

COASTAL ROOTS: School Seedling Nursery Program for Habitat Restoration



Coastal Roots Goal:

To assist students in developing an attitude of stewardship toward our natural resources and to provide an active learning situation in which they can explore strategies for sustaining our coastal ecosystems.

Coastal Roots Objectives:

- Conduct an on-going school-based nursery program growing native plants.
- Involve students in a hands-on habitat restoration planting.
- Provide teachers and students with information on issues such as ecological stewardship, wetlands functions/values, wetland loss, habitat restoration & conservation, as well as basic horticulture skills.

Coastal Roots Participation

Current (2006-7): 18 schools in 10 parishes impacting 750 students each year

Projected (2010-11): 40 schools in 16 parishes impacting 2,000 students each year

Cumulative impact after five years: 6,700 students involved in CR habitat restoration activities

Students participating in the project range from Grade 4 through 12. The project has been integrated into special education classes, elementary science, middle school (life and earth science), high school (biology and environmental science). Informal education groups have also participated (e.g., 4H, science clubs, etc.)



Coastal Roots work plan

- Seed preparation, planting, and germination of seeds (winter, early spring); ~1000 plants
- Maintenance of seedlings & nursery (spring through fall)
- Restoration field trips by students (late fall, winter)
- Nursery cleaning and preparation for next seed planting (winter)



Schools are matched with a specific restoration site so that site biologists can work with schools to (1) select appropriate plants needed for habitat restoration programs at the site, (2) educate students about ecological restoration needs of the site. Plants have included black mangrove, southern wax myrtle, hackberry, red mulberry, southern baldcypress, live oak and bitter panicum.

During early autumn, schools may wish to retain a portion of their plant stock in their nursery for a second year's growth. These seedlings will be transplanted to larger tree containers and grown for an additional year (commonly called "bumping up").

Program Coordinator and Principal Investigator

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For additional information, visit
<http://calvin.ednet.lsu.edu/~coastalroots/>
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