiasts established bluebird trails comprised of nesting boxes placed along highways and in yards across the nation. Today, bluebird populations are making a comeback, primarily because people are continuing to build and place bluebird nesting boxes in yards and along highways and byways.



### Are you interested in adding a bluebird nesting box to your backyard?

There are lots of easy instructions available online for building a nesting box. A great source for educational fact sheets and plans for construction of bluebird nesting boxes is the North American Bluebird Society at: [www.nabluebirdsociety.org/fact-sheets-plans](http://www.nabluebirdsociety.org/fact-sheets-plans)

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service also offers "Bluebird House Plans and Instructions" at: [www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/nrcs144p2\\_063895.pdf](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/nrcs144p2_063895.pdf)

**If you are interested in wildlife habitat development on your farm or ranch, contact your local office of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.**

**If you place a bluebird nesting box in your yard, email a photo to us at [ceo@trailblazer.org](mailto:ceo@trailblazer.org) and let us know if you have bluebirds nesting.**

## Trailblazer Video Features NRCS Publication That Helps Backyard Gardeners



**Check out the video at:**  
<https://youtu.be/F2fQOG0Y0Vs>

This new Trailblazer RC&D video is a quick look at a great resource publication from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS): **Backyard Conservation.**

This publication features conservation activities that you can do in your backyard to conserve, protect, and enhance its natural resources. Our video spotlights tree planting, wildlife habitat, and composting activities as featured in the NRCS publication.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service publication can

be downloaded online from the USDA NRCS Distribution Center at: USDA NRCS Backyard Conservation Book <https://nrcspad.sc.egov.usda.gov/DistributionCenter/product.aspx?ProductID=428>

Other Backyard Conservation tips sheets can be found on the USDA NRCS Distribution Center's website at: <https://nrcspad.sc.egov.usda.gov/DistributionCenter/> Just search "Backyard Conservation"

# News

## Events, happenings, and milestones

### Chronic Wasting Disease Found in a White-tailed Deer in Tensas Parish

The National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL) has confirmed a case of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in a Louisiana white-tailed deer to the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF).

This is the first confirmed case of CWD found in Louisiana. The diagnosis was made on samples submitted by LDWF staff from a hunter-harvested, wild adult buck taken on private land in Tensas Parish.

The LDAF regulates alternative livestock in regard to agricultural businesses in Louisiana, which includes farm-raised white-tailed deer. While the confirmed case was not from a deer pen, the LDAF's objective is to ensure that alternative livestock in the state are healthy and well-cared for and stay that way.

"The program requires inspection, population control, and record-keeping by the LDAF to ensure the overall health of

the deer herd," said LDAF Commissioner Mike Strain, D.V.M. Additionally, LDAF performs annual inspections of all pens. The inspections are to ensure the pens are in good condition and deemed secure.

"It will take diligence from all parties to help control the spread of CWD in Louisiana; this includes our permitted deer pen licensees," Strain said.

In light of the confirmed case of CWD, LDAF encourages permitted deer pen licensees to:

- Maintain and inspect deer herds throughout the year.
- Maintain and inspect all fencing on a regular basis.
- Maintain good record-keeping on all pens. This includes electronic implants; permanent ear tattoo and ear tags; the purchase, sale, and transfer of all deer; health certificates issued on each deer; and fencing repairs, replacements, or upgrades.

CWD is a neurodegenerative disease of white-tailed deer and other members of the family Cervidae. It is caused by a prion, an infectious, misfolded protein particle, and is 100-percent fatal in affected deer after an indeterminate

incubation period. There is no treatment or preventative vaccine for CWD.

CWD-infected deer may exhibit signs of weight loss and emaciation, salivation, frequent drinking and urination, incoordination, circling, and lack of fear of people. It always results in the death of the animal.

Although CWD has not been shown to be contagious to humans, the Centers for Disease Control and the World Health Organization recommend against the human consumption of deer known to be infected with CWD. The LDWF will provide testing for hunter-harvested deer free of charge.

For more information on the permitted deer pen license, call the Office of Animal Health at 225-925-3980.

For more information on CWD, go to <https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/page/cwd>.



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

### USDA to Conduct First-Ever Agroforestry Survey

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) is conducting the first-ever National Agroforestry Survey. Data collection begins February 1 and concludes April 5, 2022. NASS will mail the survey to 161 farmers and ranchers in Louisiana to gather information on the five agroforestry practices used for climate, conservation and production benefits, including windbreaks, silvopasture, riparian forest buffers, alley cropping as well as forest farming and multi-story cropping.

The survey is conducted cooperatively with the USDA National Agroforestry

Center (NAC), which is a partnership between USDA's Forest Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service. The NAC will release the summarized data in studies, press releases, and publications such as highlights. Highlights will give an overview of how agroforestry practices are used in regions across the United States.

"Information shared directly from farmers and ranchers really is one of the best ways to learn what works and what doesn't in agroforestry. We will use the data to discover the most effective, efficient and profitable ways climate-smart agroforestry practices are used, and share what we learn in a series of research reports to benefit U.S. farmers and ranchers," said NAC Research Program Lead Matthew Smith.

Producers can respond to the survey securely online at [agcounts.usda.gov](https://agcounts.usda.gov) or by mail. The survey will take no longer than 50 minutes to complete if producers have all five agroforestry practices on their operations. Response time will be shorter if there are fewer practices to report.

The information provided by farmers and ranchers is protected by federal law (Title V, Subtitle A, Public Law 107-347), which keeps respondent identity, operation, and answers confidential. For more information, visit [www.nass.usda.gov/go/Agroforestry](https://www.nass.usda.gov/go/Agroforestry). For assistance with the survey, please call 888-424-7828. Subscribe to Agroforestry Connection for new agroforestry-related publications and other items of interest.

# Food for Thought

Information worth  
pondering

## Kisatchie NF



### Bald Eagle Live Stream Kisatchie National Forest

The USDA Forest Service is offering a look into the lives of Louis and Anna Eagle and their baby chick Kincaid via a live camera mounted above their nest in the Kisatchie National Forest.

The nest is about 105 feet above the ground on the top of a loblolly pine tree near Kincaid Lake. The camera system is maintained by Forest Service personnel.

Due to Hurricane Laura damage, this area of the Kisatchie National Forest is closed to the public. Special on-site viewings have been conducted, but entrance to the eagle nest viewing area must be arranged with the Calcasieu Ranger District. Contact the ranger district at (318) 793-9427.

**To see the eagle family, go to:  
Kisatchie Eagle Nest Cam:  
[www.tiny.cc/knfeagle](http://www.tiny.cc/knfeagle)**

## La Dept Wildlife & Fisheries

### Always Best to Leave Suspected Injured or Orphaned Birds Undisturbed, LDWF Advises

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) wants to remind the public to leave suspected injured and orphaned birds alone and undisturbed.

It is best to refrain from intervening in the normal fledgling process and become familiar with common behaviors of fledgling birds, young birds who have grown too large for the nest and need room to stretch/flap their wings and practice flight.

Each year LDWF receives calls from concerned citizens who have found what they believe to be abandoned birds. It is against the law to capture, transport or possess birds listed on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Migratory Bird Treaty Act list and other wildlife. Generally, birds and other wildlife are better off left where they are found.

It is not uncommon to find young birds away from their nests during the spring and summer as they learn to fly. Young birds can be found hopping on the ground or in shrubs, fluttering their wings and may appear to be in distress. In reality, the young bird is continuing to be fed by its parents and is simply practicing for flight. If left undisturbed, adult birds will call and wait for a response from

their young and provide the necessary care for the fledgling during this process.

There are cases where intervention may be beneficial. Individuals who encounter displaced nestlings, birds which are mostly featherless, may immediately return the bird to its nest if at all possible and then leave the area.

Birds do not recognize human scent and will not abandon a nestling because of it. If you are unable to locate the nearby nest, you can create and return the nestling to a false nest attached to the nearest tree or shrub where the bird was found. Instructions for false nests can be found on LDWF's wildlife rehabilitation webpage at

<https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/page/injured-orphaned-wildlife>. Remember-IF YOU CARE, LEAVE IT THERE!

Individuals who believe they have encountered an injured bird, should leave it alone and contact a biologist at their nearest LDWF Regional Office <https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/page/contact-us> or an LDWF licensed wildlife rehabilitator. A list of licensed wildlife rehabilitators can be found on the Department's website at <https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/page/permitted-wildlife-rehabilitators>.

Anyone interested in LDWF's Wildlife Rehabilitation Program should contact Melissa Collins at 985-543-4777 or [mcollins@wlf.la.gov](mailto:mcollins@wlf.la.gov).

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# Partners & Friends

Thank you for your support!



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

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”

Matthew 5:9  
New International Version (NIV)



Know what's below. Call before you dig.

811 is the national call-before-you-dig phone number. You should call a few business days before you begin any digging, including common projects like planting trees and shrubs or installing fences and mailboxes.