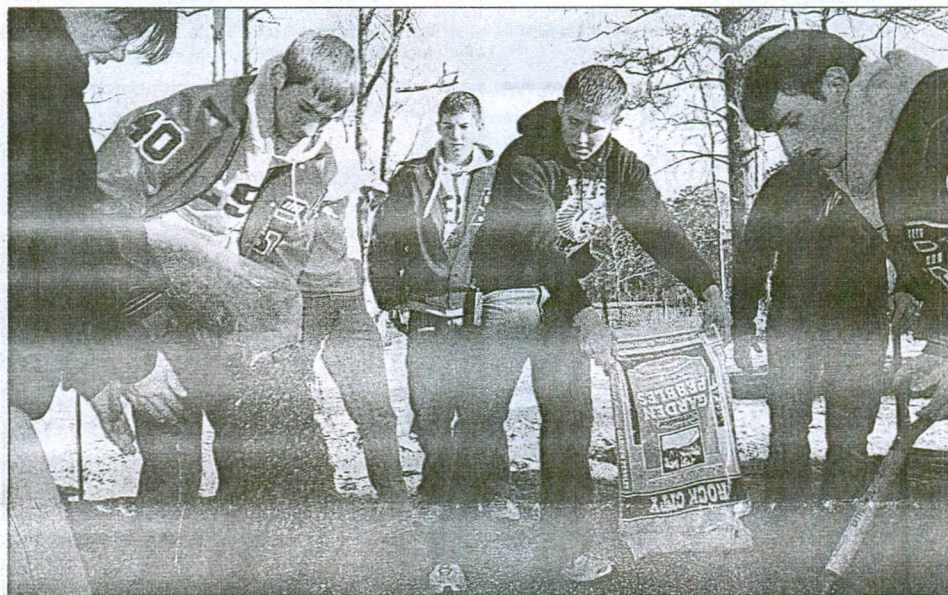


METRO · STATE

Carter's Little Liver Pills
Women carried them in their purses,
men in their pockets. It was a big
business in early 20th century

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AT REEVES HIGH SCHOOL



DORIS MARICLE / AMERICAN PRESS

Students at Reeves High School prepare a garden to grow native plants as part of a hands-on habitat restoration project. The students will plant seedlings this spring which will be transplanted next year to areas where they are needed to help restore wetlands and save coastal habitats.

Planting the seeds of a strong coast

BY DORIS MARICLE
AMERICAN PRESS

REEVES — More than 70 students at Reeves High School left the warm, familiar surroundings of their classroom Thursday to experience nature as only an outdoor classroom could provide.

Surrounded by dirt, shovels and bags of garden pebbles, the students began cultivating the school's new plant nursery, or can yard.

Students in grades 8-12 will use the 10-by-10-foot fenced-in area to grow native plants as part of a hands-on habitat-restoration project known as the Coastal Roots Program.

The seedlings will be planted this spring and transplanted next year to areas where they are needed to help restore wetlands and save coastal habitats.

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Nicky Myers
Reeves High School senior

coast," senior Nicky Myers said. "Lord knows with all the hurricanes, there is a need for our coast."

Classmate Andy Bertrand is also excited to be helping others and saving the environment.

"If more people would do projects like this, maybe it would help save the coast of Louisiana from erosion," Bertrand said.

Science teacher Connie Conner said the school will be assigned a wetland area

that has suffered saltwater intrusion or land loss and is in need of restoration.

"We do not have an environmental science class, so it is important that the students are aware of what we are facing environmentally in Louisiana and in our area," she said. "We need to find solutions to help save the coast."

Conner said the project will allow the students hands-on experience from start to finish. Students will oversee the entire growth cycle of the plants, from seed germination to the planting of the seedlings, she said.

"They will have to do everything from soil testing to fertilization concentration to weeding and keeping track of the growth rate," she said. "If they have a problem, they will have to resolve it."

Ann Blanchard, of Southern University, said 35 schools are enrolled in the program this year, with most of the schools being along

Interstate 16. Blanchard helped the students prepare their garden Thursday.

"This is a small way of showing the students this is our future and what they will have to deal with," she said. "By caring for this garden, they are actually doing something good for the environment and helping others."

The students will also learn about ecological stewardship, wetland functions and values, wetland loss, habitat restoration and conservation and basic geoscience and horticultural skills.

The Coastal Roots Program began in 2001 as an educational outreach project for the Louisiana Sea Grant College Program. In 2006, it was transitioned into the LSU Department of Educational Theory, Policy and Practice and also the LSU Center for Plant, Environment and Soil Sciences.