

# Trailblazer news

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good for the land . . . good for the people



## Trailblazer Friends Spotted



Trailblazer RC&D

Photos: Above 6/6/23, Sarepta Brown Cotton, Ruston, LA  
Below: 6/13/23, Community Gardens, Bossier City, LA



Photos by Trailblazer RC&D

## Trailblazer Friends Spotted at the Grocery Store!

It was a great treat to visit with Dexter Sapp and Charlotte Durrett recently at a grocery store in Arcadia. Dexter is a retired outreach coordinator for USDA NRCS, and Ms. Charlotte is a loyal landowner and community partner. Dexter will forever be known as THE premiere “outreach guru” in Louisiana. His love of community always shines through in his efforts, and it was great working with him. It was so good to see you both! **Nice t-shirt Dexter!**

<b>JUNE 2023</b> Workshop Update	<b>WORKSHOPS</b>	<b>ATTENDEES</b>	<b>RATINGS</b>	<b>SPONSORS</b>	<b>Serepta Brown Cotton</b> June 6, 2023 - Ruston
	2	33	82% OUTSTANDING	3	<b>Community Gardens</b> June 13, 2023 - Bossier City

### WHAT DID YOU LIKE THE MOST?

Examples of products. The great story. Speaker did a super job. Success stories.  
Ideas on sustainability. Getting healthy with better eating and exercise.

Statistics represent a total or average for the two June 2023 workshops.



Dear Friends,  
Budget cuts are a common occurrence in today’s economy. In many cases, we have all had to re-examine what we spend and where we spend it. That is the current predicament for Trailblazer. Our organization is dependent upon sponsorship funds to sustain our programs. When the funds slow down, our programs slow down. We are looking forward to a quick resolution to our sponsorship issues. Thank you for your support through the years. We hope to see you again soon at a workshop in your community.

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

**Regretfully, Trailblazer RC&D has postponed workshop events scheduled through September 2023 due to contract issues with our primary sponsor. We hope to resolve these issues soon so that we can be in your communities again with great workshop opportunities. UPDATE COMING IN AUGUST NEWSLETTER**

# Conservation Conversation

## INVASIVE SPECIES

**An invasive species is an introduced, nonnative organism (disease, parasite, plant, or animal) that begins to spread or expand its range from the site of its original introduction and that has the potential to cause harm to the environment, the economy, or to human health.**

### U.S. Geological Survey

<https://www.usgs.gov/faqs/what-invasive-species-and-why-are-they-problem>

**Invasive species can be plants, animals, and other living organisms, for example, microbes.**

**The long list of Louisiana’s invasive plants and animals includes (but is not limited to):**

- |                      |                         |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Chinese tallow trees | Nutria                  |
| Chinese privet       | Asian carp              |
| Cogon grass          | Red imported fire ants  |
| Giant salvinia       | Feral hogs              |
| Hydrilla             | Apple snails            |
| Water hyacinth       | Formosan termite        |
| Alligator weed       | Asian tiger mosquito    |
| Air potato           | Northern snakehead fish |



**Northern Snakehead Fish Found in Concordia Parish**

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries reports that two northern snakehead fish were recently found in Concordia Parish. Northern snakeheads are native to Asia. They can outcompete and prey on our native species.

Northern snakeheads have been reported in 11 other states including Mississippi and Arkansas.

If you have information, or if you think you have caught a northern snakehead, please do NOT return it to the water. Take a side view photo of the fish (if possible), kill it, double bag it and freeze it. Then contact Rob Bourgeois, LDWF Aquatic Nuisance Species Coordinator at [rbourgeois@wlf.la.gov](mailto:rbourgeois@wlf.la.gov) or 225-765-0765 or contact the LDWF aquatic invasive species hotline at 225-765-3977 email at [AquaticInvasives@la.gov](mailto:AquaticInvasives@la.gov).

### Feral Hogs are in All 64 Parishes in Louisiana

They are considered the most reproductively efficient large mammal on Earth. Feral hogs destroy farmland, uproot native plants and trees, increase erosion, introduce bacteria into waterways—causing \$76 million in agricultural damage in Louisiana annually. Hog control measures used in Louisiana include recreational hunting and trapping and aerial gunning via helicopter for nuisance wildlife control.

**See page 3 for great feral hog resources.**



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Some sources report that Louisiana is second only to Florida in the number of invasive species present. If you need help controlling the invasives on your land, contact Trailblazer RC&D at (318) 237-8350, and we will connect you with someone who can help.**

# Video Resources

## FERAL HOGS

### Feral hogs are a serious problem in Louisiana.

Their high reproduction rate makes it almost impossible to control their exploding population.

Landowners and managers and urban and rural communities constantly battle the impacts caused by these destructive animals—lost crops, uprooted tree seedings, increased erosion, disease spread, and loss of native ecosystems to name a few.

Through the years, Trailblazer RC&D has offered several community workshops to provide information about feral hogs and control measures.

Check out these videos from our feral hog workshop series.

### Feral Hog Research

Dr. Glen T. Gentry, LSU AgCenter, provides a briefing on the latest research being conducted at the LSU AgCenter to address the overpopulation of feral hogs.

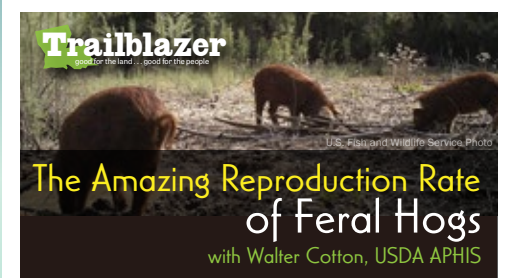
<https://youtu.be/NIOLBazaxeQ>



### The Amazing Reproduction Rate of Feral Hogs

Walter Cotton, Supervisory Wildlife Biologist, USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Wildlife Services discusses the population rate of feral hogs.

<https://youtu.be/qQxxnLYt1iY>



### The Best Tool for Controlling Feral Hogs

Walter Cotton, Supervisory Wildlife Biologist, USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Wildlife Services discusses tools for controlling feral hogs.

<https://youtu.be/5J0y7zTu0yk>



### Invasive Feral Hogs - Is There a Solution in Sight?

Buck Vandersteen, Executive Director of the Louisiana Forestry Association discusses invasive feral hogs.

<https://youtu.be/FReR87V6AKA>



**According to the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Louisiana's current feral hog population is estimated to be 700,000.**

# News

## Potential for fish kills rising due to hot temperatures, summer storms



The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) is alerting the public that the current mix of sizzling summer temperatures, extended cloudy weather, and storms may lead to inland (freshwater) and nearshore marine fish kills in waterways across the state.

Warm water has a lower carrying capacity for dissolved oxygen than cool water, creating an already delicate balance between oxygen-producing and oxygen-consuming aquatic life in waterbodies. When something alters that delicate balance, the scales can easily tip in the wrong direction and cause a hypoxic (low oxygen) fish kill. Those factors include: low or stagnant water; extended excessive hot weather; heavy rainfall; extended cloudy weather; decaying debris/vegetation in the water; turbid runoff; or nutrient-laden runoff.

Different species and sizes of fish have varying tolerances for hypoxia, so fish kills may only affect some sizes and species of fish while other sizes and species survive. Aeration of ponds, if possible, can help to alleviate hypoxic conditions and aid in the decomposition process after fish kills occur.

There are often temporary negative impacts to recreational and commercial fishing activities

immediately following fish kills, but systems normally recover on their own. Patience is required for the mostly young fish in these recovering systems to grow into catchable sizes. For this reason, stocking is not usually warranted following most low-oxygen fish kills and will not normally hasten recovery.

Decomposers and scavengers, including microbes, crawfish, crabs, fish, alligators, turtles, raccoons, and birds, will do their part in helping to clean up fish carcasses. When fall arrives, the shorter days and cooling temperatures lower the risk of low-oxygen fish kills.

Documenting fish kills in Louisiana is important whether caused by natural or non-natural events. Please report them to LDWF so biologists can investigate and document the kill as soon as possible. For information on how to report a fish kill or more information about the causes of fish kills, visit LDWF's fish kill webpage at <https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/page/fish-kills>.



SESQUICENTENNIAL

## Lincoln Parish Celebrating 150th Anniversary

In 1873, The Louisiana State Legislature passed a bill creating Lincoln Parish from parts of Jackson, Bienville, Claiborne, and Union Parishes. Now, 150 years later, Lincoln Parish is celebrating their sesquicentennial year with celebrations throughout the year coordinated by the Lincoln Parish Police Jury Sesquicentennial Committee. If you'd like to recommend activities to commemorate the sesquicentennial, or if you'd like to volunteer to help with Lincoln Parish's anniversary celebration, email [lincoln150@gmail.com](mailto:lincoln150@gmail.com).

**Congratulations to our friends in Lincoln Parish on 150 years of progress!**

**The most common cause of fish kills in farm ponds is low oxygen. From July through September, high water temperatures cause oxygen depletion. Other factors that contribute to low oxygen levels include: pond vegetation, cloudy weather, sudden die-off of plants/algae, unusual weather patterns, and overstocking.**

**Check out Trailblazer's video on pond maintenance, "Treat Your Pond Like a Garden with Jeff Sibley, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. Go to: <https://youtu.be/XrGNKjzKuiQ>**

# Did You Know ... ?



**HEAT KILLS!**



For information on heat-related illness, check out the Centers of Disease Control's Picture of America Heat-Related Illness Fact Sheet at [https://www.cdc.gov/pictureofamerica/pdfs/picture\\_of\\_america\\_heat-related\\_illness.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/pictureofamerica/pdfs/picture_of_america_heat-related_illness.pdf).

Summer 2023 is upon us. Temperatures in Louisiana are in the triple digits, and many people will suffer from heat-related illnesses. According to a report by the Centers of Disease Control, each year an average of 658 people die from heat-related illnesses.

When your body is unable to cool itself, you experience a rapid rise in body temperature. If your body cannot release this heat, it can result in heat stroke, heat exhaustion, or heat cramps.

**STAY COOL!**

**Heat exhaustion and heat stroke symptoms include:**

- Muscle cramps
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Dizziness or fainting

**Heat stroke treatment:**

- Drink frequent sips of water
- Cool off quickly with cold water or ice bath
- Wet the skin
- Cool off with fan or air conditioner
- Place cold, wet cloths or ice on your head, neck, armpits, and groin; or soak clothing with cool water
- Call 911 for medical care, if needed

**Heat stroke prevention:**

- Check on friends and family who may be at risk for heat-related illness and death
- Never leave children or pets alone in cars
- Stay hydrated, drink water before you are thirsty
- Wear loose clothing, sunscreen, and hats--use umbrellas
- Avoid strenuous work or exercise during the hottest part of the day

**Animals suffer from heat too!**

Provide your pets with plenty of water and make sure you place their water in a shady area. During walks, be careful of hot roads/sidewalks on your dog's paw pads.



**Urban Agriculture: Heat Island Effect**

Urban areas experience the heat island effect, where certain parts of cities are warmer than other parts of cities and cities are warmer than surrounding rural areas. This effect is stronger where buildings and streets are densely concentrated, and greenery is minimal. Vegetation (including urban agriculture) can reduce the heat island effect by providing shade and cooling (through transpiration and evaporation). To learn more about how to reduce the heat island effect through urban agriculture, visit the USDA's Climate Hubs webpage at <https://www.climatehubs.usda.gov/hubs/international/topic/urban-agriculture>

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# Partners & Friends

Thank you to our steadfast partners!



The Louisiana Forestry Association (LFA) is an advocate for sustainable growing, harvesting and manufacturing of Louisiana's forests. They educate landowners and logging contractors on best management practices to protect Louisiana's natural resources, and they represent LFA members on national, state, and local issues that affect forestland.

**THANK YOU!**

We appreciate LFA's support of Trailblazer RC&D and encourage you to consider membership.

**[www.laforestry.com](http://www.laforestry.com)**

**Would you like to receive a printed copy of this newsletter in your mailbox each month?**

A donation of \$100 will ensure you receive a printed copy of the latest Trailblazer news mailed to you each month. Your donation will help us continue our conservation mission and may be tax deductible.

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"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."

2 Corinthians 3:17  
New International Version



**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.

**Check us out on YouTube!**

Scan me to go to Trailblazer's YouTube

