MISSISSIPPI Soil & Water Conservation Commission

VOL. 1, NO. 2 JULY 2017

Commission News

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Tel. 601.354.7645 Fax. 601.354.6628

Nearly 150 attend MS Native Wildflower and Pollinator Field Day June 22

COFFEEVILLE—Despite predictions of heavy rains and high humidity, the rain held off until after the Field Day, resulting in a nice turnout at the Jamie Whitten Plant Materials Center.

Area 4 Supervisory Engineer Paul Rodrique (with microphone) conducts a wagon field tour.

Front to back: MSWCC Executive Director Mark Gilbert, MSWCC Environmental Administrator Nick Ivy and MSWCC Branch Director Clay Burns man the grill.

Clay Burns adds his special blend of spices to lunch.

John DeFazio demonstrates seed tamping at a Field Day tour stop.

PHOTOS BY KATHY DOUGAN, MSWCC

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MCDEA conference held June 27-29

OCEAN SPRINGS — The Gulf Hills Hotel & Resort was the setting for the annual Mississippi Conservation District Employees Association conference this year.

Presenters included: Dr. Christine Coker, MSU Extension Service-Community Gardens; Jennifer Buchanan, Crosby Arboretum-Pollinators; Cherie Schadler, MDEQ Mobile Classroom; Becky Stowe, The Nature Conservancy; Patrick Levine, Mississippi Department of Marine Resources; Jan Walker, Master Naturalist, Harrison County-Conservation Trunk; Paul Labetard, Gulf Coast Custom Knifemakers; Lance Middleton, MSWCC-Wetlands Enviroscape; John Seal, Chainsaw Artist; Rhonda Bryars, Southeast District Employees Association; Debra Veeder, MS Adopt-a-Stream; Suzanne Cook, NRCS Boot Camp, Marion County SWCD; Vernon Pierce, Pineolene; and Sanita Jetton Nelson, Wood Painting Activity.

Attendees were welcomed to the meeting by: Nancy Melancon, President of MS Conservation District Employees Association; Greg Crochet, MACD, South Area Vice President, and Benny Goff, Jackson County Soil & Water Conservation District.

Pete Hunter, MACD President, Gary Blair, MACD past president, and Rhonda Bryars, Southeast District Employees Association, spoke at the event.

MACD PRESIDENT PETE HUNTER

MSWCC Soil Tunnel travels the State

The Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission Soil Tunnel has traveled to 14 destinations since January, and has more visits to schools, conservation carnivals and communities for the remainder of the year.

The Tunnel is a 16-feet x 16-feet x 10-feet high inflatable educational aid, and can be reserved through the Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission and set up on-site by MSWCC personnel.

Visitors to the Soil Tunnel have the opportunity to:

- View the world under the top soil by walking inside of the tunnel;
- See where organisms such as bacteria and fungi thrive;
- And visit the homes of earth-dwelling creatures such as worms and moles.

Visual images on the outside of the tunnel explain:

- Functions of Soil;
- Urban Soil Profile;
- Agricultural Soil Profile;
- Forest Soil Profile;
- Wetlands Soil Profile, and;
- Storm Water Pollution and Prevention

Concepts explained include: soil layers, drainage and function; storm water pollution prevention; the impact of land use on soil, soil organisms and conservation.

To schedule the soil tunnel to visit your local Soil and Water Conservation District, please call MSWCC Branch Director II Clay Burns at 601-354-7645.

Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission
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Charlie W. Morgan
State Forester
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Jackson, MS

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Mississippi State, MS

Dr. George Hopper
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Mississippi State, MS

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MSWCC CALENDAR

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CENTRAL AREA MEETING

Smith County SWCD hosts Summer meeting; patriotic theme, Smith County watermelons

RALEIGH—Smith County SWCD hosted this year's Central Area summer meeting with a patriotic flair, decorating with red, white and blue tablecloths, bud vases of roses with baby's breath and blue ribbons, and a floral display on the stage. The 204th Air Defense Artillery Battalion Color Guard presented the colors, and the SWCD served lunch including homemade desserts and Smith County watermelons, with more than 100 attending.

Speakers included: Gary King, Smith County District Commissioner; Jim Overby, Smith SWCD Chairman; Monte Ladner, Central Area Vice President;

Partnership reports by Area Vice President Erica Fortenberry, MSWCC Executive Director Mark Gilbert;

NRCS State Conservationist Kurt Readus; and MACD President Pete Hunter.

A slate of officers was presented by the Nominating Committee; Don Underwood presented Commissioner Training, followed by Awards Presentations and lunch.

Erica Fortenberry, Neshoba SWCD (left); Wallace Cade, NRCS, Lowndes, Oktibbeha, Noxubee (seated, left); (right from back) Jay Jay Henderson, Lowndes SWCD Clerk; Lori Chaisson, Lowndes SWCD Technician; Kayla Neal, Oktibbeha SWCD Clerk; and Helen Hall, Noxubee SWCD Clerk

Monte Ladner, Leake Co. MACD Central Area Vice President

MACD President Pete Hunter, left, presents Commissioner of the Year award to Carl Mason, Neshoba County SWCD.

Earth Team Volunteer Team Leader Award

Earth Team Volunteer Award presented by MACD President Pete Hunter

Jim Overby, Smith County SWCD Chairman

Gary King, Smith County District Commissioner

Mark Gilbert, MSWCC Executive Director

Erica Fortenberry, District Employee of the Year

Kurt Readus, State Conservationist, NRCS

MACD President Pete Hunter, left, presents Jeff Fortenberry with MACD Central Employee of the Year award.

POSTER CONTEST WINNER: Tate Brister, Copiah SWCD, was poster winner for grades 2-3 (pictured at *LEFT* with Pete Hunter).

MACD CENTRAL AREA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Monte Ladner, Area VP
Andy R. Cotton
Paul Myrick
Joe Byrd
LeAnne Peters
David Barton
Ross Williamson

CONTEST WINNERS (not present at meeting): POSTER WINNERS: Damon Latham, Lowndes SWCD, Special Education; Mia Berry, Madison SWCD, grades K-1; Elijah Camba, Noxubee WCD, grades 4-6; Allie Rose Dalton, Madison SWCD, grades 7-9, and; Ivy Smith, Madison SWCD, grades 10-12. ESSAY WINNERS: John David Phillips, Madison SWCD, grades 7-8, and; Zach Ainsworth, Simpson SWCD, grades 11-12.

PHOTOS BY KATHY DOUGAN, MSWCC

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DELTA AREA MEETING

Yazoo County SWCD hosts summer meeting at historic Yazoo City public library annex

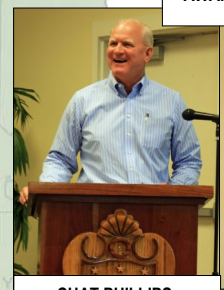
YAZOO CITY—The B.S. Ricks Library Annex was the setting for the Delta Area Summer meeting. The library, added to the National Registry of Historic Places in 1975, was constructed in 1901 in the Beaux Arts style and is located on shady corner on Main Street in downtown Yazoo City.

Gip Carter, the Delta Area Vice President, opened the meeting, with a welcome from Yazoo SWCD Chat Phillips. Speakers included MACD President Pete Hunter; MSWCC Executive Director Mark Gilbert; NRCS State Conservationist Kurt Readus; NRCS Area Conservationist Kevin Kennedy; and Delta Area MCDEA member Ellen Davis.

Don Underwood conducted Commissioners' Training; Chat Phillips delivered the Nominating Committee Report, and Jeff Good, owner of Soul City Hospitality, president of Mania Bene Restaurant Management Group, owner/operator of Bravo! Italian Restaurant & Bar, Broad Street Baking Company and Sal & Mookie's New York Pizza & Ice Cream Joint, founder of Up With Farms and mississippifarmed.com, was the keynote speaker. Bob Morgan delivered the invocation, which was followed by lunch, then presentations for the Outstanding Awards, Essays and Poster Contests winners by Pete Hunter.

OUTSTANDING CROPLAND AWARD JF PHILLIPS FARMS

DELTA AREA OUTSTANDING DISTRICT COMMISSION BOB MORGAN (CENTER) WITH PETE HUNTER (LEFT) AND GIP CARTER

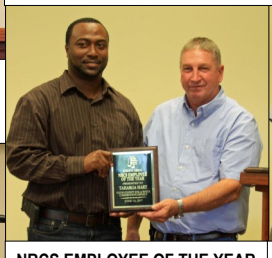


CHAT PHILLIPS, YAZOO COUNTY SWCD

OUTSTANDING WILDLIFE CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR PINEY CREEK RANCH, GARY CHESS (LEFT) RECEIVES AWARD FROM GIP CARTER

LASHON COUNTS RECEIVES DELTA DISTRICT EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR AWARD

MARK GILBERT, MSWCC EXEC. DIRECTOR



NRCS EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR TAHARGA HART

GRADE 9-10 ESSAY CONTEST WINNER KINKEAD DENT

KURT READUS, NRCS, STATE CONSERVATIONIST

PETE HUNTER, MACD PRESIDENT

JEFF GOOD (LEFT) CHATS WITH GARY CHESS AT DELTA AREA SUMMER MEETING

PHOTOS BY KATHY DOUGAN, MSWCC

Jeff Good introduces Up in Farms Food Hub to farmers, attendees at Central Area meeting

JEFF GOOD

Jeff Good is the founding principal and managing partner of Soul City Hospitality, a social business enterprise focused on developing Mississippi's local food economy. The Up in Farms Food Hub is the first effort created for this pupose, and is actively brokering growing contacts for dozens of small and medium-sized family farms in an effort to get Mississippi-fresh produce on supermarket shelves, in school cafeterias and on the menus of restaurants throughout the state.

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SOUTH AREA MEETING

Pike County SWCD hosts Summer meeting at Southwest Mississippi Community College

SUMMIT—The Southwest Mississippi Community College was the setting for the 2017 Mississippi Association of Conservation Districts South Area Summer Meeting on June 20, 2017.

Greg Crochet, South Area Vice President, called the meeting to order, with invocation by the Rev. Owen Royal. A beautiful a cappela rendition of the National Anthem was performed by Joe Elliott, SMCC Choral Director, followed by a welcome from Dr. Steve Bishop, SMCC President.

Luke Brewer, the president of the Summit Board of Supervisors spoke, followed by Scott Culberson, Acting Area Conservationist, NRCS, Mark Gilbert, Executive Director, MSWCC; and Martha Watts, MARCDC President.

Don Underwood conducted commissioner training, followed by a District Employee Election. The South Area MACD elected officers, and Dr. Brian R. Williams, Assistant Extension Professor at MS State University, was the keynote speaker.

After lunch at the SMCC cafeteria, Greg Crochet emceed the awards presentation and drawings for door prizes.

MARTY FULTON (RIGHT) OUTSTANDING NRCS EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

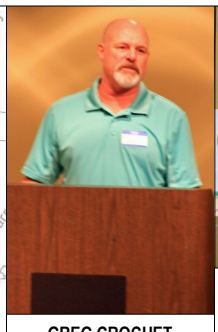
(AT RIGHT) OUTSTANDING LIVESTOCK CONSERVATIONIST WILEY GREGORY

MARTHA WATTS MARCDC PRESIDENT

KELVIN BURGE (LEFT) OUTSTANDING DISTRICT EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

SCOTT CULBERSON ACTING AREA CONSERVATIONIST

NANCY LAZENBY RECEIVES AWARD OF APPRECIATION



GREG CROCHET SOUTH AREA VP

PETE HUNTER (LEFT) PRESENTS OUTSTANDING WILDLIFE CONSERVATIONIST AWARD TO PAUL LAWRENCE

DR. STEVE BISHOP SMCC PRESIDENT

Pike County Soil & Water Conservation District
Paul L. Singleton, Chairman
Howard Alford, Vice Chairman
Bobby McKennis, Secretary/Treasurer
Billy Ray Magee, Commissioner
Paul E. Nunnery, Commissioner
Nancy G. Lazenby, District Clerk

JOE ELLIOTT, SMCC CHORAL DIRECTOR

MORE THAN 150 ATTENDED THE SOUTH AREA SUMMER MEETING IN SUMMIT, MISSISSIPPI

PHOTOS BY KATHY DOUGAN, MSWCC

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NORTH AREA MEETING

Alcorn County SWCD hosts Summer meeting at Corinth, Mississippi

MCDEA Vice President Meleiah Tyus (left) and Area Vice President Faye Burrell speak at the North Area Summer Meeting.

CORINTH -- The MS Cooperative Extension Service building in Corinth was the site for the 207 North Area Summer Meeting.

Veterans presented the colors, with the National Anthem performed by Jacy Thrasher and welcome by Lowell Hinton, Deputy Commissioner of Alcorn County.

Speakers included: MACD President Pete Hunter; MSWCC Executive Director Mark Gilbert; State Conservationist NRCS Kurt Readus; and Glenn McCullough Jr., Executive Director of MS Development Authority.

PHOTOS BY ROBIN TISDALE, MSWCC

Outstanding Wildlife ConservationTuscumbia Bottom River Farms

Terry Todd NRCS Employee of the Year

Rourke Stevenson of Itawamba Co. (left) receives First Place Poster Contest award grades K-1 from Pete Hunter.

Outstanding Wildlife Conservationist, Tuscumbia Bottom River Farms

Elizabeth Gann, Itawamba Co. Essay Contest Winner grades 7-8 receives certificate from MACD President Pete Hunter

Outstanding Cropland Conservationist Dale Cole

Japhia Williams receives District Employee of the Year Award from MACD President Pete Hunter

Outstanding District Commissioner Russell Gray Houston receives award from MACD President Pete Hunter

Taylor Gough, Tate Co., Essay Contest Winner grades 11-12 receives certificate from Pete Hunter

Outstanding Conservation Technician Gary Welch

Elizabeth Triplett ,Tate Co., receives First Place Poster Contest award for grades 7-9 from Pete Hunter

Glenn McCullough Jr., Executive Director of MS Development Authority. speaks at North Area Summer Meeting.

Earth team Group Award to Desoto Master Gardeners presented by Christy Robinson (right)

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OXFORD HIGH SCHOOL FIRST PLACE 2017 STATE ENVIROTHON TEAM (left to right): Sadie Pasco-Pranger; Siena Cizdziel; Calendula Cheng; Joanna Bu and Raina Woolworth
PHOTO BY KATHY DOUGAN, MSWCC

Oxford High School Envirothon Team State winners headed for NCF-North American Envirothon Competition

RAYMOND, MS: Oxford High School placed first overall at the Mississippi State Envirothon at Raymond FFA Center April 28, 2017, and earned the right to represent Mississippi at the NCF-National Envirothon Competition July 23-29 in Emmitsburg, MD.

Twenty-one teams placed in the North, Central, Delta and South areas on March 23, and advanced to the State competition.

FIRST: **Oxford High School**, Oxford Mississippi.
SECOND: Hillcrest Christian Academy Team A, Jackson, MS.
THIRD: Pascagoula High School, Pascagoula, MS.
FOURTH: Indianola Academy Team A
FIFTH and FFA FIRST OVER ALL: Purvis High School FFA
FIFTH and FFA FIRST OVER ALL: Purvis High School
FFA HIGH SCORE AQUATIC ECOLOGY: Hillcrest Christian School Team A
HIGH SCORE CURRENT ISSUE: Oxford High School
HIGH SCORE FORESTRY (Tie): Hillcrest Christian School Team A *and* Oxford High School
HIGH SCORE SOILS/LAND USE: Indianola Academy
HIGH SCORE WILDLIFE: Oxford High School

Mississippi Envirothon, a program of the Mississippi Association of Conservation Districts, is a hands-on natural resource competition designed to challenge students in grades 9 through 12 to explore the natural world around them.

The 2017 Area and State competitions included more than 50 student teams with more than 300 students in the competition, and 81 teacher/advisors on-site who worked with teams to prepare for Mississippi Envirothon.

The Mississippi Envirothon is funded by a grant from the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality.

SECOND PLACE: Hillcrest Christian Academy Team A, Jackson, MS. Team members *(pictured left to right)*: Thomas Wilson, Kofi Quartey, Emily Lewis, Connor McDavid and Gage Mitchell. PHOTO BY KATHY DOUGAN, MSWCC

THIRD PLACE: Pascagoula High School, Pascagoula, MS. Team members *(pictured left to right)*: Ariana Rosado, Makenzie Sanabria, Tyler Shumock, Mia Lawrence and Caroline Ko. PHOTO BY KATHY DOUGAN, MSWCC

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Training for area Envirothon competitions

CENTRAL AREA ENVIROTHON TRAINING: February 2017, Envirothon teams from central-area counties met at the Mississippi Museum of Natural Sciences to prepare for the 2017 Area Envirothon. Students learned about watersheds, micro invertebrates and aquatic organisms, duck wings, animal skulls and trees. PHOTOS BY KATHY DOUGAN, MSWCC