2008 Plantings - Off to a great start!

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

Our 2008 planting season is off to a great start! We had three schools plant last spring, and have had seven schools plant thus far this fall, with another 11 plantings scheduled for December through January 2009. We've had several “firsts” for the Coastal Roost Program this year. Both St. James Science and Math Academy and Belle Chasse Middle had phenomenal seedling crops this year, with each school producing more than 700 seedlings. This year has also seen a dramatic rise in the number of swamp red maple trees that have been successfully raised in our can yards. So far this calendar year, Coastal Roots schools have planted over 2800 seedlings on 10 restoration trips! In the past, we’ve only had one school produce so many trees that the students could not quite plant everything on their restoration trip. So far this year, we’ve had three schools produce such large numbers of trees that we now have “extra” seedlings! These seedlings will be planted by other schools to supplement what they are bringing to plant at their restoration site.

America’s Wetland Foundation - a new CR Sponsor

We are pleased to announce that the America’s WETLAND Foundation has become the newest sponsor of the LSU Coastal Roots Program. Their sponsorship will provide much-needed funding for equipment to support the restoration efforts in our schools. We thank the America’s WETLAND Foundation for their support and look forward to working with them in the future. To learn more about the work of the Foundation or the Conservation Corps, visit their website at http://www.americaswetland.com/.

CR Winter Workshop Set for January 31, 2009, 9 AM-3PM

Mark your calendars - our Coastal Roots Winter Workshop is set for Saturday, January 31, 2009, from 9 am to 3 pm at Our Lady of Mercy School in Baton Rouge. We’ll enjoy a delicious working lunch courtesy of the Our Lady of Mercy School. For those that have taken students on restoration planting trips, we ask that you send Pam a 2-3 PPT slide of your best trip photos. Each teacher will be taking back seeds and/or soil for your 2009-10 seedlings - so make sure you have space in your vehicle to transport your three bags of soil. Each teacher will receive a $100 stipend to defray the travel costs and cover a portion of the time they invest in the workshop. For those teachers unable to attend, you will need to make arrangements to come to LSU at a later date to pick up your seeds and/or soil.

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The leaves on our plants are starting to turn colors and fall off as the winter months approach. This is a normal process all of our plants go through to prepare for winter. This event might lead in to a classroom discussion on why leaves turn red and orange in the fall and winter. Plant pigments are important to growth and energy plants need to grow and reproduce. Photosynthesis is the most important chemical reaction in our universe. Without it we cannot exist! Chlorophyll (green pigment) is responsible for photosynthesis in green plants. Although we don’t think about the other pigments (orange, yellow, red, blue), they adsorb energy at different wavelengths. These pigments are very important to growth and development of plants as well. You can take green leaves from a tree you know turns colors in the fall and extract pigments from it using acetone or rubbing alcohol. Dip a strip of chromatography paper or a strip of coffee filter paper vertically in a small amount of solution for about 45 minutes. Let it dry and analyze the different migration of pigments. This varies from species to species. We have lesson plans for this if you are interested. A simple explanation to your students is that the red and orange pigments are always there, but masked by the green pigments all year long, but in the fall the light changes and temperatures are reduced decreasing chlorophyll production. This "unmasks" the colors of fall. After a while, deciduous tree leaves fall off, hence the season of fall. Spring brings new sprouts and leaves and a fresh new start.
2008-09 Coastal Roots School Locations - Map Key

2. Abbeville High (Abbeville; Vermilion Parish) 2001
4. St. Louis, King of France (Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge Parish) 2002
5. Montegut Middle (Montegut; Terrebonne Parish) 2002
6. Harry Hurst Middle (Destrehan; St. Charles Parish) 2003
7. Our Lady of Mercy (Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge Parish) 2003
9. Buchanan Elementary (Baton Rouge; East Baton Rouge Parish) 2004
10. Lafayette Middle (Lafayette; Lafayette Parish) 2005
11. J.H. Williams Middle (Abbeville; Vermilion Parish) 2006
12. Albert Cammon Middle (St. Rose; St. Charles Parish) 2006
14. R.K. Smith Middle (Luling; St. Charles Parish) 2006
15. Jackson High (Jackson; East Feliciana Parish) 2006
17. Erath High (Erath; Vermilion Parish) 2007
18. Christ Episcopal (Covington; St. Tammany Parish) 2007
19. Metairie Academy for Advanced Studies (Metairie; Jefferson Parish) 2007
20. Lusher Charter School – Willow Campus (N. Orleans; Orleans Parish) 2008
21. Isidore Newman School (New Orleans; Orleans Parish) 2008
22. Belle Chasse Middle (Belle Chasse; Plaquemines Parish) 2008
23. Central High (Central Community Schools, E. Baton Rouge Parish) 2008
24. South Cameron High (Grand Chenier, Cameron Parish) 2008
25. Grand Lake High (Lake Charles, Cameron Parish) 2008
26. Hackberry High (Hackberry, Cameron Parish) 2008
27. Johnson Bayou High (Cameron, Cameron Parish) 2008
29. Larose-Cutoff Middle (Cutoff, Lafourche Parish) 2008
30. Westlake Heights Academic Elem Magnet (Baton Rouge, EBR Parish) 2008
31. Archbishop Chapelle High (Metairie, Jefferson Parish) 2008
32. LSU Laboratory School (Baton Rouge, E. Baton Rouge) 2008
33. Reeves High (Reeves, Allen Parish) 2008
34. Holy Cross School (New Orleans, Orleans Parish) 2009
35. Priestly Charter High (New Orleans, Orleans Parish) 2009
36. Franklin High (Franklin, St. Mary Parish) 2009

LSU Coastal Roots

http://coastalroots.lsu.edu

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Putting Down Roots-plantings through Nov 2008

Erath High
Jan 15, 2008
350 seedlings on Marsh Island

Jackson High
Feb 25, 2008
71 plugs at Grand Isle State Park

Erath High
June 6, 2008
400 plugs on Marsh Island

Harry Hurst Middle
Oct 2, 2008
150 seedlings at Waveland Watcher Park

St. Martin Episcopal
Nov 10, 2008
262 seedlings at Bayou Segnette State Park

St. James Science & Math Academy
Nov 17, 2008
327 seedlings at Bayou Segnette State Park

St. Louis, King of France
Nov 18, 2008
301 seedlings at Fort Macon State Park

Belle Chasse Middle
Nov 20, 2008
800 seedlings at Woodland Plantation
Greetings from Mississippi!

We are so excited about being part of Coastal Roots. Our team, personnel from the Coastal Research and Extension Center (Coastal REC) and MSU main campus, is composed of Drs. Christine Coker (research horticulturist), Chris Boyd (extension environmental ecologist), Mengmeng Gu (extension horticulturist), and myself, Gary Bachman (extension horticulturist).

One of the roles of the Coastal REC includes working with the school systems on enhancing plant-based science and Coastal Roots is such a wonderful way to do so. I was so impressed with all the teachers at the workshop in June and what you are doing in the classroom. The bar is truly set high.

In August we installed our demonstration nursery at the Coastal REC in Biloxi. Many thanks to Pam and Ed for coming over and showing our team the correct way to set the nursery up and sharing the mistakes of the past, now we can make new ones of our own.

Put February 7, 2009, on your calendars. We are having our first workshop at the Coastal Research and Extension Center. This is going to be a recruitment event for educators and others interested in improving plant science-based education and environmental awareness in Mississippi. There will be a flyer and agenda in the next month or so. Pam and Ed have been asked to come over and present the Coastal Roots successes in LA. Of course all associated with Coastal Roots are welcome.

Opportunities

Nominations for the 2009 Richard C. Bartlett EE Award

The Richard C. Bartlett Environmental Education Award is awarded annually by the National Environmental Education Foundation to an outstanding educator who has successfully integrated environmental education into his or her daily education programs. The award is given to a 5th-12th grade educator who can serve as an inspiration and model for others. A $5,000 cash award is provided for the recipient to continue their work in environmental education. Do you know a teacher who stands out among the rest? If so, please nominate him/her for this award. Nominations accepted through January 31, 2009. For additional information, visit http://www.neefusa.org/bartlettaward.htm.

LA Young Heroes Award

Do you have a special student in your class that stands out above the crowd? Do they unselishly donate their time to help make their school and their community a better place to live? If you have an outstanding student, we hope you will nominate them for the 14th annual Louisiana Young Heroes Awards. LPB and the Rotary Club of Baton Rouge sponsor the competition for students in grades 4-12 who are currently in a LA public or private school. Nomination forms can be downloaded from http://www.lpb.org/programs/heroes. The deadline for entries is February 6, 2009, with the eight winners announced on the air March 6, 2009.

River of Words Environmental Poetry and Art Contest K-12

River of Words conducts a free international poetry and art contest for youth on the theme of watersheds and the environment. The contest helps youth explore the surroundings in which they live, and to express what they discover through poetry and art. It is held annually in affiliation with the Library of Congress Center for the Book. The grand prize and international winners receive an all-expense paid trip to Washington, DC, to attend the awards ceremony at the Library of Congress. Deadline: February 15, 2009. For additional information, visit http://www.riverofwords.org/contest/.

Helping Hands

Liz Stein, the bus driver for St. James Science and Math Academy’s restoration trip, helped distribute seedlings and materials to the nine students who participated in the trip. Those nine students, with Ms. Stein’s and Mrs. Seeley’s help, planted 300 trees on their restoration trip to Bayou Segnette State Park! Thanks for helping Mrs. Stein!
**Award Winners Among Us!**

Linda Messina, lead Coastal Roots teacher at St. Joseph Academy in Baton Rouge, has been named a U.S. Department of Education 2008 American Star of Teaching. She was one of five private school teachers selected from 5,000 nominations from across the United States chosen for the award, which is part of the Department of Education’s Office of Non-Public Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement and Teacher-to-Teacher Initiative. Linda, along with her husband, Dr. Larry Messina, SJA President Sr. Adele Lambert, CSJ, and Principal Linda Fryoux Harvison, traveled to Washington, D.C. last September to accept the award. Linda participated in a panel discussion with the other American Starts of Teaching honorees. As a part of that discussion, Linda presented the LSU Coastal Roots Program and described how she uses the program to enhance the curriculum of her students. Linda and her SJA students were part of the inspiration for program and were one of the first schools to help pilot the program. Linda was also the first teacher to secure her own funding to start the program at SJA. Congratulations, Linda! We are proud of you!

**Gustav and Ike Devastate S. Louisiana!**

by David Bourgeois, Associate Area Agent-Fisheries, LSU AgCenter/LA Sea Grant

We didn’t need another pair of hurricanes less than three weeks apart. When it happened in 2005, Katrina and Rita became known as the Twisted Sisters. And now, after the 2008 season, we are still trying out new names for the Gustav and Ike duo. Regardless of what they are called, their impacts were devastating. On Labor Day, Gustav carved out a path of destruction that many, even in north Louisiana, had never seen before. Less than two weeks later, Ike flooded so much of South Louisiana, it made everyone wonder what would have happened if it had made a turn the forecasters didn’t predict. In Terrebonne Parish alone 3500 homes flooded and Ike made landfall 175 miles to our west!

In the slow recovery process following this pair of hurricanes, my thoughts were constantly rambling over what I could have done to prevent these terrible impacts. I finally came to the conclusion that we ARE doing it with Coastal Roots. We are growing wetlands plants and planting them where they are needed. That is what we can do.

During the four weeks after the hurricanes I traveled south to the ends of every road to assess the damages to the fisheries industries. I took pictures of debris lines, watermarks on walls, inside buildings and homes, and recorded the location on GPS. I took pictures of fishing boats stranded in the shallows and of some that even came to rest on roads. All these things are necessary to try to predict what the next storm might do. But my focus changed to our schools that are in the program and our planting locations.

The Montegut Middle School can yard was flooded again and the yellow potting cells were scattered all over the school grounds. Several teachers and staff members had already gathered up the bulk of them and stored them for future use. Later, I traveled south to our planting site on the Pointe au Chenes hurricane protection levee. I had heard that most levees in southern Terrebonne sustained varying degrees of damage. The levee at our planting site was no different. But when I made it to the actual planting site, I was surprised. Over 500 feet of the smooth cord grass we had planted last year was not only still there, but had prevented storm surge damage to the levee. We are making a difference! (See Cameron, p. 7)
Ann’s Can Yard Wisdom: Duracell Batteries Win, Don’t Change Your Lock, & Why Clean Up?

By Ann Gray Blanchard, Southeastern Louisiana University

As much as we would like things to work perfectly all the time, they don’t, right? Dr. Blanchard and I are always investigating ways to make the irrigation system more trouble-free and consistent. Well, Duracell batteries are the overwhelming choice in powering the timers. It appears that Duracell is the battery of choice because it has the strength to open and close the valve to control the water flow to the plants. Other batteries appear to be good (fresh and powered) but sometimes they may not have the strength Duracell has. So, if you think your system is not working properly, or you see your “battery low” indicator flashing on the screen, try replacing the battery with a FRESH Duracell battery.

I have also noticed that some of you are giving up on the beautiful brass locks that were given to you when your can yard was installed. PLEASE, don’t put your own lock on the gate. We have had all these locks keyed the same so that I or any other Coastal Roots personnel can get in without having to get the key from you or having to keep track of a bunch of pass codes. W-D 40 works wonders in loosening up the locks for smooth opening and closing. I have just added this to my tool box and will be spraying as needed. If you have your lock, please put it back on or ask Dr. Blanchard or me about getting another one. Thank You

Now is general clean up time. This is a good practice that can save you a lot of work in the summer and fall. It is a good time to scrape all dead grass around the perimeter of your can yard. There are probably viable seeds hanging from the weeds just waiting for spring to come. Yes, you probably already have seeds in the ground but if you clean and rake, there will be less to fight next summer. Just grab a rake and a garbage bag and rake a clean perimeter. Also, it is advisable to rake and sweep the black cloth covering your trays are on. You can do this once you are done planting your trees. Once the leaf litter, extra soil, and general debris build up, it creates a perfect setting for seeds to sprout. Pre-emergent herbicide is available to halt these seeds from germinating but it requires knowing when and where to place the herbicide. We would not want to affect the seeds that are planted for restoration purposes.

Till next time!

Ann

Cameron Parish Schools Regrouping Again After H. Ike

by Dr. Pam Blanchard, LSU College of Education

One of the best pieces of good news in the past year has been the return of South Cameron High to the Coastal Roots Program. This school had to drop out of the CR Program in 2005 after Hurricane Rita destroyed the school. Since that storm, students have been going to school in FEMA trailers. With the aid of a grant from Restore America’s Estuaries through the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana, and with the help of a donation from Cheniere Energy (a business located in Cameron Parish), not only did S. Cameron High return to the CR Program, but they brought with them the three other schools in Cameron Parish: Grand Lake High, Hackberry High and Johnson Bayou High. Ann Gray Blanchard and I visited all the schools on August 1, 2008, and were helping these schools to make installation plans for their school nurseries. Unfortunately, Hurricane Ike struck in early September and two of the schools, S. Cameron and Johnson Bayou, sustained heavy water and wind damage. Hackberry High and Grand Lake High both sustained wind damage, but were back in business shortly after the storms. This was not the case for S. Cameron and Johnson Bayou - both schools will have to be rebuilt - which means that their CR nurseries are on hold for the immediate future. The teachers at the schools remain adamant about continuing their participation in the CR Program. Grand Lake High’s nursery installation will be scheduled for January, and we hope to have Hackberry High’s nursery installed in February.

One of S. Cameron High’s FEMA trailers flipped on its side after Hurricane Ike. Photo by P. Blanchard.
LSU Coastal Roots Calendar

2008

Oct 2  PLANTING: Harry Hurst @ Wetland Watcher Park
Oct 14  PLANTING: Harry Hurst Middle @ Wetland Watcher Park
Oct 24  NEW INSTALLATION: Larose Cutoff Middle, Cutoff
Oct 30  NEW INSTALLATION: St. Paul's Episcopal, New Orleans
Oct 31  NEW INSTALLATION: Archbishop Chapelle High, Metairie
Nov 7   NEW INSTALLATION: LSU Lab School, Baton Rouge
Nov 10  PLANTING: St. Martin Episcopal @ Bayou Segnette State Park
Nov 17  PLANTING: St. James Parish Science and Math Magnet @ Bayou Segnette State Park
Nov 18  PLANTING: St. Louis, King of France @ Fontainebleau State Park
Nov 20  PLANTING: Belle Chasse Middle @ Woodland Plantation
Nov 21  PLANTING: Albert Cammon Middle @ Bayou Segnette State Park
Dec 2   PLANTING: Our Lady of Mercy @ Fontainebleau State Park
Dec 9   NEW INSTALLATION: Westdale Elementary Magnet, Baton Rouge
Dec 12  PLANTING: Isidore Newman @ Jean Lafitte National Historic Park & Preserve (Barataria)
Dec 16  PLANTING: Metairie Academy for Advanced Studies @ Jean Lafitte National Historic Park & Preserve (Barataria)
Dec 20  PLANTING: St. Joseph’s Academy @ Fontainebleau State Park

2009

Jan 7   PLANTING: Christ Episcopal @ Fairview-Riverside State Park
Jan 8   PLANTING: Christ Episcopal @ Fontainebleau State Park
Jan 9   PLANTING: Buchanan Elementary @ Avery Island
Jan 14  PLANTING: Lafayette Middle @ Avery Island
Jan 15  NEW INSTALLATION: Reeves High, Reeves
Jan 16  PLANTING: Central High @ BREC Blackwater Conservation Area
Jan 23  PLANTING: Belle Part Elementary @ Maple Bayou Hunting Club
Jan 23-25 WORKSHOP: Bayouside Classroom Workshop @ LUMCON. Open to CR teachers!
Jan 29  PLANTING: Lusher Charter @ Jean Lafitte National Historic Park & Preserve (Barataria)
Jan 31  WORKSHOP: LSU Coastal Roots Winter Workshop @ Our Lady of Mercy School, BR

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

LSU Coastal Roots Seedling Nursery Program

LSU Coastal Roots: Helping the LA coast one seedling at a time!
http://coastalroots.lsu.edu