

Acadiana Resource Conservation and Development Council

2008 ANNUAL REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

Message from the President

I have been proud and honored to serve this Council as President in 2008, and it is with mixed feelings that I relinquish this position. I believe 2008 was a pivotal year for the Acadiana RC&D Council. Many improvements were made as we continue to be actively engaged in projects relative to our mission and plan of work. Wow! We thought 2007 was a blur; well, the Acadiana RC&D has been on a wild stimulating ride in 2008!

The council seems to be growing by leaps and bounds and building a reputation with every new project. We are helping to stimulate the economy by creating job opportunities. We recently hired Mrs. Theresa Fuselier, a part time Administrative Assistant because of increasing office workload. The council hired another part time LNPI nursery manager, Mr. David Vannoy, who is a senior biology student at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (ULL). He will manage the most recently established LNPI production facility at the ULL Center for Ecology and Environmental Technology (CEET.) Another ULL senior, Mr. Andre Daugeaux, has been hired as a part time field technician to support the Acadiana Grassland Restoration Initiative (AGRI.) These projects are highlighted on the following pages. Please visit our website at www.acadianarc.com.

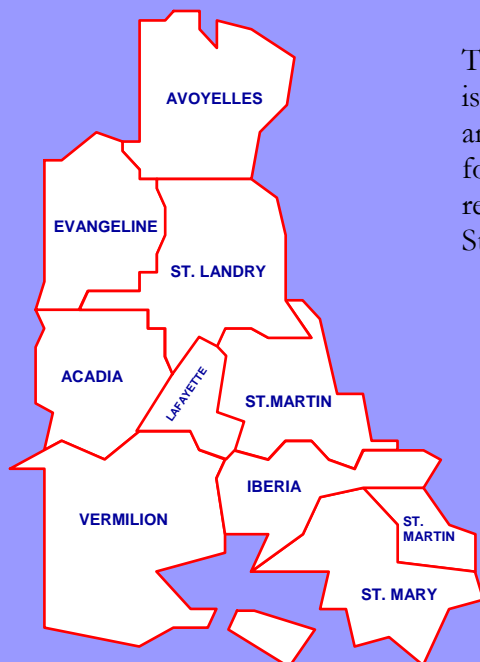
In 2008 we welcomed 3 new at-large members Council including: Marc Schaefer – Acadia Parish, Kelia Bingham – Lafayette Parish, and Cassidy LeJeune – Iberia Parish. Two new members were appointed by their respective parish governments: Pam McGee – Evangeline Parish, and Whitney Broussard – Lafayette Parish.

I am particularly proud of several awards which were presented to our Council, Coordinator, and a student intern this past year. They reflect the significance of our activities. The awards are listed on page 10 of this report.

Please take a moment to read the following report of activities and you will see just how much the Council has accomplished in one short year. I thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve as your Council President for the past several years. I welcome the incoming President Angie Fogleman. I will continue to serve as Past President, and look forward to supporting the new officers, staff and membership as they further the mission of the Acadiana RC&D Council.

Colette Anzalone

Council President



The **Acadiana Resource Conservation and Development Council** is a non-profit organization that addresses the social, environmental and economical concerns of South Central Louisiana. Our primary focus is on the conservation, development and utilization of natural resources in Acadia, Avoyelles, Evangeline, Iberia, Lafayette, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Mary and Vermilion Parishes.

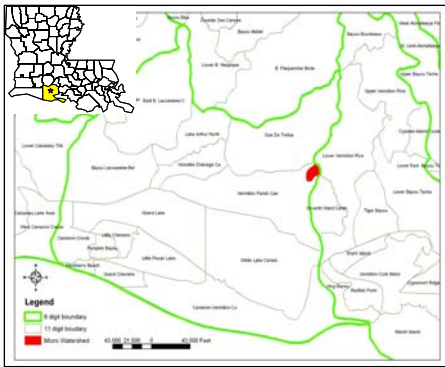


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Coulee Baton Microwatershed Rural Sewer Improvement Project

The Vermilion Parish Soil and Water Conservation District initiated a study to address water quality issues in the Coulee Baton Microwatershed. One of the issues identified was that of aging, failing home sewer systems. The council entered into an agreement with VSWCD, then applied for and received funding from Louisiana's Department of Environmental Quality to support a project which intends to repair or replace aging, failing home sewer systems.

The Coulee Baton Microwatershed Rural Sewer Improvement Project is a project that will result in immediate improvement of surface water quality. In 2008, two town hall meetings were organized and conducted in an effort to advertise and explain the project. About 10 citizens attended each of them. From the applications received at these meetings, three were ranked and chosen to receive specific effluent-reduction (ER) systems at no charge to the homeowner. With input from the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals and several sewer installers/equipment distributors, an upgraded rock plant filter system, ER field line and spray irrigation system were installed. A public demonstration day was held to educate homeowners, installers and inspectors of the advantages of these ER systems which are more suitable for use in the area soils. Approximately 50 people attended the field day presentation, which placed emphasis on the environmental hazards of failing sewer systems and proper home sewer system care and maintenance. Advantages of the three specific effluent reduction systems were emphasized as the participants toured the demonstration home sites. The field day launched the cost-share phase of the project. As of this writing, three other home owners have taken advantage of the 60% reimbursement made available from DEQ for new sewer system installations.





Acadiana Grassland Restoration Initiative

This program seeks to restore native grasslands for the purpose of providing wildlife habitat corridors in two regions of the Acadiana RC&D service area. Ideally, field edges, non-productive acreage, and riparian areas on working lands will be targeted to encourage wildlife habitation, and to protect surface waters by reducing erosion and associated sedimentation and nutrient run-off. The project will establish two areas as demonstration sites for the purpose of educating other landowners as well as professional conservationists.

Three workshops will provide further technical training for conservation professionals. Funding has allowed for the procurement of major pieces of equipment and the salary for a full-time field technician. The primary function of the project is to provide landowner assistance in varying degrees to aid in the installation of native grasslands on private lands.

To date, plans are being drafted for the two demonstration farms which have been identified in Acadia and St. Landry parishes.



No Till Drill Rental Program

The Council continues to partner with the NRCS, National Wild Turkey Federation, US FWS, Quail Unlimited, LA Association of RC&D Councils, and SWCD's to promote and provide equipment for conservation planting of native grasses. The drill is equipped with multiple seed boxes to accommodate seeds of varying sizes and textures. Its design dispenses seed precisely. The no till feature requires no seedbed preparation. It is ideal for establishment of native grass range plantings, wildlife habitat and conservation buffers.

Each season, the number of drill rentals increase, along with the number of acres affected. Land managers often return because of satisfactory results. In the 2008 calendar year, Acadiana RC&D rented the drill 17 times; approximately 438 acres were planted in native grasses.



Southeast Quail Study Group Conference

In July, the Council partnered with Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to host the 14th Annual Southeast Quail Study Group conference at the Lafayette Hilton and Towers. With the support of 16 sponsors and the participation of about 120 attendees, this event was both productive and fun!



Bobwhite Quail Habitat Workshop



In partnership with Southern University, the LA Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and NRCS, the council hosted two workshops for area landowners. Attendees were provided with updated technical information necessary to enhance and/or establish wildlife habitat on and around working lands. About 40 area landowners and sports enthusiasts attended each workshop



Whitetail Deer Management Workshop



National Organization of PBNRCS

The council Coordinator and staff were invited to speak at the annual conference of Professional Black NRCS Employees. They presented two sessions focusing on individual contributions to the global climate change phenomenon. Participants calculated their carbon footprint, were given information about energy-reducing strategies, and were informed of renewable energy technologies and federal and state tax incentives.



Native Plant Identification Course

The Acadiana RC&D Council, hosted two wetland plant identification courses in April and October in and around the Lafayette, Louisiana area. Dr. Robert H. Mohlenbrock taught this intensive hands-on field course where the distinguishing characteristics of every plant encountered was discussed. The students learn techniques and gain experience in identifying plants in various ecosystems — bottomland hardwood, fresh and saline marsh, and gulf coast prairies. A total of 43 students took the course in 2008.





Louisiana Native Plant Initiative

This program seeks to increase and release locally adapted ecotypes of native grasses, forbs and legumes for eventual commercial availability. The potential economic and ecological benefits are broad and numerous.

In partnership with ULL, new production acres for the LNPI were added at the Center for Ecology and Environmental Technology (CEET) pictured below. A part time field technician was hired (David Vannoy) through funding from TNC. The original Lake Charles test plot was relocated because of planned highway construction.

In early March 2008, the council hosted a volunteer group of high school students to transplant native prairie specimens from a remnant to a dedicated site in Gueydan.

In April the council's annual Spring meeting was held on site at CEET. Active council members participated in the transplanting of native specimens on the first rows placed in production there. New council members witnessed first-hand the time and labor-intensive processes that must ensue in order to increase native seed sources. The seedlings which were installed last spring produced seeds which were harvested in the fall. More acreage is being prepared for another spring planting.

PARTNERS

- Acadiana RC&D Council
- Barataria Terrebonne National Estuary Program
- Bayou Land RC&D
- Coastal Plain Conservancy
- Imperial Calcasieu RC&D
- Lafourche-Terrebonne SWCD
- Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry
- Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
- Louisiana Wildlife Federation
- McNeese State University
- National Wildlife Federation
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Nicholls State University
- Rapides Wildlife Association
- The Louisiana Nature Conservancy
- University of Louisiana at Lafayette
- USGS - National Wetland Research Center



Mission Statement

The Louisiana Native Plant Initiative will collect, preserve, increase, and study native grasses, forbs and legumes from Louisiana ecosystems, conserving a vanishing natural resource and providing an essential step in the development of a native plant seed industry that will supply plant materials for restoration, revegetation, roadside plantings and the ornamental plant industry.



Sustainable Energy and Efficiency Demonstration

Renewable energy derived from agricultural crops has become an essential component of this nation’s energy strategy. This three-phase project seeks to address issues of lowering renewable energy production costs by 1) Implementing energy conservation practices subsequent to on-farm Energy Audits, 2) Estimating yield and quality of potential biomass crops, 3) Demonstrating a char-coaling process to reduce the size and weight of biomass, thereby reducing transportation costs/end-user costs.

Farmers throughout the area were contacted with program announcements. Of those that responded, three were chosen for energy audits to be conducted by EnSave at no cost. The purpose of this phase was to demonstrate energy usage and recommend a combination of behavior changes and equipment installations to decrease overall energy usage. Two of the farmers developed energy-reducing projects that were “commercially available” and thus eligible for USDA—Rural Development 9006 grant program. The council assisted these farmers (and six more farmers with smaller projects) in the grant application process.

The biomass variety trials associated with the SEED project are behind schedule because of the lack of production plots, and because of weather-related issues. However, new acreage has been secured at CEET, and potential acreage has been identified on a local farm. The biomass will eventually be harvested and evaluated for total dry matter yield and energy values.

Regarding the final phase, one of our council members, Arch Hill, is designing and constructing the biomass reduction apparatus, which is intended to accept biomass, reduce it in a retort heated by natural gas and its own off-gases. The product rendered will be a fine charcoal powder, which will then be briquetted in a press. Dr. Hill is about 2/3 finished with the charcoaling apparatus (pictured below). Based on the variety trials, the more promising feedstocks will be evaluated according to conversion yield, conversion efficiency, energy value, and overall cost of production. Findings will be reported and information will be disseminated to explore market potential.



Project Benefits

- reduces on-farm energy costs
- promotes sustainable agriculture practices
- opens markets for farmers and businesses
- encourages rural development
- displaces fossil fuel use
- lowers market price of renewable energy
- provides forum for education outreach
- reduces national dependence on foreign oil

Project Partners

- EnSave
- Primary Power Fuel Company
- USDA – Rural Development
- Gulf Coast Joint Venture
- University of Louisiana at Lafayette



Public Speaking, Agronomy

The council is proud to host several FFA Career Development Events on an annual basis. 2008 was no exception. A public speaking workshop was held on the ULL campus, where approximately 35 students were given the opportunity to hone skills.

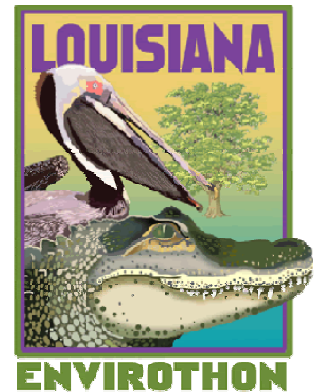


This year a third course was added for high school agriculture teachers and students. Dr. DeRamus, professor of animal science at ULL and Larry Allain, Biologist with USGS National Wetlands Research Center conducted a training course for the FFA Agronomy Competition for about 25 participants.



Envirothon

Teams of area high school students train and study for the Louisiana Envirothon state competition, which is held annually at the ULL Cade Farm. Winning competitors receive recognition for demonstrating knowledge in environmental science and natural resource conservation, and go on to compete at the national level. Professionals from DEQ, LDAF, LDWF, LDNR are among those who serve as station masters for the day. Support comes from over twenty organizations across the state and country. The council serves as primary fiscal agent for the Louisiana Envirothon. Council members are usually on hand to volunteer for the day of informative fun, to support and encourage the development of tomorrow's conservationists.



Soils Judging Competition

FFA members converged at University of Louisiana at Lafayette Cade Farm recently for the Invitational Land Judging Competition. 70 teams of high school students sharpened their skills in determining land capability classes, proper use and treatment for specific soils. The Career Development Event helped students realize the influence of land protection, land features on production, and select suitable soil and water conservation practices. The event is sponsored by the Acadiana RC&D Council; Area IV SWCD; USDA, NRCS; and University of Louisiana at Lafayette.





Northwest Acadiana Sports Authority— Iota Ballpark Project

The council welcomed Brian Daigle, an Industrial Engineering student at ULL, as an Earth Team volunteer. Brian developed a design and model of a sports complex for the community of Iota in Acadia Parish. His efforts became his senior thesis project, and were supported by council and by the Northwest Acadia Sports Authority. The project has been named Moody/Amy Memorial Park in honor of the family who donated the property on which the complex is to be built. It is on display at the Iota city hall. Brian was recognized as a Louisiana Earth Team Volunteer of the Year for donating approximately 400 hours to this project..

Fire Wise Education

The purpose of this project is to improve wildfire protection in Louisiana’s Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) communities for the benefit of all citizens of the state. Smokey Bear signs designed to make the public aware of the current fire condition were installed at twenty-two volunteer fire departments in rural communities in the Acadiana RC&D service area. Agreements were signed with each department which obligated them to maintain the signs so that the fire danger rating shown is accurate on any given day .

This project is designed to improve public awareness of fire danger, conditions, and burn bans. Five Volunteer Fire Departments – Beaver/Cypress, Morse, Cypremort Pointe, Chitimacha Tribe, and Morrow and Egan were each presented with a \$1,000 sub grant to host homeowner/community meetings. The meetings focus on the Wildland Urban Interface and ways the community can become fire safe. These funds are specifically intended to promote a long-range strategy for community wildfire protection programs at the local level and to educate the public about the importance of Wildfire prevention and protection in rural Louisiana communities.





Council Recognition

Because this council strives to obtain partnership with and support from various public and private, local, state and federal agencies, recognition from these entities is particularly rewarding. In 2008, The Acadiana RC&D Council garnered deserved recognition for its efforts.

These awards are:

- Conservation Organization of the Year (LA and National Wildlife Federation)
- State Conservationist's Office Award for Area II
- Southwest State Association Outstanding Performance by a Council
- Earth Team Volunteer of the Year to Brian Daigle (UL student intern)

These awards are validation that under effective leadership and with dedicated membership, RC&D councils play an important role in both conservation and community development in America's rural areas.



2009 Officers

Angie Fogleman
Nolan Romero
Don Menard
John Girard

Staff

David Vannoy
CC Richmond
Lonnie Fontenot
Theresa Fuselier
Sue Arnaud
Andre' Daugereaux



Summary of 2008 Finances

Income		
AGRI	\$	31,909.68
BOBWHITE QUAIL	\$	577.71
COULEE BATON MWATERSHED SEWER	\$	32,110.00
Drill Rental	\$	4,541.34
ENVIROTHON	\$	17,123.19
2008 FFA Land Judging	\$	885.00
FIRE WISE	\$	20,018.00
LA NATIVE PLANT INITIATIVE	\$	42,542.84
WETLAND PLANT ID	\$	25,800.00
SE QUAIL STUDY GROUP	\$	32,430.00
SEED Project	\$	16,018.99
WHITETAIL DEER MANAGEMENT WORKS	\$	355.00
Facilitation/Mgt Fee	\$	1,779.11
Membership Dues	\$	500.00
Reimbursed Expenses	\$	7,910.44
		\$ 234,501.30
Expense		
Advertising	\$	734.11
Automobile Expense	\$	257.31
Awards	\$	403.19
Bad Debt Write Off	\$	375.00
Bank Service Charges	\$	1,193.21
AGRI	\$	103.46
BOBWHITE QUAIL	\$	276.12
COULEE BATON MWATERSHED SEWER	\$	19,983.15
Drill Rental	\$	1,763.06
ENVIROTHON	\$	11,921.25
FFA WORKSHOPS	\$	937.71
FIRE WISE	\$	7,597.22
LA Native Plant Initiative	\$	28,146.18
QUAIL WORKSHOP 02/08	\$	280.27
SE QUAIL STUDY GROUP JULY 2008	\$	29,978.59
SEED Project	\$	21,383.06
WETLAND PLANT ID	\$	18,024.35
WHITETAIL DEER MANAGEMENT WORKS	\$	838.13
Contributions	\$	126.92
Dues and Subscriptions	\$	625.00
EQUIPMENT MAINT / FUEL	\$	40.00
FACILITATION / MGT EXPENSES	\$	374.94
Insurance	\$	5,685.23
Interest Expense	\$	527.16
Licenses and Permits	\$	5.00
Meetings Expense	\$	2,822.88
Office Expense	\$	4,031.94
Payroll	\$	32,775.88
Postage and Delivery	\$	260.58
Professional Fees	\$	1,000.00
Program Expense	\$	650.00
TECHNOLGY STIPEND	\$	2,360.00
Travel	\$	2,435.91
Web & Internet Services	\$	1,233.57
		\$ 199,150.38
Net Ordinary Income	\$	35,350.92
Interest Income	\$	245.76
		\$ 35,596.68



Acadiana RC&D Council Thanks Our Sponsors & Partners

Partners

USDA

Natural Resources Conservation Services
Rural Development
Farm Service Agency

RC&D Associations

Louisiana Association of RC&D Councils
Southwest States RC&D Association
National Association of RC&D Councils

Partners *(Alphabetically Listed)*

Bamert Seed
Barataria Terrebonne National Estuary Program
Biotic Consultants, Inc.
Black Bear Conservation Committee
Coastal Plain Conservancy
EnSave
FFA Organization
Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative
Iota Recreation Sports Authority
Les Chretiens
Louisiana Dept. of Agriculture and Forestry
Louisiana Cattlemen Association
Louisiana Dept. of Health and Hospitals
Louisiana Dept. of Environmental Quality
Louisiana Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries
Louisiana Native Seed Company
Louisiana Wildlife Federation
Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation
McNeese State University
National Wild Turkey Federation
Nicholls State University
Pastures, LLC
Primary Power
Quail Forever (Atchafalaya Chapter)
Quail Unlimited (Northwest LA Chapter)
Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group
Southern University
The Nature Conservancy
Turner Seed
USGS - National Wetland Research Center
University of Louisiana at Lafayette
Village of Estherwood, Louisiana

Sponsors

Corporate

First South Farm Credit

Conservation Districts

Acadia
Avoyelles
Evangeline
Iberia
Lafayette
St. Martin
St. Mary
Vermilion

Parish Governments

Acadia
Avoyelles
Evangeline
Lafayette
St. Martin
St. Mary
Vermilion

Southeast Quail Study Group Sponsors

Bamert Seed
BASF
Covey Rise
First South Farm Credit
Kisatchie National Forest
Louisiana Outdoor Writers Association
Louisiana Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries
Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation
Quail Forever (Atchafalaya Chapter)
Quail Unlimited (Northwest LA Chapter)
USDA / FSA
USDA / NRCS
USDA / NRCS / GLCI