

# Commission NEWS

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## *From Our Executive Director:*

As Soil and Water Conservation District boards search for venues to hold business meetings during the pandemic, I would like to offer a service to those SWCD boards that are finding it difficult to meet.

Your MSWCC field rep can set up a conference call through our office that will allow you to conduct needed business until your USDA Service Center can safely reopen. Contact our office for more information.

In addition, our staff is working on the possibility of offering virtual meetings and educational programs through ZOOM, GoToMeeting, and other types of meeting software. We will keep you posted on our progress.

Please know that during this difficult time, the MSWCC remains committed to assisting districts in carrying out their local programs.

Thanks,

*Mark Gilbert*



MARK GILBERT

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Gone, But Not Forgotten .....	2
Conservation Chats.....	2
MACD Endowment Fund Scholarship information .....	2

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## MACD ANNUAL MEETING ONLINE ONLY FOR 2021

Because of the uncertainty with COVID-19 and restrictions at the Hilton-Jackson Hotel for the MACD Annual Meeting, the MACD Executive Board decided on Aug. 11, 2020, to *NOT* have a face-to-face meeting at the Hilton-Jackson on Jan. 20-21, 2021.

The board is exploring some type of virtual online (Zoom) meeting, MACD



Secretary/Treasurer Hope Daley stated. The plans are to still have a draw-down and possible auction online. Daley asks that you let your board know about this decision. More details will be forthcoming.

If you have any questions, please let Daley know. Her email address is [Hope.Daley@ms.nacdnet.net](mailto:Hope.Daley@ms.nacdnet.net).

## Agostinelli working with Quitman County on Matching Grant proposal

MSWCC Field Rep Colin Agostinelli is currently working with Quitman County on a MACD Endowment Fund Matching Grant Proposal.

The proposal is for matching funds to add an outdoor classroom to a High Tunnel Garden that Quitman County SWCD gifted to Madison Palmer High School.

"We are just in the early stages right now, but that is my main project at the moment," Agostinelli said.

The purpose of the MACD Endowment Fund Matching Grant Program is to assist the SWCDs with educa-

tional programs and increase public awareness of the district's role in conservation of our natural resources.

A total of four grants ranging from \$500 to \$2,500 may be available for SWCDs. The district is required to match a minimum of \$500 of the grant received, with the grant amount determined by the MACD Endowment Fund Committee.

For these competitive matching

grants, in-kind services, with the exception of district employee time, will be accepted as a match. Matching funds may come from SWCD funds; however, districts are encouraged to find other sources for matching funds.

Projects submitted should aim at increasing awareness and knowledge of soil, water and other related resources.

The deadline is October 1, 2020.

For more information, contact your Field Rep or [Chelsey.Gazaway@ms.nacdnet.net](mailto:Chelsey.Gazaway@ms.nacdnet.net)

## GONE, BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

NATCHEZ — Graveside services for **HATTIE MAE WESLEY -HARRIS**, 82, of Natchez, who died

Wednesday, August 12, 2020, in Natchez, were held on Friday, August 21, 2020, at Egypt



**HATTIE HARRIS**  
Baptist Church Cemetery.

She was a 4-H Volunteer leader for 65 years; a Deputy Commissioner for the Adams County Soil and Water Conservation District; and a SWCD board member.

She was a member of Egypt Baptist Church.

## GAZAWAY GUEST AT DESOTO COUNTY CONSERVATION CHATS

Desoto County's July Conservation Chats session was all about soil!

Special guest Chelsey Kennedy Gazaway, Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission staff officer, joined in on the learning and fun with DeSoto County Information and Education Specialist Meleiah Hill Tyus.

Tyus was excited to share different facts about soil and educate the participants about the different layers of soil. Participants logged in via Zoom to the online Conservation Chats session, participating virtually in the event.

They were asked questions such as: *Did you know that the state soil for Mississippi is the Natchez Silt Loam and it was designated as our state soil on March 3, 2003?*

Gazaway, who joined the session via Zoom from her home in Charleston, MS, used soil runoff containers to demonstrate the effects of erosion on bare soil versus soil with vegetation. The participants were able to see the difference by this demonstration.

Tyus wrapped the lesson up by sharing about the soil baby craft and soil painting

activity. Similar to a Chia Pet, the soil baby will sprout its own "hair" and kids can entertain



Meleiah Tyus, Desoto Co. I & E Specialist (above) displays a soil painting and a soil baby. At left, Chelsey Gazaway demonstrates the effects of erosion.



themselves by giving their soil baby crazy hair cuts in the future! Plus, it's a way for kids to see they can grow things they plant. We can't wait to see the soil babies; stay tuned to the Desoto County Soil and Water Facebook page for photos!

— Meleiah Tyus

## ENVIROTHON 2021

March 25, 2021 (Tentative):

Area Competitions

April 23, 2021 (Tentative):

State Competition

July 25-31, 2021:

International Competition,  
Lincoln, Nebraska

Training begins January 2021.

## MACD Endowment Fund Scholarship application due October 1

The deadline for MACD Endowment Fund Scholarship applications is October 1, 2020.

Mississippi sophomores, juniors, seniors and graduate students currently enrolled in college may apply. The scholarship may be used at a two-year junior college or a four-year college in Mississippi.

Five scholarships in the amount of \$5,000

each will be awarded. Funds are sent directly to the college.

The scholarships are open to students pursuing a Natural Resource field of study.

For an application form, specific instructions for applying and a list of information required to complete the application, please contact Chelsey.Gazaway@ms.nacdnet.net.

## Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission

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