



# Coastal Roots



August 22, 2008

<http://coastalroots.lsu.edu>

## 2008 Grant News We Can Celebrate!

by Dr. Pam Blanchard, CR Director, LSU Dept. of Educational Theory, Policy & Practice;  
Dr. Ed Bush, CR Co-Director, LSU School of Plant, Environmental and Soil Sciences;  
Mr. David Bourgeois, CR Co-Director, Associate Fisheries Agent, LA Sea Grant /LSU AgCenter

As you know, Coastal Roots has been supported financially since its beginning in 1999 by the Louisiana Sea Grant College Program. In the early years, grants from the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program, the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana, and the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources' Coastal Impact Assistance Program (Terrebonne Parish) all helped to expand and make Coastal Roots what it is today. The last LA Sea Grant College Program grant will end in May 2009, and its ending means that new financial support for our program had to be identified. The great news is that we have three new financial supporters of our program!

Our first great news came in December of 2007, when Ed Bush and I met with **Secretary Scott Angelle** and his staff from the **Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (LDNR)** to present our program to them. At the end of the meeting, Secretary Angelle indicated he would provide a \$25,000 contract to our program to support important components for the schools in the coming year. First, the contract will provide funds for a Coastal Roots Student Wetland Ambassador Day (this event will be scheduled soon, so please watch for the email). This will allow two students from each school, their parents and their teacher to come to a workshop to learn more about coastal issues. These students will then travel back to their schools as "wetland ambassadors" to share what they have learned. In addition, the LDNR contract will provide up to \$300 in reimbursement per school to defray the cost of the bus rental and driver cost for the fall 2008 and spring 2009 field trips. There is also funding to cover travel costs for CR staff to check on school nurseries and participate in the restoration trips. The contract also covers printing costs for this newsletter! This means that I will not have to print each copy of the newsletter off on my office printer! All these things are greatly appreciated and needed very much! Thank you, Secretary Angelle!

Our second great news came back in March 2008, when Ed Bush and I traveled to the **Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana (CRCL)** to meet with **Gwen Emick** and **Natalie Snider**. **Cheniere Energy Corporation**, a CRCL supporter, has provided the funding to bring **all four Cameron Parish K-12 schools** into the Coastal Roots Program! Ann Gray and I traveled to each of these schools on August 1st to meet the teachers and their principals. We identified the location of their future can yards and are now in the process of setting the dates for their installations this September. One school, **South Cameron High**, was originally installed during 2002, but Hurricane Rita literally wiped the school off its foundations. We are happy to have Tina Savoie and her South Cameron High students back with us in the CR Program. We also welcome **Grand Lake High** (Bobbye Delaney; Grand Lake), **Hackberry High** (Gregoire Theriot; Hackberry), and **Johnson Bayou High** (Lacey Dougharty; Johnson Bayou).

Our third bit of good news came in as the summer was starting. We found out that we received a three-year **National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration Bay-Watershed Education and Training (NOAA B-WET)** grant. This grant will fund professional development experiences and resources for our teachers, ensure continued technical support to the schools by CR staff, and pay for CR staff and teachers to present at national conferences. In addition, there are funds to make LUMCON's BayouSide Classroom water quality monitoring professional development, through the efforts of **Dr. Nancy Rabalais** and **Murt Conover**, available to our teachers, as well as to help start the CR Program in Mississippi through the Mississippi State University's Coastal Research and Extension Center in Biloxi. **Dr. Gary Bachman** is heading up the Mississippi Effort.

Our last bit of good funding news (so far) is that a grant to **Dinah Maygarden** at the **University of New Orleans Pontchartrain Institute for Environmental Studies** was funded and there is funding available to bring another New Orleans school into the Coastal Roots Program. This is indeed great news and I am in the process of calling teachers on our waiting list to find out if they ready to start their CR nursery.



Bald cypress seedlings.  
Photo by Pam Blanchard.

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# Three things to do to get ready for Fall Plantings!

Dr. Ed Bush

LSU School of Plant, Environmental, and Soil Sciences



There are three things you need your students to do in order to get the maximum growth on your seedlings for our upcoming Fall plantings.



Above: Yellow Osmocote prills, a time-released fertilizer.

**GETTING READY TIP 1. Weeds are an issue** for some of the schools (especially around the edges of the yard). These need to be removed as soon as possible. Ann Gray has been applying a weed killer during the summer and now it is your turn to take over this maintenance task.

**GETTING READY TIP 2. Plants need to be fertilized.** Your students need to fertilize new plants with a pinch (5 to 7 beads of Osmocote) in each yellow cell about 4 to 6 weeks after germination. If you haven't fertilized your plants, now is the time to do it! In addition, once a month you can mix one tablespoon of liquid fertilizer in one gallon of water to give older plants a boost.

**GETTING READY TIP 3. Separate out the small seedlings** from the cells that do not have seedlings in them. Have your students discard the soil from these "empty" cells, wash with baby bottle brushes, soak in a mild solution of Clorox and water, and store the clean dry yellow cells in a closed container until February.

I want to remind each of you the lessons we learned this summer about identifying and pressing your coastal plants. Pam will be sending you your pressed leaves soon. We have many new schools this year and will need experienced teachers to help mentor new schools. If you guys have any questions, email me or phone me at 225/ 578-1044. We are all helping to keep the coast green!

## New Schools Join CR Program

The LSU Coastal Roots Program is happy to welcome nine new schools into the program this year. A generous donation from *Cheniere Energy Corporation* through the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana enabled all four schools in Cameron Parish to join the program. They are **South Cameron High** (Tina Savoie; Grand Chenier), **Grand Lake High** (Bobbye Delaney; Grand Lake), **Hackberry High** (Gregoire Theriot; Hackberry), and **Johnson Bayou High** (Lacey Dougharty; Johnson Bayou). As you know, Hurricane Rita caused tremendous damage in Cameron Parish. In fact, South Cameron High was participating in Coastal Roots prior to the storm, but the storm literally wiped the foundations clean. The school broke ground on their new buildings August 1, 2008, and Tina Savoie is excited about rejoining the CR Program with her Cameron Parish colleagues.

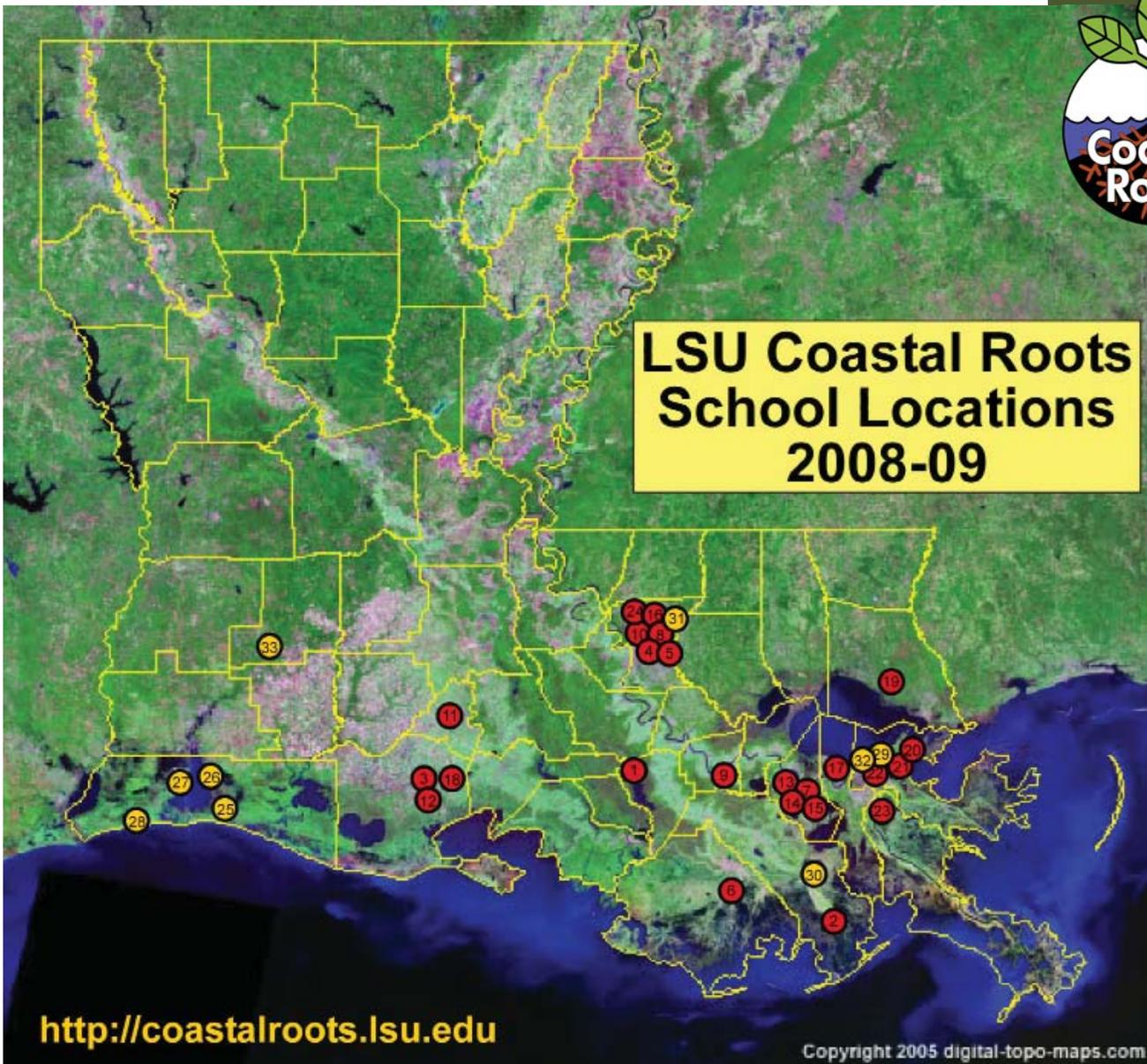
In addition to these four schools, teachers at five other schools have been successful in finding support to start the CR Program at their schools. We welcome **Larose-Cutoff Middle School** (Louise Dykes; Cutoff), which is also rejoining the Coastal Roots Program after an absence. Four other schools, **Westdale Heights Academic Elementary Magnet School** (Mary Legoria, Baton Rouge) **Saint Paul Episcopal School** (New Orleans), **Archbishop Chappelle High** (JoAnn Haydel, Metairie) and **Reeves High** (Connie Conner, Reeves) will also be joining the program this fall. We welcome all our new schools! The new schools are designated by the yellow circles on the school location map (Page 3).

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## LSU Coastal Roots School Locations 2008-09



### 2008-09 Coastal Roots School Locations - Map Key

- |                                                                         |                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 Pierre Part Elementary (Pierre Part, Assumption Parish) 2001          | 17 St. Martin Episcopal (Metairie, Jefferson Parish) 2007                  |
| 2 South Lafourche High (Galliano, Lafourche Parish) 2001                | 18 Erath High (Erath; Vermilion Parish) 2007                               |
| 3 Abbeville High (Abbeville; Vermilion Parish) 2001                     | 19 Christ Episcopal (Covington; St. Tammany Parish) 2007                   |
| 4 St. Joseph's Academy (Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge Parish) 2001      | 20 Metairie Academy for Advanced Studies (Metairie; Jefferson Parish) 2007 |
| 5 St. Louis, King of France (Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge Parish) 2002 | 21 Lusher Charter School – Willow Campus (N. Orleans; Orleans Parish) 2008 |
| 6 Montegut Middle (Montegut; Terrebonne Parish) 2002                    | 22 Isidore Newman School (New Orleans; Orleans Parish) 2008                |
| 7 Harry Hurst Middle (Destrehan; St. Charles Parish) 2003               | 23 Belle Chasse Middle (Belle Chasse; Plaquemines Parish) 2008             |
| 8 Our Lady of Mercy (Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge Parish) 2003         | 24 Central High (Central Community Schools, E. Baton Rouge Parish) 2008    |
| 9 St. James Science & Math Magnet (Vacherie, St. James Parish) 2004     | 25 South Cameron High (Grand Chenier, Cameron Parish) 2008                 |
| 10 Buchanan Elementary (Baton Rouge; East Baton Rouge Parish) 2004      | 26 Grand Lake High (Lake Charles, Cameron Parish) 2008                     |
| 11 Lafayette Middle (Lafayette; Lafayette Parish) 2005                  | 27 Hackberry High (Hackberry, Cameron Parish) 2008                         |
| 12 J.H. Williams Middle (Abbeville; Vermilion Parish) 2006              | 28 Johnson Bayou High (Cameron, Cameron Parish) 2008                       |
| 13 Albert Cammon Middle (St. Rose; St. Charles Parish) 2006             | 29 St. Paul's Episcopal (New Orleans, Orleans Parish) 2008                 |
| 14 Luling Elementary (Luling; St. Charles Parish) 2006                  | 30 Larose-Cutoff Middle (Cutoff, Lafourche Parish) 2008                    |
| 15 R.K. Smith Middle (Luling, St. Charles Parish) 2006                  | 31 Westdale Heights Academic Elem Magnet (Baton Rouge, EBR Parish) 2008    |
| 16 Jackson High (Jackson; East Feliciana Parish) 2006                   | 32 Archbishop Chapelle High (Metairie, Jefferson Parish) 2008              |
|                                                                         | 33 Reeves High (Reeves, Allen Parish) 2008                                 |

# A Sampling of Summer Green

Albert Cammon Middle (1), Belle Chasse Middle (2), Buchanan Elementary (3), Central High (4), Christ Episcopal (5), Harry Hurst Middle (6), Isidore Newman (7), JH Williams Middle (8), Lusher Charter (9), Metairie Academy for Advanced Studies (10), Our Lady of Mercy (11), St. James Science & Math Academy (12), St. Joseph's Academy (13), and St. Martin's Episcopal (14).

*Pictures 1-7, and 9-14 by Ann Gray. Picture 8 by Pam Blanchard.*



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12



13



14

# National Conference of State Legislatures Volunteer Planting

by David Bourgeois, LSU AgCenter Associate Area Agent - Fisheries  
LA Sea Grant Marine Extension Program



Plans for a conference like this one start very early in the year. Back in January, Pam was contacted by the organizers of the conference to organize a “volunteer” planting at Bayou Segnette State Park for conference attendees. This evolved into providing tree seedlings that would be used as centerpieces on the closing banquet tables. The organizers were planning to use a swamp theme to decorate the Contemporary Art Center (CAC) on Camp Street in New Orleans. They needed hundreds of seedlings, so they came to the right place. In addition, they invited the Coastal Roots directors to attend the reception to provide information and a presentation about Coastal Roots.

As Pam completed the finishing touches on the PowerPoint presentation and loaded all the displays and handouts for the event, I was traveling to Baton Rouge, trailer in tow, to pick up 400 bare-root cypress seedlings for the planting. The seedlings were provided by **Joey Breaux** with the Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry’s Office of Soil & Water Conservation through a donation from South Brown Soil and Water Conservation District in South Dakota. The next stop was the Coastal Roots can yard at Pierre Part Middle School. **John Giambroni**, Coastal Roots veteran and Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana’s 2008 Coastal Stewardship Award winner (see the story on page 6 of this issue), had 25 one-year-old cypress seedlings that needed to be planted. A third stop at Thomas Blanchard’s house in Pierre Part yielded seven trays of cypress and tupelo gum seedlings for the centerpieces, plus shovels, dibbles and fertilizer for the planting. One final stop at John Giambroni’s house in Napoleonville provided another five trays of cypress seedlings. This had to be enough! I didn’t have any more room in the truck or trailer. After carefully covering all the seedlings with a tarp to prevent wind-burn, I was on my way. I delivered all the seedlings to the CAC organizers and they quickly performed their magic by creating a beautiful seedling centerpiece for each of the conference tables.

As conference goers began to file in the CAC, they were amazed at the elaborate decorations. Every room looked like a swamp scene and there were even two “live” trees walking around the center. Congressmen and women from across the nation stopped by our exhibit to see what LSU’s Coastal Roots Program is all about. Many wanted to take a seedling centerpiece home as a souvenir, but were reminded that these were going to be planted by the students that grew them to help stop coastal erosion.

The planting trip to Bayou Segnette State Park was well-attended and well-organized. **Kate Marchal** and **Pam Brierre**, leaders of the CR Program at **St. Martin’s Episcopal School** in Metairie lent their expertise and guidance to the planting event. About 40 energetic “volunteers” made quick work of the 400 bare-root cypress seedlings. Park naturalist, **Denise McKinney**, had already marked the planting locations with an orange flag and when we were done, every orange flag had a cypress seedling next to it. We even had a few extras that were planted in an alternate location and were “flagged” with some orange ribbon. The 40 hot, sweaty and tired volunteers from all over the country boarded their bus to reflect on what they had accomplished on the short trip back to the conference hotel.



Above top: David’s trailer filled with CR seedlings.  
Middle and bottom: NCSL volunteers start work. That’s Pam Brierre in the middle picture giving instructions! Photos by Pam Blanchard.



## Helping Hands

**Dr. Paul Wilson, LSU School of Plant, Environment, and Soil Sciences.** We want to thank Dr. Paul Wilson for assisting Dr. Bush with the installation of the Belle Chasse Middle School can yard last spring. His efforts helped make the installation go smoothly! Thank you Dr. Wilson!

**Dr. Allen Owings, the staff of the LSU AgCenter Research Station in Hammond, and the LA Nursery and Landscape Association.** A huge thanks goes to Dr. Owings and the staff of the LSU AgCenter Research

Station for their hospitality in hosting the 2008 CR Summer Institute. The facility is wonderful and its staff was very kind and welcoming. We also want to thank Dr. Owings for his talents at the grill and to the Louisiana Nursery & Landscape Association for hosting the Thursday night supper. Many, many thanks!  
*(continued on p. 6)*

# Award Winners Among Us!

**Dr. Ed Bush**, Co-Director of the LSU Coastal Roots Program and associate professor in the LSU School of Plant, Environmental, and Soil Sciences, was recently awarded the **Grand Prize** in the **Gardener's Supply Garden Crusader Award Program**. He was chosen from over 500 entries in the nationwide award program. Ed will receive a \$2,500 gift certificate to Gardener's Supply company, \$2,500 cash for the non-profit of his choice, and will be featured along with the LSU Coastal Roots Program in the Gardener's Supply Company catalog and on their website. **Maree Gaetani**, the coordinator for the Gardener's Supply Garden Crusader Award Program, said that the nomination committee was "really impressed with the entire program." We are all proud of Ed and congratulate him on this recognition of his hard work to make the LSU Coastal Roots Program a success! In the picture to the left, Ed is guiding students at Lusher Charter School in New Orleans during the installation of their can yard this past spring.



**John Giambrone**, lead teacher on the Coastal Roots Program at **Pierre Part Elementary School (PPE)** in Pierre Part, and **his middle school students** recently received one of seven state-wide Coastal Stewardship Awards given by the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana. Part of their nomination package read, "John Giambrone and his PPE middle school students are true leaders and have made a large and steady contribution to helping conserve and restore our fragile Louisiana wetlands." John and his students are among the four original schools to install nurseries when Coastal Roots first began in 2000. They routinely raise 500-600 cypress seedlings each year in their school-based nursery. We are very proud of John and his students for the good work they do and the leadership they show in being active stewards of our coast. John, pictured with his wife, Jennifer, on the right, received the beautiful hand-carved award on behalf of his students at PPE.



## New Restoration Site Partners

We continue to work diligently to establish longterm planting site partners for CR schools. One new planting site partner is the **Southeast Louisiana Refuges Complex of the US Fish & Wildlife Service**. Another new partner is **Woodland Plantation** in Point a la Hache. Both of these new planting partners have welcomed the opportunity to work with our schools to restore damaged habitats at their sites. See page 8 for a full listing of all our current restoration partner sites.



## Helping Hands (continued from p. 5)

**Rebecca Triche and the National Wildlife Federation.** We are grateful to Rebecca Triche and the National Wildlife Federation for the donation of 20 bar dibbles to the LSU Coastal Roots Program. This donation almost doubles our number of dibbles and will enable us to schedule two plantings on the same day if necessary! Thank you, Rebecca, and the National Wildlife Federation!

**Joey Breaux (Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry) and the South Brown Soil and Water Conservation District in South Dakota.** We are grateful to Joey Breaux (Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry's Office of Soil & Water Conservation AND LA State Coordinator for Project WET) and the South Brown Soil and Water Conservation District for their donation of 400 bare root cypress seedlings that were used in the Coastal Roots volunteer planting for the National Conference of State Legislature's field trip on July 26, 2008. Months earlier, Joey put the plants in the ground and then dug them up and prepared them for the planting in July. We are grateful to Joey and our new friends in South Dakota for their help!

# Spring 2008 Plantings

## Marsh Island Planting by Erath High School.

Four Erath High School students and their LSU Coastal Roots Program leader, **Wayne Mouton**, traveled to Marsh Island last January to plant 150 live oak and 200 hackberry bareroot seedlings on the island. Thanks go to **National Resource Conservation Service** employees **Kyle Soileau** and **Mtize Dorhman** for their continued help over the years with these planting events. (Reported by Pam Blanchard).

## Grand Isle State Park Planting by Jackson High School.

One Jackson Middle School and ten Jackson High School students and their LSU Coastal Roots Program leader, **Donna Boudreaux**, traveled to Grand Isle State Park last February. They planted 71 one-gallon bitter panicum plants that they grew in their CR nursery. Thanks go to **Dawn** and **Ed**, Grand Isle State Park employees, who helped coordinate the logistics for the planting. (Reported by Pam Blanchard).

## Fifi Island Planting by Lafayette Middle School.

Thanks to **Wayne Keller**, Grand Isle Port Commission Director, the 4th annual LSU Coastal Roots planting trip to Fifi Island was a huge success. All the time, effort and the boat transportation he provided were key ingredients to make a major project like this work smoothly. LSU Coastal Roots project leader at **Lafayette Middle School**, **Stacy Hess**, along with her 60 students and seven teachers and chaperones were thrilled to return to "their" plants on "their" island. They measured and monitored the growth of previous plantings and planted over 100 additional *Spartina* plants that were provided by **Dr. Richard Neill** at the **USDA/NRCS Plant Materials Center in Golden Meadow, Louisiana**. I know we are making a difference in saving this island! I was surprised to see the size of the black mangroves that were growing actively from previous years. Some were even starting to bud and will probably produce seeds for the first time this year. Every student had a chance to identify a mangrove plant, carefully measured the height and width, then they recorded the GPS coordinates of the plant on Fifi Island. They also recorded environmental conditions at the time of their visit. These field trips provide so much more hands-on learning than I have ever seen in a classroom.

Special thanks also go out to **Martha**, Wayne's secretary, for all the last-minute arrangements she made to make their visit a great one. She is a valuable asset to this project and all these behind-the-scenes arrangements should not go unnoticed. In addition, three **LSU AgCenter/America's Wetland Conservation Corps members**, **Jacob**, **Gil**, and **Trevor**, provided a lot of valuable assistance on this trip. They quickly pulled over 100 *Spartina* plants at the USDA/NRCS Plant Materials Center and were eager to act as deck hands and team leaders for the plantings. I know they helped make this trip a lot easier for me. If success is measured by how tired we are at the end of the day on these trips, it must have been a great one. These last-minute major productions are taking a toll on me too! (Reported by David Bourgeois.)

## Marsh Island Planting by Erath High School.

FFA students from Earth High School with their teacher, **Wayne Mouton**, traveled to Marsh Island for the second time this spring. They planted 400 smooth cord grass plugs on the island. Thanks goes, once again to the **National Resource Conservation Service**, and their employee Donald Stemmans, for providing the plants and for assisting with logistics. (Reported by Pam Blanchard).

**National Conference of State Legislature Volunteer Planting at Bayou Segnette State Park.** David Bourgeois reports the full story on page 5.



Above images, top to bottom.

- (1) Students from Erath High plant bareroot live oak and hackberry on Marsh Island.
- (2) Bitter panicum plants installed on Grand Isle by Jackson High students.
- (3) Erath High students planting smooth cord grass on Marsh Island.
- (4) Lafayette Middle student planting smooth cord grass on Fifi Island.

*Photo 1 and 3 by Wayne Mouton. Photo 2 by Donna Jane Boudreaux. Photo 4 by Linda Beyt.*

# Keys to a SUCCESSFUL Can Yard!

by Ann Gray, SELU Biology

Hello to all. Let's go over these timers!!! The summer is hot and we are ever grateful for this great invention. However, it does need maintenance like all of us!

A little history on the timers.... When Dr. Blanchard began this program a very long time ago, Coastal Roots decided to use wireless timers. A timer is known by irrigation professionals as a **solenoid**. It is the device on an automatic electric valve that regulates the flow of water into the upper chamber of the valve. It works by way of a simple electromagnet that permits the valve to either open or close. So we have the solenoid (pictured at left) that is attached to the the valve by two wires. The valve houses the diaphragm, which is what actually opens or closes.

The concept of a wireless solenoid is extremely convenient because it means we don't have to a) dig a trench from an electric source at your school to the timer, b) we don't have to hire an electrician, and c) it is probably safer for all concerned.

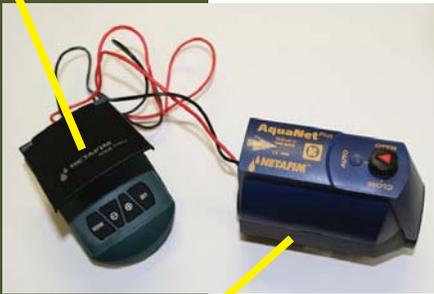
So, for all the wonderful advantages that a wireless solenoid provides, it is not perfect. We have to be vigilant about the state of the battery because this is what powers the solenoid, which then opens the diaphragm, and allows water through to our precious plants.

**Please check on the status of your battery at least once a month.** Also, the rain gauges you have installed in the canyards are a good indicator as to whether the timer is working properly. If the timer is not working, it could be a number of other problems such as a cracked diaphragm, something stuck in the valve, corroded wires or battery compartment, or a broken solenoid. In these cases, I will go and look into it. But if you can stay on top of the battery issue, it helps us narrow the list of potential problems.

These timers use a **9V battery** which generally last no more than a year. Please keep these things in mind when you are changing your battery:

1. Keep the rubber gasket clean to the battery compartment to ensure a watertight seal.
2. Check that the small rubber gasket is in place around the area where the wires go into the timer.
3. Keep your timer from sitting on the dirt inside the valve box. You can insert a short piece of PVC pipe to keep it from sitting in water when it rains.

timer, or solenoid



valve



battery compartment



**Information contact:**

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## LSU Coastal Roots Restoration Partners

We thank our restoration partners for their willingness to work with and educate our LSU Coastal Roots students about the restoration needs of their site as well as other important coastal issues.



Wetland Watcher Park  
Grand Isle Port  
Commission



Woodland Plantation  
Maple Bayou  
Hunt Club



Marsh Island  
Terrebonne  
Levee District

Jean Lafitte



National Historical Park  
and Preserve



Patterson State Museum

## LSU Coastal Roots Seedling Nursery Program



LSU Coastal Roots: Helping the LA coast one seedling at a time!

<http://coastalroots.lsu.edu>