

# Trailblazer news

Volume 12 • Issue 5 • May 2022

good for the land . . . good for the people



Lincoln Parish Library, Ruston, Louisiana

Dear Friends,

You may not know this, but Trailblazer has been around a long time. Our organization was officially authorized by the Secretary of Agriculture in 1966 and incorporated in 1988. Since 1966, Trailblazer has worked throughout north Louisiana building coalitions to meet the needs of the people in the communities we serve.

Throughout the years, our locally led council/board of directors have identified and addressed many local resource concerns and ensured effective, equitable solutions. Today, as we did 56 years ago, we use our voice to bring people together to address resource concerns. During April, we hosted meetings dedicated to pollinators, soil health, and invasive species (feral hogs). In May, we will touch on wildlife habitat development and soil health.

We are excited to be able to continue to offer cutting-edge information on a variety of natural resource concerns and look forward to seeing you at an upcoming meeting.

Sincerely,

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



April 5



April 12



April 19

Top to bottom: Honey Bees and Pollinators with Amy Weeks, Ruston; Soil Health in Your Garden with Rachel Stout-Evans; and Feral Hog Research with Dr. Glen T. Gentry, Ruston.

## Upcoming Events

**May 2 - 6 p.m.**  
**Backyard Birding**  
 with David  
**Moreland**  
 Athens Town Hall  
 Athens, LA

**May 3 - 6 p.m.**  
**Backyard Birding**  
 with David  
**Moreland**  
 Lincoln Parish Library  
 Ruston, LA

**May 10 - 6 p.m.**  
**Soil Health In Your**  
**Garden With**  
**Rachel Stout-Evans**  
 History Center, Bossier  
 Parish Library  
 Bossier City, LA



**Check out our YouTube channel!**

Go to:  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGghA8uiafmp92cYXWI5nw>  
 or scan this code with your cell  
 phone:



**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 May!

## Backyard Birding

With David Moreland  
Featuring Bluebirds, Purple Martins,  
and Hummingbirds

**May 2, 2022**

Athens Town Hall  
15327 Highway 9  
Athens, Louisiana

6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Join us at 5:30 p.m. for refreshments

**May 3, 2022**

Lincoln Parish Library  
910 North Trenton Street  
Ruston, Louisiana

6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Join us at 5:30 for refreshments



## SOIL HEALTH in Your Garden

Featured Speaker  
Rachel Stout-Evans  
Resource Soil Scientist  
USDA NRCS

**May 10, 2022**

**Bossier Parish Libraries**

History Center  
2206 Beckett Street  
Bossier City, Louisiana

6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Join us at 5:30 p.m. for refreshments!

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



### 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.

Please check our website for a complete listing of events. New events are added throughout the month, and we don't want you to miss an opportunity to attend! Hope to see you during May!

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

### May Workshop Sponsors/Partners

- Energy Transfer
- Hunt Forest Products, LLC
- Mudd & Holland Consulting Foresters, LLC
- Weyerhaeuser
- Allstate Land & Timber Co., Inc.
- National Wild Turkey Federation
- Burnham Construction
- Canfor Southern Pine
- Louisiana Forestry Association
- Whitetails Unlimited, Lincoln Parish Chapter
- Lincoln Parish Police Jury
- Lincoln Parish Library
- Claiborne Parish Police Jury
- Village of Athens
- Bossier Parish Police Jury
- Bossier Parish Libraries
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Trailblazer RC&D



### Locally led conservation is the keystone to sustainability of our natural resources.

Community residents involved in solving local resource concerns is vital to natural resource conservation.

Each year, locally led conservation meetings are conducted by local soil and water conservation districts in cooperation with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to

assess local conservation priorities. Once priorities are identified, the soil and water conservation districts and the USDA Natural Resources address technical and financial assistance decisions for the coming year.

Locally led conservation begins with you. To find out more about a locally led conservation meeting in your area, contact your local soil and water conservation district or USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service office today.

# Conservation Conversation

## NRCS Helps Ag Producers Through Farm Bill Programs

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offers financial and technical assistance through conservation practices, activities and enhancements to help agricultural producers make and maintain improvements on their land. USDA NRCS assistance is available through several programs authorized by the 2018 Farm Bill, including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Conservation Stewardship Program, and more.



USDA NRCS

### Environmental Quality Incentives Program EQIP

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits such as improved water and air quality, conserved ground and surface water, increased soil health and reduced soil erosion and sedimentation, improved or created wildlife habitat, and mitigation against increasing weather volatility.

### Conservation Stewardship Program CSP

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) helps agricultural producers maintain and improve their existing conservation systems and adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resource concerns. Participants earn CSP payments for conservation performance—the higher the performance, the higher the payment.

### Agricultural Conservation Easement Program ACEP

The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program helps landowners, land trusts, and other entities protect, restore, and enhance wetlands, grasslands, and working farms and ranches through conservation easements.

### Regional Conservation Partnership Program RCPP

The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) promotes coordination between NRCS and its partners to deliver conservation assistance to producers and landowners. NRCS provides assistance to producers through partnership agreements and RCPP conservation program contracts.

**To learn more about these programs and more, visit [www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov).**

**The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)** provides America’s farmers and ranchers financial and technical assistance to voluntarily put conservation on the ground. If you are interested in learning more about NRCS opportunities, contact your local field office.

#### NRCS Local Contacts:

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

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

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

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

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

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

# News

## Events, happenings, and milestones

### Shop at your local farmers market!

#### Support Louisiana's farms and farmers

Nothing tastes better than fresh, locally-grown fruits and vegetables. Check out this list of local farmer's markets and visit one near you!

#### Shreveport Farmers Market

101 Crockett Street  
Shreveport, Louisiana  
Open Saturdays June 4 - August 27, 2022  
7:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.  
<https://redriverrevel.com/farmers-market/>

#### Bossier City Farmers Market

Pierre Bossier Mall Parking Lot  
Bossier City, Louisiana  
Open Saturdays  
April - November  
9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.  
<https://www.bossiercityfarmersmarket.com/>

#### Ruston Farmers Market

220 East Mississippi Avenue  
Ruston, Louisiana  
Open Saturdays  
9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.  
<https://www.rustonfarmersmarket.org/>

#### Monroe Farmers Market

1212 Washington Street  
Monroe, Louisiana  
Open in the Summer  
Monday through Saturday  
7:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.  
Telephone: (318) 329-2225

### Mark your calendars

Visit the Louisiana Peach Festival in downtown Ruston, Louisiana.  
June 4, 2022  
For more information:  
<https://www.lapeachfest.com/>



### Friends in the News

#### Congratulations to

#### Bob Brotherton

#### Elected to Serve as the President of the Louisiana Police Jury Association

Bob Brotherton is a life-long resident of Bossier Parish. He is well-known and loved by his community, and he is serving in his third term on the Bossier Parish Police Jury. He served as Vice President in 2016 and President in 2017. He is on 15 different committees as either a member or chairman. He serves on the Trailblazer RC&D Board of Directors representing Bossier Parish. He was elected in 2017 to the Executive Board of the Louisiana Police Jury Association to represent Region IV. In 2022, Bob was elected as the President of the Louisiana Police Jury Association (LPJA).

**Congratulations, Bob, on your election. We wish you the best of success with LPJA!**

#### Congratulations to

#### Danny Suggs

#### Recertified as Master Farmer

Danny Suggs, Lincoln Parish farmer, was recertified as a Master Farmer during an April meeting of the Louisiana Association of Conservation Districts in Baton Rouge. Danny was among eight farmers who received recertification.

To become a Master Farmer, participants must participate in educational sessions about environmental stewardship, attend a conservation-based field day, and develop plans for implementing conservation practices on their farms. To maintain the Master Farmer designation, they must meet continuing education requirements and be recertified every five years.

**Congratulations Danny! We are proud of your conservation success!**

# Food for Thought

Information worth  
pondering

## News from the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

### LDWF: Now That Spring is Here, Keep an Eye Open for Snakes (Please, Give Me a Break, Not a Rake!)

LDWF News Release

With spring in full bloom in Louisiana, it certainly isn't uncommon to see snakes in many places. Louisiana is home to 47 native snake species but only seven of those are venomous.

Human nature is to fear snakes. However, snakes are an important and valuable part of every ecosystem and should be left alone. They prey on pest species such as rodents and insects, keeping populations of these nuisance animals in check. Several snake species feed on fish, particularly injured or diseased fish, which keeps waterways and fish populations healthy. Those fearful of venomous snakes might be surprised to learn that some nonvenomous snakes, like king snakes, actually eat venomous snakes. Rather than feared, snakes should be respected.

Spring and summer (April-July) is a heightened time for snake encounters. Although snakes may be active throughout the day during spring and in the summer, snakes



**Black rat snake.**  
Photo by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

tend to avoid the extreme temperatures of midday. In summer, activity is reserved for early mornings, late evenings and night.

The most productive way to minimize encounters with snakes in residential areas is to make homes and yards unattractive to snakes. Inspect your home's foundation, windows, doorways and attic, sealing any holes or cracks that may provide entry ways for rodents and snakes. Be sure to trim any tree branches overhanging the roof of your home as some snakes and rodents are great climbers.

Snakes only bite to defend themselves when they feel threatened or provoked. If a bite occurs from a suspected venomous

snake, seek medical attention promptly at your local hospital or by dialing 911.

It is important and helpful to become familiar with Louisiana's snake species in your area and the difference between nonvenomous and

venomous snakes. Please visit [https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/assets/Resources/Publications/Rare\\_Animal\\_Species\\_Fact\\_Sheets/Reptiles/2022-Snakes-of-LA\\_17x22\\_poster.pdf](https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/assets/Resources/Publications/Rare_Animal_Species_Fact_Sheets/Reptiles/2022-Snakes-of-LA_17x22_poster.pdf) (updated in March of 2022) for the LDWF Snakes of Louisiana poster to aid in identification on most Louisiana snake species. Go to <http://www.louisianaherps.com/> for additional help with identifying Louisiana's snakes.

For more information, contact LDWF State Herpetologist Keri Lejeune at 337-735-8676 or [klejeune@wlf.la.gov](mailto:klejeune@wlf.la.gov)

**For more of this news release, go to: <https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/news/ldwf-now-that-spring-is-here-keep-an-eye-open-for-snakes-please-give-me-a-break-not-a-rake>**

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# Partners & Friends

Thank you for your support!



**Friends of Trailblazer**  
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries



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



Natural Resources Conservation Service



LSU AgCenter  
Claiborne Parish Library  
USDA APHIS  
Lincoln Parish Library

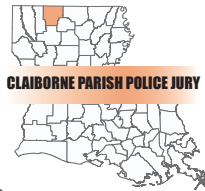
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for your support



BIENVILLE PARISH POLICE JURY



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CLAIBORNE PARISH POLICE JURY



LINCOLN PARISH POLICE JURY



UNION PARISH POLICE JURY



WEBSTER PARISH POLICE JURY



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

“The Lord bless you  
and keep you”

Numbers 6:24  
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.