

# Eighth graders plant new trees

by Linda Cooke

Wednesday, Nov. 13, saw most of the eighth grade students from Pierre Part Middle School donning their boots, grabbing shovels and planting cypress trees on the sandy soil of the new Lake Palourde beach extension in Morgan City.

The weather was perfect. Sunny, dry, a bit chilly. The students quickly discovered that the damp soil of the newly made beach would jiggle when stomped upon. But the main purpose was to plant cypress trees that the students have personally grown for the last 2 years in Mr. John Giambrone's science classes.

As part of the Coastal Roots



Ashlyn Tramonte, Lacey Picou and Krista Thibodeaux get 'down and dirty' planting their tree.

Program of Louisiana Sea Grant College Program through Louisiana State University, 14 different schools throughout the state have been planting seeds of cypress, mangrove and wax myrtle trees in conjunction with the Atchafalaya Basin Master Plan

Dr. Pam Blanchard from LSU and Sea Grant was on hand to supervise the planting. Also present were teachers Tina Landry, Angela Burt, Angela Hebert and Mr. Giambrone.

Representing Sea Grant besides Dr. Blanchard were Ann Garay and Ed Bush. Mr. Clyde Thibodeaux, Assistant Principal of PPMS had a truck bed full of beautiful, 3 to 4 foot tall cypress trees.

Mr. David Bourgeois also involved with the Sea Grant Program had his hands full most of the time with shovels, trees and a stuffed and mounted nutria, which, said Mr. Bourgeois would eat the tender young trees if they weren't surrounded with hard plastic sleeve protectors. Dr. Blanchard and Mr. Bourgeois both said all the trees being planted today were grown by the students but LSU Ag. Center has back-up trees available if needed.

Participating schools in Montague and a few other places lost their entire nursery stock during Hurricane Lili.

Dr. Blanchard said planting these

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trees is not strictly for coastal erosion. "Growing, nurturing and now planting the trees the students themselves grew gives them a real sense of stewardship and a hands on experience in preserving the environment," said Dr. Blanchard. She also said the PPMS students have really done a great job with their tree raising project. "These trees are in beautiful condition and if left alone, should develop into a really beautiful cypress forest right here on the beach."

For sure the students will be able to keep an eye on their efforts. Every trip to Morgan City they will pass by their trees and be able to watch them grow. You can practically hear them already----"See that one! I planted that one.!"



Brittany Hebert, Chelsea Gaudet, Ashlie Cavalier and Michelle Landry ready to put their cypress in a freshly dug hole.

THE CAJUN GAZETTE

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