

Commission NEWS

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Nick Ivy takes top job at MSWCC July 1

BY KATHY DOUGAN, MSWCC

Nick Ivy, who currently serves as the Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission Interim Executive Director, takes over as MSWCC Executive Director on July 1, 2021.



NICK IVY

Mark Gilbert's last day as head of the commission is June 30, 2021, when he officially retires after 33 years of service with the agency.

Prior to his promotion as interim executive director of the commission, Ivy served as a Bureau Director II, Environmental Administrator I, and a Natural Resource Specialist I, II and III. He was hired by MSWCC in August 2014.

Ivy credits his rapid ascent to

the top position at the commission to "listening to the needs of the people we serve, and being willing to work hard to meet those needs. The passion for conservation that I have seen in the Commissioners, cooperators, and employees of all of the agencies in the conservation partnership, have instilled in me a desire to not only carry their legacy into the future, but build upon the great foundation that has been laid before us," Ivy said. "I owe everything to the ones who have taken the time to pass on their years of knowledge to me. Passion for conservation is what has gotten us to where we are, and it is that same passion that will drive us forward into the future."

A graduate of Mississippi State University with a bachelor of science degree in Agricultural Engineering Technology and Busi-

ness, Ivy worked seven years in agricultural research for Mississippi State University and the University of Arizona, and as Area Manager for Progressive Solutions Chemical Applicators in the Northeast Region.

Ivy and his wife, Shannon, have three children: Ethan, age 13; Dylan, age 9; and Julianna, age 5. They live in Brandon and attend First Baptist Church of Brandon.

In their spare time, the family enjoys the great outdoors, running and triathlon, and attending live music concerts – especially bluegrass music, as often as possible.

Ivy is the fourth executive director in the history of the commission. Gale Martin, Don Underwood and Mark Gilbert preceded Ivy as executive directors.

Please join us in congratulating Ivy on his promotion.

MCDEA plans best conference ever for June 23-24

BY KATHY DOUGAN, MSWCC

As we all venture out after the isolation of the COVID-19 pandemic, the MS Conservation District Employees Association board and North Area SWCDs have worked extra hard to ensure a very special conference experience when we get together and meet in June.

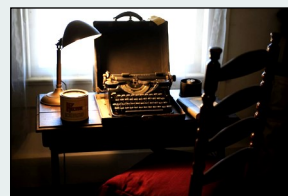
MCDEA President Suzette Jetton encourages all district employees, old and new, to attend the conference, which this year will be held June 23-24 at the

Hampton Inn Conference Center in Oxford.

In addition to hands-on activities and educational information to take back to your districts, participants have the opportunity

to tour Rowan Oaks, the home of Nobel prize-winning author William Faulkner and his wife, Estelle, for more than 30 years.

Other events include an optional crafts class at 6 p.m. June 22.



Faulkner's home office, where he wrote many of his best-known works.

A silent auction is planned during the conference. MCDEA board asks that each district bring an item for the auction.

For questions, call Jetton at 228.395.1503 or MSWCC Executive Director Mark Gilbert at 601.354.7645.

[Click here to download MCDEA Registration Packet](#)

David Barton, long-time Hinds County farmer, conservation leader, passes away at age 81



DAVID BARTON

David Barton, 81, a fifth-generation Hinds County farmer who served in leadership roles for Hinds County SWCD and the Mississippi Association of Conservation Districts, passed away on May 20, 2021.

Barton loved the family farm, Barton Farms LLC/Canaan Plantation, where he grew up and actively managed the farm until his death. The first farmer to embrace no-till practices in Hinds County, Barton was passionate about conserving our natural resources.

A commissioner with the Hinds County Soil and Water Conservation Commission, he won multiple state and national awards for his conservation efforts. He was named a Soil Health Champion by the National Association of Conservation Districts in 2016.

A 1957 graduate of Raymond High School, Barton joined the U.S. Army, graduated from

Hinds Junior College, and gained a commission to Officer Candidate School.

He graduated from Mississippi State University with a degree in Civil Engineering, and later from the Jackson School of Law. He left military service as a captain, having earned a Ranger tab and senior parachutist with Airborne wings.

After briefly working for MDOT, Barton joined Warren Brothers Company (now APAC-Mississippi Inc.) in 1966. He worked his way up in the company, retiring as APAC Regional President and serving on the board of directors. He served on the Hinds Community College Foundation board of directors.

VISITATION: 9-11 AM May 25, at Wright & Ferguson Funeral Home in Raymond **SERVICE** 11 AM.

In lieu of flowers, the Barton family asks those who wish to express sympathy to consider a donation to the Hinds Community College Foundation for the David C. Barton Scholarship, PO Box 1100, Raymond, MS 39154. [CLICK FOR OBITUARY](#)



Calhoun Academy students learn about watersheds from MSWCC's Carlee Goode



MSWCC Natural Resource Specialist Carlee Goode uses an EnviroScape model to teach students about watersheds.



Fourth and fifth grade students at Calhoun Academy pose for a photo with a Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission EnviroScape teaching model in the foreground. MSWCC's Carlee Goode visited the classroom in March 2021. PHOTOS SANDRA LEE

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www.mswcc.ms.gov



Mississippi Soil & Water
Conservation Commission
680 Monroe Street, Suite B
Jackson, MS 39202
Office: 601-354-7645
Fax: 601-354-6628
Kathy Dougan, MSWCC
Public Relations Director
kdougan@mswcc.ms.gov

From Idea to Implementation

Agostinelli works with Quitman SWCD, high school, MACD grant to create Outdoor Learning Facility

BY KATHY DOUGAN, MSWCC

QUITMAN COUNTY—An already robust outdoor conservation education program at Madison S. Palmer High School recently doubled its classroom capacity by building an Outdoor Learning Facility next to the school's High Tunnel House.

Daniel Myrick, environmental science and biology teacher at Madison Palmer, spearheaded the Outdoor Learning Facility project, which was completed over the course of three months by Myrick, his students, and MSWCC Field Representative Colin Agostinelli.

The outdoor learning area is 60-feet x 60-feet and has four planting beds.

"Class, student break and mentoring will be done out there," Myrick said.

"Building our outside classroom caused students to buy in and work hard to create a space they can be proud of. This increased their ability to critically think about things and work until the job is



The Outdoor Learning Facility encompasses 3600-square feet.

done," Myrick explained. "Now that the project is complete, teachers of all subject areas will use this classroom to engage their students in new ways."

The high tunnel, gifted to the high school by Quitman County SWCD in 2020, is an enclosed structure that covers in-ground crops, protects them from harsh weather, and extends the growing season; it also includes conservation practices such as drip irrigation and cover cropping.

At the MACD 2020 Annual Meeting in Jackson, Myrick presented a PowerPoint slide show created by his students about the High Tunnel as a Quitman County Success Story.

Quitman County SWCD

applied for and received a MACD Endowment Fund Matching Grant in 2020 to assist with the cost of constructing the Outdoor Learning Facility next to the high tunnel.

Myrick hopes the facilities will spark the interest of students to further study environmental education and conservation after leaving Madison Palmer.

The school thanks MACD and the Quitman County SWCD for providing funding for the project through the MACD Endowment Fund Matching Grant Program.

The project was completed in partnership with Madison Palmer High School, MSWCC, Quitman Co. SWCD and MACD.

Click links below to learn about Sam E. Soil and more

Watch, listen and learn the story of Sam E. Soil by clicking here to visit: [Sam E Soil](#)

To view MSWCC's educational videos, please click [MSWCC videos link](#).

For news and information, please click to visit our website, www.mswcc.ms.gov.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

SUMMER AREA MEETINGS

CENTRAL

Thursday, June 3
Madison County

SOUTH

Thursday, June 17
Adams County

NORTH

Thursday, July 8
Desoto County

DELTA

Wednesday, July 14
Holmes County

2021 MCDEA CONFERENCE

June 23-24, 2021
Hampton Inn, Oxford

For more information about the MCDEA Conference, call MCDEA President Suzette Jetton, 228.395.1503 or MSWCC Executive Director Mark Gilbert, 601.354.7645

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Plant a seed, watch it grow

Pre-K student Clayton Muirhead at Beechwood Elementary School in Vicksburg, plants flower seeds in his Sam E. Soil pot during class with teachers Salli Hobson and Jennifer Stringer on April 19. The 4K school recently studied all about plants during this first in-school program since the COVID-19 pandemic.

—Courtesy Warren County SWCD