



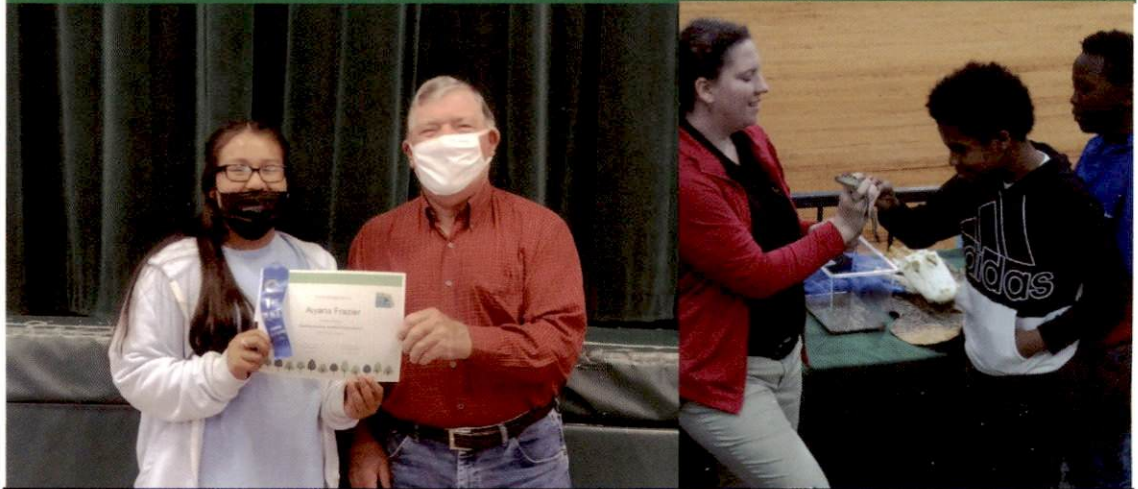
NESHOBA COUNTY CONSERVATION NEWS

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ISSUE 1

April 2022



Educational activities back in full swing!

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You can now keep up with the Neshoba County Soil and Water Conservation District's activities on facebook! Just search Neshoba County Soil and Water Conservation District

Come visit our website!!

Come see us at the County's website:
http://
www.neshobacounty.net/county-departments/soil-water-conservation/



26th Annual Conservation Carnival

Conservation Carnival
Sponsored by Neshoba County
Soil & Water Conservation District

The Neshoba County Soil & Water Conservation District hosted their 26th Annual Conservation Carnival at the Neshoba County Coliseum on Wednesday, February 23rd and Thursday, February 24th, 2022. Just over 340 fifth grade students from Neshoba Central, Philadelphia and Union Schools took part in this year's carnival. The purpose of this event is to enhance our youth of tomorrow with the importance of our natural resources and what they can do to conserve them.



Nine educational stations were set up and students rotated through all stations. Local agencies participated in the carnival educating students on various subjects such as:

ATV Safety – Brad Staten with the MSU Extension Service.

Bugs – MSU Entomology Department's Bug Blues Museum

Water Safety - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Farm to Table – Chase Domingue and Anna Windham with MSU Extension Service and Carlee Goode with the MS Soil & Water Conservation Commission.

Wildlife – Jean Aycock with the MS Museum of Natural Science.

Composting – Lynn Bradshaw with MS Dept. of Environmental Quality.

Soil Tunnel – Dalton Griggs and Chase Ingram with the MS Soil & Water Conservation Commission.

Hunter Safety – Justin Blackburn and Hunter Hall with MS Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks.

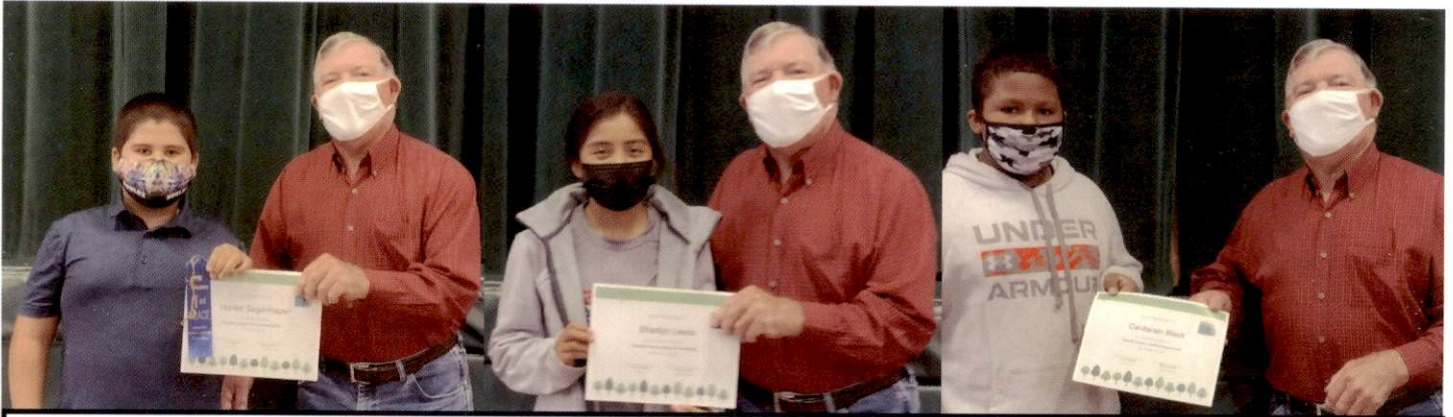
Forestry – MS Forestry Commission.



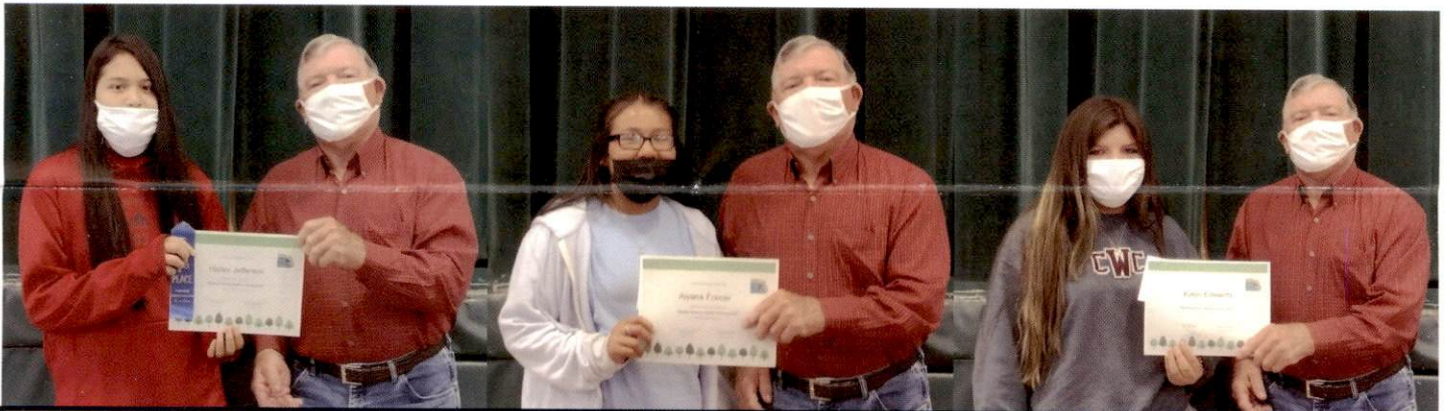
We would like to thank Brown Bottling for the donation of drinks for the kids.

2021 Poster and Essay Contest winners

Every year, the National Association of Conservation Districts hosts a poster and essay contest. The 2021 Contest theme was "Healthy Forest / Healthy Communities". The Neshoba County Soil and Water Conservation District hosted at the County level. The winners were as follows:



Grades 4-6 (listed right to left. Awards presented by Chairman Lynn Copeland)
1st place—Hunter Sagenhagen, 2nd place—Shastyn Lewis and 3rd place— Centarain Black



Grades 7-9 (listed right to left. Awards presented by Chairman Lynn Copeland)
1st place—Hailey Jefferson, 2nd place—Aiyana Frazier and 3rd place— Kalyn Edwards



Essay 1st place—Aiyana Frazier
(Area award presented by MACD President Anita Cowen)

Ms. Frazier not only received 1st in the County, but first in the Central Mississippi level of the contest. Picture by Carlee Goode.



Farm Pond Management Tips Controlling Aquatic Vegetation

By: Russell Singleton Area II Biologist

It's a late afternoon in early summer, the temperature is 70 degrees, and the ole pond's water is as slick as glass. You make a cast. Immediately, you realize the cast is a thing of beauty as it falls just to right and 10 feet behind the lily pads that you were shooting for. As you begin to retrieve your top water lure it pops and hops along the water's surface causing quite the disturbance. Just as the lure reaches the edge of the lilies, BAM! A largemouth erupts from the water depths with violence and beauty. The fight is on! *****The sun is high on a spring day, and you are fishing a treetop that has historically produced a lot of fish. You make your cast, a perfect one, and it lands gently between the branches of the treetop. Obviously, it doesn't land on his nose because it begins to sink. You allow it to reach near the bottom and begin the retrieve of your pumpkin-colored

artificial worm. You're not worried about the top or snagging something. You've prepared a weedless rig, and you're anticipating your first hit of the day. Something isn't right. You feel resistance. Not the sort of resistance you're used to encountering when you bounce off and over obstacles, but a firm steady weight that seems to increase. Finally, you complete your retrieve, and your worm is covered in a thick green sludge substance. What in the world is this you wonder? Then you realize the sludge, filamentous algae, is covering the entire bottom of your favorite fishing spot. How in the world is a fish going to strike a big blob?

The above two scenarios are ones a lot of us are probably familiar with. One scenario shows the importance of an aquatic vegetation (AV) that provides structure and cover for lurking monsters, while the other illustrates the frustration of an aquatic vegetation that prevents us from enjoying our fishing experience. AV fulfills important biological roles in farm ponds and other bodies of water. They provide cover, a nutrition base for the food chain, and the filtering of runoff that may contain pesticides, excess sediment, or nutrient loads. It is very important that AV is managed in farm pond situations to ensure we get the most out of our favorite fishing spots. Let's take a look at some preventative and management measures to get the best out of our farm ponds this spring and summer.

Prevention

With the exception of floating vegetation, all AV classes require sunlight to penetrate the water column to grow. Water clarity is a huge factor in AV management, and although some landowners prefer the aesthetics of clear water, it is usually an indicator of poor pond productivity. Ideal water clarity should resemble "pea soup". It should be a light green color that indicates the water column is full of a healthy algae bloom that both supports fish life and prevents excess AV growth due to sunlight not reaching through the water column. How do we achieve this water condition? The most important factor is controlling your pond's alkalinity through the introduction of lime. Generally speaking, farm ponds located in north MS, central MS, and coastal MS will require 2 tons or more of lime every couple of years for the pond to reach its full potential. Lime should be added in the fall and winter, so it is fully mixed for the growing season in the spring and summer. The addition of lime will allow your pond to access the soil nutrients from its shores and bottom much the same way your garden would with the surrounding soils. Usually, just lime alone will greatly diminish water clarity issues and allow for a healthy algae bloom. Pond alkalinity may be checked by your local NRCS office to determine if your pond needs an application of lime. If fertilizer is to be used, please be sure that you plan to fish your pond intensively. Fertilizing ponds that don't receive an adequate amount of fishing pressure can lead to over population issues and the introduction of bad algae if not properly monitored. Your pond may also be getting fertilized without your knowledge! If adjacent fields are being treated with chicken litter or commercial fertilizer, chances are it's running off in your pond. Pay attention to activities within your pond's watershed.

Management

Even a properly managed pond will occasionally encounter an AV outbreak that requires proper management. There are 3 management types that are typically used to combat or mitigate excess AV occurrences: mechanical, chemical, and biologic control measures. Mechanical is physically removing excess vegetation from the pond. This is obviously labor intensive and requires a boat to properly reach vegetation further out in the pond. Mechanical control is usually less effective in dealing with large "bad" algae outbreaks but may be useful in removing some AV while allowing some to remain for fishing structure. Chemical control is by far the most widely used control method to quickly suppress an AV outbreak. The AV must be identified to species and a specific herbicide is applied to kill the problematic vegetation quickly and efficiently. Mississippi State University has a publication, "Managing Mississippi Farm Ponds and Small Lakes", available on their website (MSUcares.com) that covers what chemicals should be used depending on the species that are being targeted. This publication includes color pictures of common AV species that occur in MS and a table listing what control measures are available. I highly recommend every landowner gets a copy. To successfully control AV with chemical control, a landowner must properly identify the problem species, follow all chemical label instructions, and treat no more than a 1/3 of their pond at a time. Everything that dies requires oxygen for decomposition, by only treating a 1/3 of a pond at a time, we can ensure that oxygen levels are not depleted to the point that it is detrimental to the fish population. Your local NRCS office can properly identify AV if there are doubts. Lastly, grass carp can be stocked in a pond to keep AV levels at manageable levels. Grass carp do not eat all kinds of AV, and they will need to be replaced every 5 years or so. Extension's publication covers the benefits of stocking grass carp and their limitations. Following these simple guidelines will make your pond experience much more enjoyable, so get out there, spend some time with family and friends, and eat a couple fish for me. Besides, don't we all want to be the one catching that monster from under the lily pads?

Students observe Tree Planting Week



Tree Planting Week is celebrated in February each year and was established in 1974 as an annual event to recognize the importance of trees to the environment. The Neshoba County Soil and Water Conservation District celebrated Tree Planting Week with third grade students in local schools this February. Russell Singleton and Eugene Livingston with USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service and Erica Fortenberry with the Neshoba County Soil and Water Conservation District visited with third grade students from Neshoba Central Elementary, Philadelphia Elementary and Union Elementary. They taught them why trees are so important to our environment as well as the economic importance of the forestry industry. Just under 400 third grade students received a loblolly pine seedling to take home. These seedlings were donated by Arborgen's Super Tree Seedlings.



COMMISSIONERS



Nelson White Vice Chairman Lynn Copeland Chairman Ross Williamson Carl Mason Treasurer Jerry Smith

DEPUTY COMMISSIONERS



Glenda Winstead Steve Cumberland Mary Lundy Meruvia Charlie Wilson Vacant



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ERICA FORTENBERRY

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Facebook at:

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Come see our website at:

<http://www.neshobacounty.net/county-departments/soil-water-conservation/>

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Priscilla Williamson - NRCS

Supervisory District

Conservationist

Jeff Fortenberry - NRCS Soil

Conservationist

Bill Stalcup - NRCS Soil

Conservation Technician

Erica Fortenberry - SWCD

District Administrator

WHAT IS A SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT?

The Neshoba County Soil & Water Conservation District is a governmental subdivision of the State of Mississippi located in the Third Congressional District. The formation of the Conservation District was authorized by the MS legislature on April 4, 1938, through House Bill 454. The Neshoba County SWCD was organized by citizens of Neshoba County on October 30, 1939.

The Neshoba County SWCD is governed by five commissioners. Three are elected in a district (county) wide election by landowners. Two are appointed by the MS Soil & Water Conservation Commission upon recommendations of the SWCD board of commissioners. Each District is authorized to appoint five deputy commissioners. These commissioners serve without pay to carry out a cooperative program that addresses the natural resource concerns of the District.

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**NESHOBA COUNTY SOIL AND
WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

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National Association of Conservation Districts