

Natural Resource ENTERPRISES

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Natural Resource Enterprise Demonstration Center in Newton, MS

Development and construction of the Natural Resource Enterprise Demonstration Center on the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Experiment Station (MAFES) Coastal Plain Experiment Station in Newton, MS is progressing.

The Center will feature five demonstration areas: Nature Trail and Lake, Backyard Habitat, Wildlife Management, Agriculture, and Forestry. The Natural Resource Enterprises (NRE) Program received a grant last fall from The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation that will be used to design and develop an educational program associated with the Nature Trail Area. The grant will also fund two landowner workshops featuring nature tourism and bird conservation.

In January and early April, NRE, MAFES, and MSU-ES staff conducted 2 controlled burns at the station. Fifty acres were burned in the Nature Trail Area in preparation for native grassland restoration and to introduce fire back into the forested areas. In the future, these areas will demonstrate the importance of fire in wildlife and vegetation management to visitors.

Additionally, the 10-acre pond was re-engineered by NRE and MSU-ES staff and the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Engineering Division from the Pearl and Decatur offices. New features of the reconstructed pond include two earthen piers, a boat launch, spillways, and a parking area. The pond will provide a tangible example of a fee-fishing operation, a recreational lake for future events, and quality wildlife habitat.

In April, MAFES completed the renovations to the main office building including new sheet rock, heating and cooling systems, windows, a conference room, bathrooms, a kitchen, carpet, and much more. The upgraded facility will provide a high quality meeting, office, and research center for MAFES and the NRE Program.

The Backyard Habitat Area committee was recently formed to assist in designing the Backyard Habitat Area that will surround the newly renovated building. This committee is composed of representatives from federal, state, and non-governmental agencies. This area will include butterfly gardens, wildflower gardens, examples of energy conservation through landscaping, an outdoor classroom, and other educational demonstrations.

Once the center is completed, MAFES/NRE landowner workshops and single topic field days and events will be held. As the facilities are completed, announcements will be made of future events. Stay tuned! For more information visit <http://www.naturalresources.msstate.edu/demo/newton.html>

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Landowner **Brandon, MS** September 18, 2007 Workshop



Jimmy Lanier of Panola County speaks to workshop participants about wildlife habitat management at a workshop held in 2005.

The Natural Resource Enterprises Program of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and partners will host a Natural Resource Enterprises Workshop on September 18, 2007. The event will be held in Brandon, MS and include an afternoon field tour of private property south of Brandon, MS.

MSU's Extension Service, MAFES and the Fish and Wildlife Research Center (FWRC) cooperatively created and implemented the Natural Resource Enterprises Program to assist private landowners in developing sustainable, supplemental methods of generating income from their land.

The workshop will consist of morning lectures by local natural resource and business professionals discussing types of natural resource enterprises and associated revenue potential, USDA cost-share assistance programs available for habitat management, outdoor recreation, nature tourism, business management, legal and liability considerations, and marketing.

After lunch, workshop attendees will board Mississippi State University covered trailers for afternoon tours of Mr. Arland Phillips' property. Natural resource professionals from the NRE Program, Mississippi State University, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks will be on hand for discussions and to answer questions about wildlife and fisheries management techniques that are taking place on the property. Some highlights include white-tailed deer management, fisheries management, quality vegetation management, outdoor recreation, bird watching and much more.

Registration for the workshop is \$25, which includes a reference notebook, lunch, breaks, presentations by resource professionals and a field tour with agency personnel. Early registration is recommended due to space limitations. For more information about the workshop or to register, visit <http://www.wildlifeworkshop.msstate.edu>.

The NRE Program is currently planning additional workshops in central and south Mississippi and neighboring states for the fall. We will post those dates in the near future on our website: <http://www.naturalresources.msstate.edu!>

Adam T. Rohnke

Understanding Food Plot Mixes and Combination Plantings

Spring is the time when many landowners and wildlife managers initiate annual plantings for wildlife food plots. Prior to planting, it is important to identify specific long-term goals and objectives for a property to avoid overuse of some plantings and to get the most benefit from food plots.

Plantings for wildlife are typically associated with combinations of agronomic varieties or specialty mixes “designed” to increase the attractiveness of wildlife on designated properties. Combination plantings, such as planting portions of a field with two or more varieties like corn and soybeans, have existed across our agricultural landscapes for decades, while specialty mixes have only been around a short time. Both can provide wildlife with ample foraging opportunities during nutritional stress periods, but have varying degrees of success depending on the scale and placement of these plantings.

With the assistance of Pennington Seed, Inc., the NRE Program has established demonstration plantings at various MAFES stations over the past two years. These demonstrations include plantings of several individual varieties and specialty mixes commonly used for enhancing and increasing wildlife abundance. These plots are monitored to compare establishment and productivity of the varieties used. Observations of each variety have led to interesting discoveries regarding rate of establishment, periodic growth, and tolerance to high browsing conditions and drought. Results varied across Mississippi’s soil types, primarily due to weather and soil-moisture conditions, non-specific competition from weeds, and timing of prescriptions.

Recommendations for warm season legumes/ grain producing plantings

Based on observations from demonstration plantings, we recommend using warm season legumes that are able to tolerate a variety of growing conditions for Mississippi soil types. We found Iron & Clay peas to be superior to Lab Lab and Soybeans when planted during April and May of the year. This variety also seems to withstand low soil moisture and high browsing pressure better than the other two varieties.

When selecting or formulating a mix to produce leafy forage and grain for wildlife, always use a mix with at least 5 varieties. Formulate these mixes at liberal rates for a more complete and productive mix. By incorporating legumes, like Iron & Clay peas, Alyce clover, Buckwheat and others into this mix, you will increase attractiveness to a wider diversity of wildlife including game and non-game birds and mammals. Mixes that were formulated with Sunflower, Grain Sorghum, Proso Millet, and Brown-top Millet provided seed at staggered intervals across the growing season and attracted a wider variety of wildlife to plot locations. By using these mixes, managers can target multiple game species with one planting.

Incorporate perennials like Crimson Clover, Arrowleaf Clover, Ladino Clover, and Durana Clover into your food plot plan. These varieties can be planted as a border around existing plots or as independent plots. For more information about forage plantings for wildlife and for more information about the Pennington Project please visit us online at <http://www.naturalresources.msstate.edu>. Also, Refer to MSU-ES publication 2111 “Wildlife Food Planting Guide for the Southeast” at <http://msucares.com/pubs/publications/p2111.htm> for establishment and management recommendations for wildlife forage plantings.

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