



United States Department of Agriculture

Louisiana's Conservation Update

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Helping People Help the Land

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September 2014

Reaching Out Helping People in Franklin Parish

**StrikeForce in
Louisiana**

**Partner Tribute
Elvadás Fields
A lifetime of service**

A cooperative partnership with local
Soil and Water Conservation Districts and
Resource Conservation and Development Councils (RC&D)

Projects · Successes · Partnerships





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The Conservation Update is distributed monthly by mail and e-mail.

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On the Cover



Kobe Williams, son of Travis Williams, holds an NRCS partnership sign as Elvodus Fields looks on. Travis Williams, Calvin Williams, and Horace Robinson learned about USDA program opportunities at a StrikeForce outreach meeting in Franklin Parish. Today, they are working with NRCS to address resource concerns on their land. To learn more about StrikeForce and these farmers, see pages 4 and 5.



USDA identifies census tracts with over 20 percent poverty (according to American Community Survey data) to identify sub-county pockets of poverty. As areas of persistent poverty are identified, USDA staff work with state, local and community officials to increase awareness of USDA programs and help build program participation through intensive community outreach.

Nearly 85 percent of America's persistent poverty is located in rural areas.

StrikeForce for Rural Growth and Opportunity

Follow us on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/LouisianaNRCS>

Follow us on Twitter: http://twitter.com/NRCS_Louisiana

Notes from the State Conservationist



USDA's StrikeForce for Rural Growth and Opportunity is a focused effort to form strategic partnerships of local, state, and federal agencies and organizations; communities; and people in targeted areas to help improve economic conditions in parishes identified as having persistent poverty. StrikeForce is not a new program with dedicated funding, but a new approach for enhanced cooperation that delivers results for farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners, and their local communities.

In Louisiana, StrikeForce began in January 2014, and we have already achieved significant success. As a result of StrikeForce, young beginning farmers, as well as established farmers, have received much-needed funding from the Farm Service Agency to improve their operations; farmers have received technical and financial assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service to conserve, protect, and enhance the natural resources of their farms and ranches; and communities have received financial assistance to establish new farmers markets, improved community services, and housing. Established partnerships have been refocused and new partnerships have developed, and as a result, more people are learning about financial and technical assistance opportunities through USDA agencies—and we are learning better ways to serve people and communities.

In coming months, a StrikeForce outreach meeting will be hosted near you. I encourage you to attend and learn more about StrikeForce—and the opportunities USDA has to offer.

Kevin D. Norton
State Conservationist

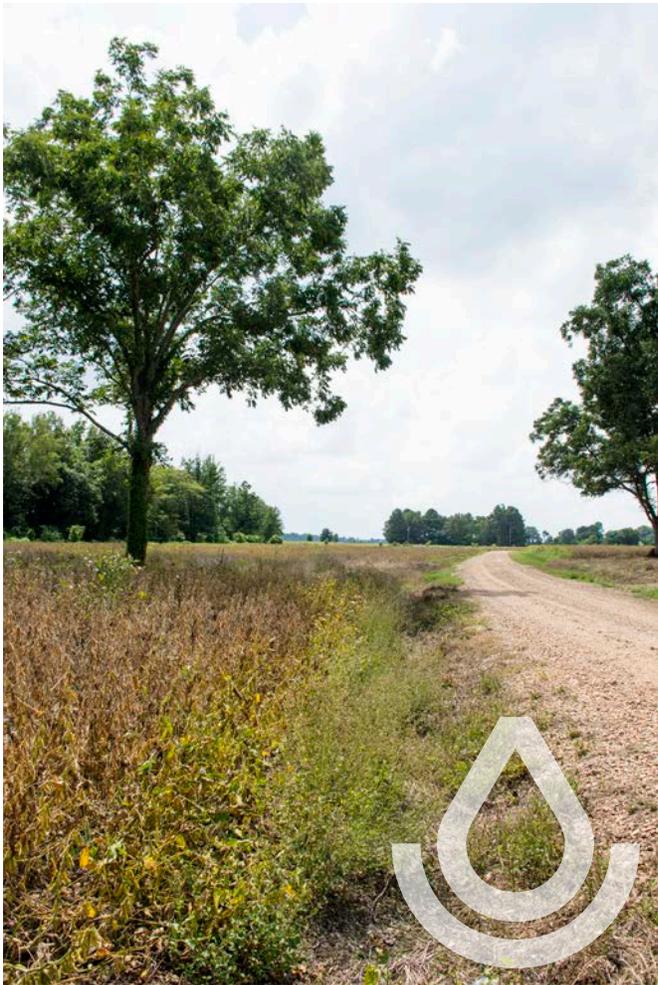
Louisiana parishes designated by USDA as StrikeForce parishes are: Acadia, Allen, Avoyelles, Bienville, Caddo, Caldwell, Catahoula, Claiborne, Concordia, DeSoto, East Baton Rouge, East Carroll, East Feliciana, Evangeline, Franklin, Grant, Iberia, Iberville, Jackson, Jefferson Davis, Lincoln, Madison, Morehouse, Natchitoches, Orleans, Ouachita, Pointe Coupee, Rapides, Red River, Richland, St. Bernard, St. Helena, St. James, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Mary, Tangipahoa, Tensas, Union, Washington, Webster, West Carroll, West Feliciana, and Winn.



USDA's StrikeForce for Rural Growth and Opportunity currently targets more than 700 rural counties, parishes, boroughs, tribal reservations, and Colonias in 20 states, including Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Arizona, Colorado, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia and West Virginia.

The USDA StrikeForce initiative is led by three USDA agencies: the Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and Rural Development (RD).

Ag Facts



Reaching Out Helping People



Farming Together . . .

In 2010, USDA launched a pilot project—USDA's StrikeForce for Rural Growth and Opportunity—in Arkansas, Georgia, and Mississippi to help increase economic opportunities in poverty-stricken rural areas. Since 2010, StrikeForce efforts expanded into persistent poverty counties in Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, and Virginia. On January 17, 2014, forty-four parishes in Louisiana were added to USDA StrikeForce efforts, along with persistent poverty counties in Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia.

partnering with local grassroots organizations to help promote StrikeForce. One such partner is the Louisiana Association of Cooperatives led by Harvey Reed, Executive Director. During fiscal year 2014, Reed hosted five StrikeForce roundtable meetings and one multi-parish conservation field day in the Mississippi Delta Region of Louisiana. He recruited Elvodus Fields, the Association's Director of the Delta Regional Outreach Center, to assist with these meetings.

In Louisiana, the Natural Resources Conservation Service is

“USDA's StrikeForce is a step forward to reaching socially disadvantaged farmers and small farmers,” said Elvodus Fields. “USDA has been a helping hand all along, down through the ages; however, with the way the agriculture business works today, we really need something like StrikeForce to reach out to these individuals who need assistance the most.”

After attending a StrikeForce meeting organized by Reed and Fields in Winnsboro, Louisiana, three local soybean farmers—Horace Robinson, Calvin Williams, and Travis Williams—decided

Travis Williams
Horace Robinson Calvin Williams
Conservationists

**USDA
StrikeForce for
Rural Growth and
Opportunity**



Horace Robinson, Calvin Williams and Travis Williams own and operate a farm in Franklin Parish that was handed down from their parents. The Robinson and Williams families have always been close. When the three men were young children, their parents combined their land to run the farm together and help support each other. Today, the younger generations of the two families are following the same path.



It's a Family Tradition

to find out more about the information they received, and they visited their local USDA Service Center to talk with the Natural Resources Conservation Service. They were having erosion and drainage issues, but they were not sure how to combat the problem.

After discussing their resource concerns with District Conservationist Jason Hardie and Soil Conservation Technician Joel Williams, they elected to apply for assistance to do land leveling and install grade stabilization structures. This combination of conservation practices will help to evenly disperse water across their farm and provide a drainage system for overflow, solving a lot of their erosion and drainage problems.

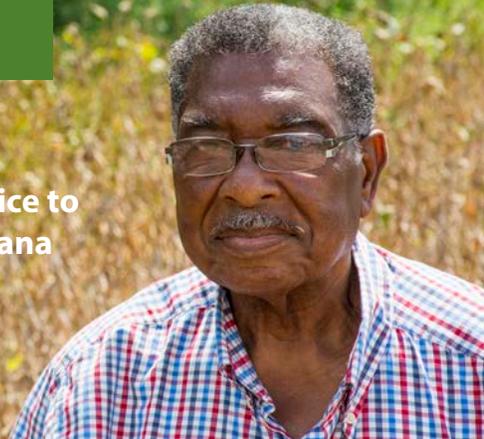


"These practices are really going to help our operation," said Horace Robinson. "With erosion you lose a significant amount of topsoil, and we can't afford to keep losing our greatest resource or having our water runoff into the streams and water basins."

"It really means a lot to our family to be able to continue to pass down this great (family) relationship and this great land to our children, and hopefully they will do the same for theirs," said Calvin Williams.

Partner Tribute

We salute
Elvadus Fields
for his lifetime of service to
agriculture in Louisiana



Elvadus Fields is the Director of the Delta Regional Outreach Center for the Louisiana Association of Cooperatives. His days are spent helping spread the word to socially disadvantaged farmers and landowners about the help they can receive from USDA agencies.

But this is nothing new to Fields. Agriculture has always been a way of life for Fields, and his relationship with the Natural Resources Conservation Service dates back to Soil Conservation Service days.

"I can still remember the lime green Soil Conservation Service (now NRCS)

trucks that would pull up to our house when my daddy needed help with terracing," says Fields. "SCS was always helping us make our farm a success."

When he left the farm to attend school, he joined what was once referred to as the New Farmers of America (NFA), a group similar to Future Farmers of America (FFA); the only exception between the two groups was skin color. His membership in this club helped Fields decide that he wanted to make a career in agriculture.

He went on to attend Southern University and majored in agriculture. After graduating, Fields taught

agriculture for a year while one of his former professors took leave to gain a master's degree. Shortly after that, he received an appointment to become the Assistant County Agent for Work with Negroes in Tensas Parish. Fields retired after 32 years with the LSU Extension Service.

After retirement from LSU, Fields went to work for Southern University as a Farm Management Specialist, located in the USDA office. He worked there for 20 years, assisting with loan applications. During much of his career, Fields also worked as the 4H county agent, a job he remembers fondly.

"Working with children was really fulfilling. It gave me great pleasure to help shape the minds of our younger generations and hopefully grow a strong foundation for the future of agriculture," said Fields.

Today, Fields is providing liaison support between USDA and the Louisiana Association of Cooperatives in support of USDA's StrikeForce—continuing to spread the message of conservation and agriculture to those people in persistent poverty areas. We salute Elvadus Fields.

StrikeForce Initiative



Louisiana Update

for Rural Growth and Opportunity

USDA Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration Malcom Shorter participated in a StrikeForce

roundtable discussion hosted at Inglewood Farm in Rapides Parish. Topics covered included food hubs, production and marketing of fresh produce for local markets, USDA programs, and partnership opportunities. Other organizations participating in the roundtable discussion included: Central Louisiana Economic Development Alliance, City of Alexandria, City of Vidalia/Delta Agriculture Production Incubator,

Inglewood Farm, Louisiana Association of Cooperatives, Rapides Station Community Ministries, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, USDA Forest Service, USDA Farm Service Agency, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and USDA Rural Development.



Mark your
calendar!

Upcoming Events

Sep 27

National Hunting and Fishing Day: Visit the NRCS tent at National Hunting and Fishing Day in Woodworth, Louisiana on September 27, 2014.

Sep 30

Red Bayou Watershed Project Ribbon Cutting Ceremony: The Caddo Soil and Water Conservation District will host a ribbon cutting ceremony to mark completion of the construction of the Red Bayou Watershed Project on September 30, 2014.. For more information, call (318) 676-3461, ext. 3.

Around the State

Jul 8-9

Iberia SWCD Revegetation Project:

The Iberia Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) conducted their annual revegetation project along the shoreline and terrace tops of Marsh Island on July 8 and 9, 2014. Over 3,000 linear feet of smooth cordgrass, seashore paspalum, and saltgrass were planted. Volunteers included the trustee program of the Iberia Parish Sheriff's Department, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.



Aug 26-28

Louisiana Forestry Association

Annual Meeting: NRCS hosted an exhibit at the Louisiana Forestry Association Annual Meeting in Shreveport, Louisiana. Rick Williams, Louisiana NRCS State Forester, provided visitors with information on Farm Bill programs.

Sep 17

Plaquemines SWCD Hosts Tour:

On September 17, 2014, in conjunction with the monthly board meeting, the Plaquemines Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) hosted a boat tour of lower Plaquemines Parish. The focus of the tour was to illustrate the unique and dynamic coastal ecosystem of the lower Mississippi River distributary system—particularly in the Empire, Louisiana, area. Attendees learned about the many planned and implemented conservation projects, as well as conservation needs of the area.

Sep 18

Louisiana Association of

Conservation Districts: The Louisiana Association of Conservation Districts (LACD) conducted their annual convention planning meeting on September 18, 2014, in Alexandria,

Louisiana. LACD President, Ruben Dauszat discussed the new format for the LACD annual meeting which is scheduled for January 12-13, 2015, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.



Sep 22

Agricultural Prescribed Burn

Certification Workshop:

On September 22, 2014, the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry—Office of Soil and Water Conservation partnered with the LSU AgCenter to conduct an agricultural prescribed burn certification workshop in Port Allen, Louisiana. Attendees included sugarcane producers and other farmers and landowners who would benefit from learning how to develop an agricultural prescribed burn plan. Participants also learned about state legislation relevant to agricultural prescribed burning.

Oct 2

FFA Area III Forestry Career

Development Event: The Evangeline Soil and Water Conservation District will host the FFA Area III Forestry Career

Development Event on Thursday, October 2, 2014 at Mountain Bayou Lake Boy Scout Camp in Evangeline Parish.

Oct 2-3

Sparta Water Festival: The Sparta Groundwater Commission will host the annual Sparta Water Festival at the Lincoln Parish Park in Ruston, Louisiana, on October 2-3, 2014.

Oct 4

Boy Scout 2014 Scoutfest: Visit the NRCS tent at the Boy Scout 2014 Scoutfest at Camp Avondale in Clinton, Louisiana, on October 4, 2014.

Oct 10

USDA's LGBT Rural Summit Tour:

On October 10, 2014, USDA's LGBT Rural Summit Tour will visit Southern University's Law School in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. For more information, go to: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/lgbt_rural_summit_series.html

Oct 9

Annie's Project Lafayette: Register today to participate in Annie's Project Risk Management Education for Women in Lafayette. Sessions begin October 9, 2014. Contact Deborah Cross-Young at (985) 543-6570 for more information.

Oct 16

FFA Soils Judging Career

Development Event: The FFA Soils Judging Career Development Invitational event will be October 16, 2014, at the University of Louisiana, Lafayette, Cade Farm. For more information, contact Angie Fogleman at Acadiana RC&D at (337) 262-1776.

Nov 14

Louisiana Women in Agriculture

Conference: The 2014 Louisiana Women in Agriculture Conference will be hosted on November 14, 2014, at the LSU AgCenter in Napoleonville, Louisiana. For more information, contact Angie Fogleman at Acadiana RC&D at (337) 262-1776.



Contact Our Offices

Visit our web site at:
www.la.nrcs.usda.gov

Parish	Field Office	Soil and Water Conservation District	Address	Telephone
Acadia	Crowley	Acadia SWCD	157 Cherokee Drive, Suite C, Crowley, LA 70526	(337) 783-5823, ext. 3
Allen	Oberlin	Allen SWCD	309 North 1st Street, Suite 1, Oberlin, LA 70655	(337) 639-4850, ext. 3
Ascension	Donaldsonville	Lower Delta SWCD and New River SWCD	2438 Highway 1 South, Donaldsonville, LA 70346	(225) 473-7638, ext. 3
Assumption	Donaldsonville	Lower Delta SWCD	2438 Highway 1 South, Donaldsonville, LA 70346	(225) 473-7638, ext. 3
Avoyelles	Marksville	Avoyelles SWCD	629 Tunica Drive West, Marksville, LA 71351	(318) 253-9445, ext. 3
Beauregard	DeRidder	Calcasieu SWCD	597 Mahlon Street, Suite B, DeRidder, LA 70634	(337) 463-8555, ext. 3
Bienville	Minden	Saline SWCD	216B Broadway, Minden, LA 71055	(318) 377-3950, ext. 3
Bossier	Benton	Bodcau SWCD	200 Burt Boulevard, Suite 101, Benton, LA 71006-4901	(318) 965-2185, ext. 3
Caddo	Shreveport	Caddo SWCD	1402 Hawn Avenue, Shreveport, LA 71107	(318) 676-3461, ext. 3
Calcasieu	Lake Charles	Gulf Coast SWCD	5417 Gerstner Memorial Drive, Lake Charles, LA 70601	(337) 474-1583, ext. 3
Caldwell	Columbia	Boeuf and Dugdemona SWCD	7128 Highway 165 South, Suite 2, Columbia, LA 71418	(318) 649-2651, ext. 3
Cameron	Lake Charles	Gulf Coast SWCD	5417 Gerstner Memorial Drive, Lake Charles, LA 70601	(337) 474-1583, ext. 3
Catahoula	Jonesville	Catahoula SWCD	3545 4th Street, Jonesville, LA 71343	(318) 339-4239, ext. 3
Claiborne	Minden	D'Arbonne SWCD	216B Broadway, Minden, LA 71055	(318) 377-3950, ext. 3
Concordia	Ferriday	Tensas-Concordia SWCD	8331 Highway 84, Ferriday, LA 71334	(318) 757-2455, ext. 3
DeSoto	Mansfield	DeSoto SWCD	332 Lake Road, Mansfield, LA 71052	(318) 872-4949, ext. 3
East Baton Rouge	Denham Springs	Capital SWCD	907 Florida Boulevard, SW, Denham Springs, LA 70726	(225) 665-4253, ext. 3
East Carroll	Lake Providence	East Carroll SWCD	406 Lake Street, Suite C, Lake Providence, LA 71254	(318) 559-2604, ext. 3
East Feliciana	Clinton	Feliciana SWCD	9752 Plank Road South, Clinton, LA 70722	(225) 683-5496, ext. 3
Evangeline	Ville Platte	Evangeline SWCD	205 Court Street, Ville Platte, LA 70586	(337) 363-6602, ext. 3
Franklin	Winnsboro	Northeast SWCD	616 Riser Road, Winnsboro, LA 71295	(318) 435-6743, ext. 3
Grant	Colfax	Grant SWCD	510 Main Street, Colfax, LA 71417	(318) 627-9903, ext. 3
Iberia	New Iberia	Iberia SWCD	2617 Northside Road, Suite 600, New Iberia, LA 70563	(337) 369-6623, ext. 3
Iberville	Addis	Lower Delta SWCD	7747 Highway 1 South, Addis, LA 70710	(225) 687-2184, ext. 3
Jackson	Ruston	Dugdemona SWCD	1412 Celebrity Drive, Ruston, LA 71270	(318) 255-3136, ext. 3
Jefferson	New Orleans	Crescent SWCD	1041 Rue La Cannes, Luling, LA 70070	(985) 331-9084
Jefferson Davis	Jennings	Jefferson Davis SWCD	2003 Port Drive, Jennings, LA 70546	(337) 824-0975, ext. 3
Lafayette	Lafayette	Lafayette SWCD	905 Jefferson Street, Suite 310, Lafayette, LA 70501-7913	(337) 262-6601, ext. 3
Lafourche	Thibodaux	Lafourche-Terrebonne SWCD	143 Laura Drive, Thibodaux, LA 70301	(985) 447-3871, ext. 3
LaSalle	Jonesville	LaSalle SWCD	3545 4th Street, Jonesville, LA 71343	(318) 339-4239, ext. 3
Lincoln	Ruston	D'Arbonne SWCD	1412 Celebrity Drive, Ruston, LA 71270	(318) 255-3136, ext. 3
Livingston	Denham Springs	Capital SWCD	907 Florida Boulevard, SW, Denham Springs, LA 70726	(225) 665-4253, ext. 3
Madison	Tallulah	Madison SWCD	1900 Crothers Drive, Tallulah, LA 71282	(318) 574-4158, ext. 3
Morehouse	Bastrop	Morehouse SWCD	9604 Marlatt Street, Bastrop, LA 71220	(318) 283-7626, ext. 3
Natchitoches	Natchitoches	Natchitoches SWCD	6949 Louisiana Highway 1 Bypass, Natchitoches, LA 71457	(318) 357-8366, ext. 3
Orleans	New Orleans	Crescent SWCD	1041 Rue La Cannes, Luling, LA 70070	(985) 331-9084
Quachita	Monroe	D'Arbonne/Boeuf River SWCD	2410 Old Sterling Road, Suite B, Monroe, LA 71203-2668	(318) 343-4467, ext. 3
Plaquemines	New Orleans	Plaquemines SWCD	1041 Rue La Cannes, Luling, LA 70070	(985) 331-9084
Pointe Coupee	New Roads	Upper Delta SWCD	180 East Main Street, New Roads, LA 70760	(225) 638-7746, ext. 3
Rapides	Alexandria	Rapides SWCD	3734 Government Street, Building C, Alexandria, LA 71303	(318) 473-7856, ext. 3
Red River	Coushatta	Red River SWCD	1311 Ringgold Avenue, Coushatta, LA 71019	(318) 932-4352, ext. 3
Richland	Rayville	Boeuf River SWCD	141 Industrial Loop, Rayville, LA 71269	(318) 728-4451, ext. 3
Sabine	Many	Sabine SWCD	570 Highway 171 By Pass, Many, LA 71449	(318) 256-3491
St. Bernard	New Orleans	Crescent SWCD	1041 Rue La Cannes, Luling, LA 70070	(985) 331-9084
St. Charles	New Orleans	Crescent SWCD	1041 Rue La Cannes, Luling, LA 70070	(985) 331-9084
St. Helena	Amite	Tangipahoa-St. Helena SWCD	805 West Oak Street, Suite 1, Amite, LA 70422-2820	(985) 748-8751, ext. 3
St. James	Donaldsonville	Lower Delta SWCD and New River SWCD	2438 Highway 1 South, Donaldsonville, LA 70346	(225) 473-7638, ext. 3
St. John	New Orleans	Crescent SWCD	1041 Rue La Cannes, Luling, LA 70070	(985) 331-9084
St. Landry	Opelousas	St. Landry SWCD	5832 I-49 North Service Road, Opelousas, LA 70570	(337) 942-2530, ext. 3
St. Martin	Lafayette	St. Martin SWCD	905 Jefferson Street, Suite 310, Lafayette, LA 70501-7913	(337) 262-6601, ext. 3
St. Mary	Franklin	St. Mary SWCD	500 Main Street, Franklin, LA 70538	(337) 828-1461, ext. 3
St. Tammany	Franklinton	Bogue Chitto-Pearl River SWCD	1111 Washington Street, Franklinton, LA 70438	(985) 839-5688, ext. 3
Tangipahoa	Amite	Tangipahoa-St. Helena SWCD	805 West Oak Street, Suite 1, Amite, LA 70422-2820	(985) 748-8751, ext. 3
Tensas	St. Joseph	Tensas-Concordia SWCD	1223 Plank Road, St. Joseph, LA 71366	(318) 766-3502, ext. 3
Terrebonne	Thibodaux	Lafourche-Terrebonne SWCD	143 Laura Drive, Thibodaux, LA 70301	(985) 447-3871, ext. 3
Union	Farmerville	D'Arbonne SWCD	501 Glory Road, Farmerville, LA 71241	(318) 368-8021
Vermilion	Abbeville	Vermilion SWCD	3221 Veterans Memorial Drive, Suite H, Abbeville, LA 70510	(337) 893-5664, ext. 3
Vernon	Leesville	Calcasieu SWCD	205 North 5th Street, Leesville, LA 71446	(337) 239-2193
Washington	Franklinton	Bogue Chitto-Pearl River SWCD	1111 Washington Street, Franklinton, LA 70438	(985) 839-5688, ext. 3
Webster	Minden	Dorcheat SWCD	216B Broadway, Minden, LA 71055	(318) 377-3950, ext. 3
West Baton Rouge	Addis	Upper Delta SWCD	7747 Highway 1, South, Addis, LA 70710	(225) 687-2184, ext. 3
West Carroll	Oak Grove	West Carroll SWCD	208 South Constitution Street, Oak Grove, LA 71263	(318) 428-9303, ext. 3
West Feliciana	Clinton	Feliciana SWCD	9752 Plank Road South, Clinton, LA 70722	(225) 683-5496, ext. 3
Winn	Natchitoches	Dugdemona SWCD	6949 Louisiana Highway 1 Bypass, Natchitoches, LA 71457	(318) 357-8366, ext. 3

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