

Pierre Part Middle School Science students plant trees at the Belle River boat landing

May is wetlands month in Louisiana, and Gov. Foster has designated May 10-11 as "Take Back the Coast" days. These two days are part of a cooperative effort of the Coastal Roots Program of Louisiana Sea Grant College Program, the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program, the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana, the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry and the

Achafalaya Basin Project. As their part of the Coastal Roots program, Mr. John Giambrone's eighth grade science students planted about 100 small cypress trees at the Belle River Boat landing in Belle River on May 10. These trees were planted and nurtured by the seventh grade science students last year at the school.

Students in the science classes of Ms. Angela Hebert, Polly Scott, and

Jessica Cassard also helped plant and care for the tree seedlings.

Science students in 11 different parishes have participated in this Coastal Roots program for the past two years, growing wax myrtle, cypress, hackberry and black mangrove trees from seeds and then planted them in declining wetlands. Louisiana is losing 30 square miles of land per year and without some action, is projected to lose

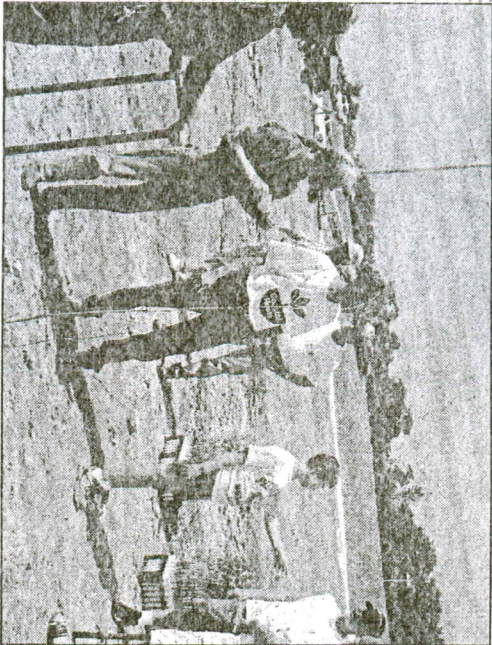
nearly 1000 square miles by 2050.

"It is so encouraging to see students interested in forestry, coastal restoration and the environment," said Commissioner of Agriculture and Forestry Bob Odom. "If we can nurture their interests in coastal restoration topics now, these students might become the researchers that improve the processes that we use in the future."

Helping the students plant the

trees were Toni DeBosier and Errol Verret of the Louisiana Department of Forestry and Agriculture. Tommy Warden of the Achafalaya Basin Project was on hand as was Mr. Rick Louque, County Extension Agent. Also, Pam Blanchard of the LSU Sea Grant Program called Coastal Roots. Parents provided transportation and onlookers chipped in with manual labor when needed. (The ground was hard after weeks of dry

weather.) The little saplings looked brave encased in their plastic sleeve protectors with pink ribbon markers fluttering in the breeze. If even half grow, the landing will be a wondrous sight. Coastal Roots participants wish to say thanks to St. Martin Parish Sheriff Charles Fuselier whose trustee helpers dug tree holes in advance.



Mr. John Giambrone, PPMS Science teacher and Toni DeBosier, La. Dept. of Agriculture and Forestry.



Nikita Hebert, Cindy Templet, Dara Hebert, Megan Callegan.



Jacob Alleman, Ryan Hebert, Lee Alleman