

CONSERVATION NEWS

JUL-SEPT 25

COMMISSION CHRONICALS

LIVE & LOVE, MISSISSIPPI



Virginia Salmon
Southeast Region Conservation
Hall of Fame

National Association of
Conservation Districts

NEW HIGHLIGHT

THE 2025 SOUTHEAST H.O.F
INDUCTEE: MRS. VIRGINA
SALMON-ADAMS COUNTY



Virginia Salmon-Adams County: Inducted into Southeast NACD Conservation Hall of Fame



The Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission is proud to recognize Mrs. Virginia Salmon of Adams County on her induction into the Southeast Region NACD Conservation Hall of Fame. This prestigious honor highlights her decades of service and dedication to the advancement of conservation in Mississippi and beyond.

Miss Virginia Salmon was astonished to learn of her nomination for the Southeast Region NACD Conservation Hall of Fame. Salmon stated, "I've never ever expected a reward. It's honoring, surprising and challenging."

In 1960, Ms. Salmon graduated from Mississippi State College for Women as a home economist. Then in 1963, she began her work in Adams County, indicating her desire to improve the community, which was inspired by her mother, who wholeheartedly believed in community.

This issue:

Southeast NACD Conservation
Hall of Fame

Employee Spotlight

2026 International Envirothon
Update

Crossword Puzzle



"The coincidental thing is that at 86, my mother was awarded golden deeds. Pretty special. I'm 86 and I'm awarded a recognition that I never thought about since birth."

She has always been enchanted by the tranquility of the land, leading her to accept the challenge of practicing and improving conservation in Mississippi.

"I think that we have to look at all sides of any challenge before we act. And I find it really sad that some people are not in tune with protecting our Earth."



Mrs. Salmon's leadership, vision, and tireless commitment to stewardship of our state's natural resources have left a lasting legacy. Her work has not only influenced policy and program development but has also inspired countless individuals, from landowners to students, to embrace conservation as a way of life.

"To sustain the Earth is my first nature and my second nature. I taught home economics before joining the extension service. I taught again in a local school here, and I teach my grandson all the time about saving our earth and protecting it. Comes second nature."

The Southeast Conservation Hall of Fame celebrates individuals who embody conservation values through professional achievements, community engagement, and advocacy. We congratulate Mrs. Salmon on this well-deserved recognition and thank her for her lifelong dedication to conservation.



Employee Spotlight

Patrick Vowell- Water Quality Director

Jackson, MS –This quarter, we are shining the spotlight on someone whose passion for conservation and leadership has made a lasting impact on our state's natural resources: Patrick Vowell, MSWCC's Director of Water Quality.

Patrick's story begins in Carthage, Mississippi, where he grew up on a cattle farm that instilled in him a strong work ethic and a love for the land. Those early roots shaped the foundation for a career dedicated to agriculture and conservation.

His academic journey took him to Mississippi State University, where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Agri-business with minors in Economics and General Business. He later sharpened his leadership skills with a Master of Science in Business Administration from Belhaven University.

For nearly 15 years, Patrick served MSWCC by leading Section 319 projects, tackling nonpoint source pollution, and improving water quality throughout Mississippi. His expertise later guided him to the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), where he coordinated basin efforts across four major river basins: the Tennessee, Tombigbee, North Independent Streams, and Yazoo River Basins. In August 2021, Patrick returned to MSWCC to take on the role of Water Quality Director, where he now oversees efforts to protect and preserve Mississippi's most vital resource: water.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Patrick is also a devoted family man. He is married to Alison Vowell, and together they are raising three wonderful children: Olivia, Madeline, and Colin.





Whether he's in the field working with partners, coordinating statewide initiatives, or cheering on his kids, Patrick brings energy, dedication, and heart to everything he does. We are proud to call him part of the MSWCC family and grateful for his leadership in safeguarding Mississippi's water resources for generations to come.

2026 International Envirothon Update



MSWCC Director & team met with MSU representative to view campus facilities and lay the groundwork for establishing the event structure with NCF Representatives.

Starkville, MS – Preparations are underway as Mississippi looks forward to hosting the 2026 National Conservation Foundation (NCF) Envirothon at Mississippi State University (MSU). This summer, the Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission (MSWCC) Director and team met with MSU representatives to tour campus facilities and discuss logistics for the event.

The visit also included discussions with NCF representatives to lay the foundation for the event's structure, ensuring Mississippi delivers a memorable and successful competition. With hundreds of students, educators, and conservation leaders expected to attend, planning is focused on educational excellence, smooth operations, and showcasing Mississippi's conservation efforts.

The International Envirothon is the premier environmental and natural resources competition for high school students across the United States, Canada, and beyond. Hosting the 2026 event is both an honor and an opportunity for Mississippi to shine on a national stage.

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HOW YOU CAN HELP

Bringing an event of this scale to Mississippi is a tremendous undertaking and an incredible opportunity for partners to invest in the next generation of conservation leaders. MSWCC welcomes sponsors, partners, and donors to join us in making the 2026 Envirothon a success. Whether through financial contributions, in-kind support, or collaborative partnerships, your involvement will directly support Mississippi students, communities, and conservation efforts.

For more information on sponsorships, donations, or partnership opportunities, please contact MSWCC at (601) 354-7645 or email us at nivy@mswcc.ms.gov. Together, we can create a lasting impact through conservation education.

