

# Natural Resource ENTERPRISES

www.naturalresources.msstate.edu

Issue 1, No. 1

## Conservation Reserve Program mid-contract management offers significant wildlife habitat management opportunity

*In Mississippi, nearly 1 million acres are enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). However, simply enrolling land in CRP does not necessarily make it good wildlife habitat, and even good habitat must be actively managed to produce quality wildlife habitat.*

Provision of wildlife habitat is one of the primary objectives of the CRP, and mid-contract management practices can help to ensure that lands enrolled in the CRP provide quality habitat for a diversity of wildlife species. Toward this end, USDA cost-shares a number of mid-contract management practices that producers may utilize to improve wildlife benefits and plant diversity in established CRP conservation covers. Some examples of the types of management practices cost-shared through mid-contract management include light strip-disking, prescribed fire, and herbicidal control of invasive vegetation. Landowners can apply for mid-contract management practices at any time, but mid-contract management practices must be incorporated into the CRP contract and management plan. Mississippi State University, in cooperation with USDA-Farm Service Agency; USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service; US Fish and Wildlife Service; Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks; Mississippi Forestry Commission; Delta Wildlife, Inc.; and Mississippi Fish and Wildlife Foundation, recently developed an informational brochure "Conservation

Reserve Program Mid-Contract Management: Practices for Wildlife Habitat Improvement in Mississippi" for producers who have active CRP contracts. The publication outlines Mississippi's mid-contract management cost-share practices to improve wildlife habitat and timber quality in CRP conservation covers and where to get assistance with management planning. An electronic copy of this brochure can be obtained from <http://www.naturalresources.msstate.edu/resources/bobwhite.html>, or a hard copy can be obtained by contacting Rick Hamrick at Mississippi State University, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Mississippi State, MS 39762-9690; phone: 662-325-5470; email [rhamrick@cfr.msstate.edu](mailto:rhamrick@cfr.msstate.edu). If you are interested in managing wildlife on your CRP acreage, mid-contract management practices are just a few easy steps away.



## Workshop offers landowners the opportunity to learn about natural resource enterprises



Dr. Wes Burger discusses quail management with workshop attendees at Birdlands Plantation

Landowners interested in earning additional revenue from their land can take part in a one-day workshop. The first workshop will be held on March 2nd at Lake Hall Farm in Lake Village, Chicot County, Arkansas. A second workshop will be held in Mississippi at Cypress Lodge Outfitters in Kilmichael, Montgomery County, March 8th.

These workshops will provide landowners with opportunities to speak with managers who are currently operating an enterprise, as well as provide "how to" information and access to resource professionals. Workshop attendees

will learn about revenue potential from enterprises, enterprise development, cost-share programs, liability and legal considerations, business planning, marketing, and wildlife habitat management.

The morning sessions will include presentations from resource professionals. Afternoon sessions will be conducted in the field and focus on cost-effective wildlife habitat management. For more information visit: [www.wildlifeworkshop.msstate.edu](http://www.wildlifeworkshop.msstate.edu) or call (662) 325-3174.

## Bird Feeding in Winter

*Millions of people in the United States enjoy feeding birds in their backyards every year.*

In fact, they spend \$3.1 billion on bird seed and wildlife food, and \$731 million on bird feeders, bird houses, and bird baths according to the 2001 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Associated Recreation.



© Wild Birds Unlimited

As winter approaches, many people choose not venture outside in the freezing temperatures to clean out and refill their bird feeders. In fact, winter is the most important time of year to provide seed as a supplement to their natural diets because of the lack and inaccessibility of food. Winter bird feeding can provide great entertainment for you and your family during one of those cold and blustery Saturdays in January.

Feeding birds can be as simple or as complex as you want it to be. Personally, I believe in the cheaper the better! My backyard is set up the following way, a plastic bird feeder (easier to clean than wood; see importance of cleaning below) filled with black oil sunflower seeds. Black oil sunflower seeds are the preferred seed of most backyard bird species and provide one of the highest calorie/ounce ratios in birdseeds available. For variety I will provide suet (pure fat substance available at any local pet store), which

is high in fat and provides the energy needed to keep warm.

Bird feeding attracts large numbers of multiple bird species into a small confined area. Cleaning bird feeders and stations is very important for the health of our wild bird populations. Close contact with each other and each others' saliva and feces exposes your visitors to possible infectious diseases. But by cleaning and disinfecting feeders bi-weekly you can keep the exposure to a minimum. Use one part liquid chlorine household bleach in nine parts of warm water (a 10% solution) to disinfect a feeder. Make enough solution to immerse an empty, cleaned feeder completely for two to three minutes. Allow it to air dry and then refill the feeder with fresh seed. At the same time you should clean up the feeding station or the ground below the feeder of waste seed. By doing so, you remove another potential exposure to infectious disease and reduce attraction of scavengers like rodents, squirrels, and even the family dog!

A birdbath or bowl with water is very important especially during freezing times because most available water freezes and cannot be used by birds. Many pet stores or garden centers sell birdbaths with built in de-icers that provide unfrozen water during the cold months. Place these items in an area that is out of the wind, like the east or southeast side of the house and near a couple of bushes or trees. The trees and bushes will provide perching areas for the birds to survey the feeding station for predators.

Finally, get yourself a cup of hot chocolate, blanket and comfortable chair and enjoy the winter bird-life!

- Adam T. Rohnke, NRE Program Associate

## The Land Bank of North Mississippi

The Land Bank of North Mississippi (LBNM) is a private farm cooperative bank owned by the borrowers. The LBNM has provided loans on tracts of land in north Mississippi for over 80 years. Any person or group who currently owns or desires to purchase land is eligible to apply for a loan. All loan approvals and financing terms are subject to the creditworthiness of the applicant.

There are many reasons to acquire a piece of land in the country. You may want to purchase land to build a nice home for a growing family or to use as a long-term investment. You may want to create a weekend getaway for hunting, fishing or just relaxing. Many of the loans that the LBNM make are for farming, ranching, refinancing existing mortgages and other debts, construction and building repair, improving property, constructing and improving facilities, purchasing equipment or other needs where term financing is appropriate. These loans could be used to improve your natural resource enterprise.



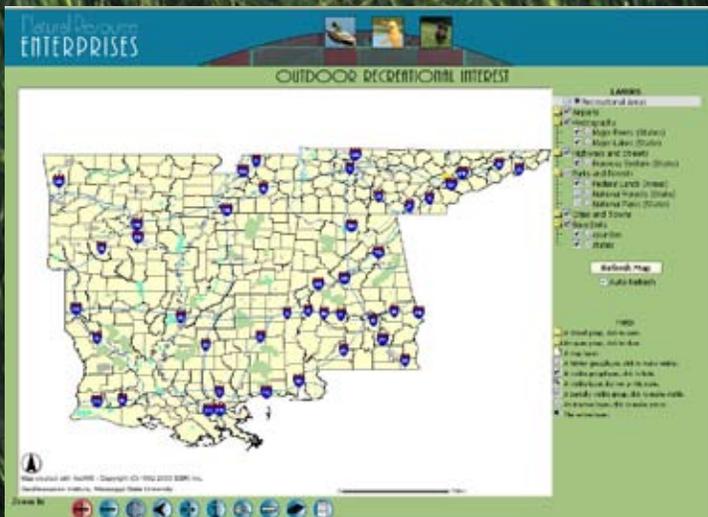
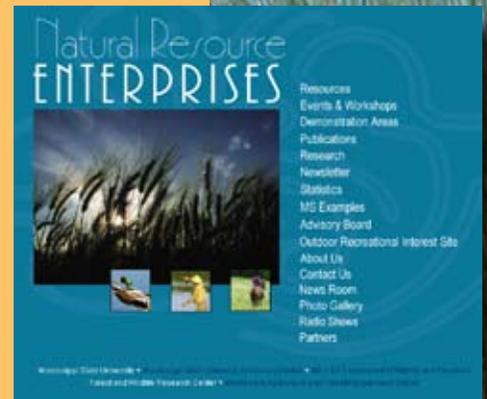
The LBNM can offer a variety of competitive interest rate plans to meet the diverse needs of customers. After all, land financing is all they do. They offer a variety of fixed rate products with fixed rate periods ranging from two to thirty years. Long term or short term, both the length of the loan and the frequency of repayment are structured to reflect the individual borrower's needs and financial ability. Available terms range from five to thirty years with either monthly, quarterly, semiannual or annual installment payments of principal and interest. For more information, call Matthew Raff or Joe Hill at 662-562-9664 or visit their web site at [www.mslanbank.com](http://www.mslanbank.com).

## Natural Resource Enterprises website

The NRE website is targeted to landowners and natural resource professionals who wish to increase the revenue generated from their land and diversify their revenue base. By encouraging landowners to retain and manage Mississippi land sustainably, Mississippi's natural heritage is protected.

The use of the Internet is an easy way to make information readily available to landowners, but it is only part of an information delivery system, working in conjunction with our workshops, newsletter, publications, and radio shows.

This site allows landowners access to current information on developing fee access businesses that are compatible with agriculture and forestry. Resources available include information on the management of important Mississippi wildlife species, liability considerations, business planning, marketing, financial considerations, cost-share programs, and many other resources vital to the proper management of a natural resource enterprise. Resources regarding these topics have been compiled from various state, federal, and non-governmental organizations. Users can listen to radio clips or read publications online. In the future, we will add tutorials and video clips to aid in the transfer of information. The website address is [www.naturalresources.msstate.edu](http://www.naturalresources.msstate.edu)



## Outdoor Recreational Interest website

The Outdoor Recreational Interest mapping website provides landowners in Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, Tennessee, and Arkansas the opportunity to market access to their properties for outdoor recreation (hunting, fishing, agritourism, wildlife watching, heritage tourism). Layers available for viewing include county boundaries, city boundaries, streams and rivers, state and national forests, wildlife management areas, and various types of imagery. The imagery available for viewing includes the National Agricultural Statistics crop layer for 2002 and the latest land use/land cover imagery. In the near future, DOQQ imagery will be added.

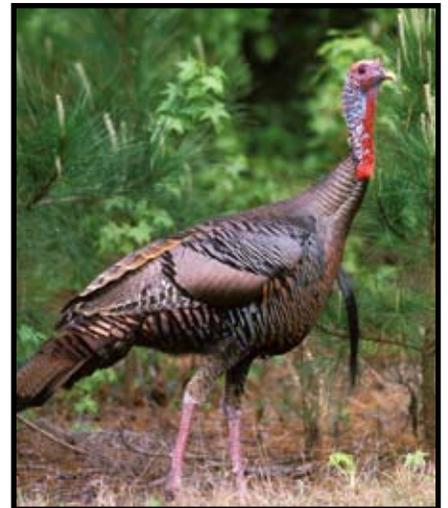
After an outdoor recreationalist has perused the website, he/she can submit an interest form with the specific recreational activities and locations of interest. This information is collected in a database which is searchable by landowners who can then contact potential recreationalists based on the services and leasing arrangements that they offer.

New users can browse the online tutorial and help files to learn how to use this site. The tutorial directs users through the website and provides samples of potential uses. Access the website by going to: [www.naturalresources.msstate.edu](http://www.naturalresources.msstate.edu) and clicking on "Outdoor Recreational Interest Site."

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