

# SWCD Spotlight

## Upper Delta SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

The Upper Delta Soil and Water Conservation District (UDSWCD) was born in 1947 at the request of resident landowners to establish a soil and water conservation program for all land within its capabilities and land treatment for protection and improvement. With geographic boundaries that include **Pointe Coupee and West Baton Rouge parishes**, the district enlists regular and special committees to establish and implement their conservation goals.

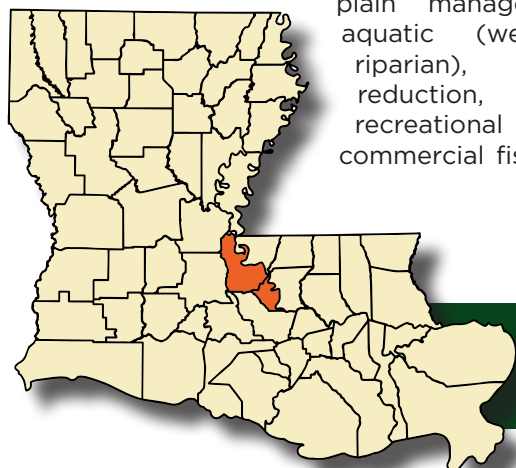
Upper Delta SWCD works closely with partners to assist the producers and landowners in its parishes. With the help of the the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), La. Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF), and many other partners, Upper Delta SWCD provides technical, planning, educational, and financial services to producers.

As of 2023, Upper Delta SWCD's population is 48,148, with the slight majority residing in West Baton Rouge Parish. Conversely, Pointe Coupee Parish contains the majority of cropland acres.

	Pointe Coupee	West Baton Rouge
Cropland acres	192,682	29,844
Aquaculture acres	2,500	852
Head of livestock	21,732	10,790

Major waterways in the district include the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers, the Intracoastal Waterway, and both False and Old rivers. In 2019, Upper Delta SWCD applied for Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program (PL-566) funding through NRCS.

That year there were only 7 projects in the United States chosen to receive PL-566 **watershed planning** funds, and the UDSWCD's Upper Terrebonne Watershed Plan was one of them. The plan is projected to cover 225,000 total acres across 7 Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC)-12 watersheds, including False River, Portage Canal (1), Portage Canal (2), Bayou Fardoche, Bayou Poydras, Bayou Grosse Tete, and Bayou Maringouin. Project improvements will include water quality, flood plain management, aquatic (wetland/riparian), flood reduction, and recreational & commercial fisheries



throughout Pointe Coupee, West Baton Rouge, and Iberville parishes.

The plan was recently put into action when the UDSWCD signed a contract with the La. Office of Community Development—Louisiana Watershed Initiative (LWI) Program to begin implementation of the Upper Terrebonne Watershed Project; GIS Engineering, Inc, will complete engineering and design for the Upper Terrebonne Basin Drainage Improvement Project. The LWI provides funding for watershed planning, modeling, and data collection on lands which pose as a threat to flood risk. Upper Delta SWCD was awarded \$9,503,130.80 for this project and will use these funds to assist with drainage issues to help prevent flooding.

Through a partnership with LDAF's Office of Soil and Water Conservation, LDEQ Nonpoint Source Division, and USDA-NRCS, UDSWCD was able to hire a **full-time Watershed Technician** to assist landowners with improving the district's water quality, soil health, and wildlife habitat. The Section 319 Nonpoint Source Management Program was created following amendments to EPA's Clean Water Act. This program uses **voluntary landowner participation** to target reductions in sedimentation, nutrient loading, turbidity, biological oxygen demand, coliforms/bacteria, and agricultural chemicals.

To determine conservation resource needs and concerns in the district each year, the UDSWCD conducts locally led stakeholder meetings, and then prioritizes and disseminates the information to partners and cooperators. In previous years, property and crop damage from feral hogs topped this list of priorities, leading to the purchase of four Pig Brig net style hog traps, which are rented out to farmers and landowners to help control the feral swine population. The district would like to thank Rep.



Upper Delta Supervisor Chip Vosburg and District Secretary Reba Leonards with poster contest winners at False River Academy



LWI contract signing — (L-R back) Brandi Fontenot, GIS Engineering; Mark Ward, Pointe Coupee Parish Government; Chippy Vosburg, SWCD Supervisor; Curtis Engemann, SWCD Supervisor; Donald Schexnayder, SWCD Supervisor; Jacob Loeske, GIS Engineering; Travis Byland, GIS Engineering; (L-R front) Reba Leonards, SWCD Secretary; Price Gay, SWCD Chairman

Jack McFarland, for his assistance in acquiring funds for the purchase of hog traps for use in SWCDs statewide.

This past January, during the 78th annual meeting of the Louisiana Association of Conservation Districts, the Upper Delta SWCD brought home multiple awards.

- **Distinguished Service** — Mr. Donald Schexnayder, UDSWCD Supervisor
- **Special Recognition** — Stephanie Garvin, part-time UDSWCD secretary
- **Guy Caire Award** — Chippy Vosburg, UDSWCD Supervisor
- **Outstanding District Technician** — DaJuan Ellis

Conservation and protection of our natural resources is critical to Louisiana's future, as agriculture brings billions of dollars to the state's economy. **Upper Delta SWCD** is proud to thoughtfully and proactively address soil erosion, soil health, wildlife habitat, flood protection and water quality issues for farmers, landowners, and the general public, as well as provide conservation education for future generations.

### UPPER DELTA SWCD

377 Major Parkway,  
New Roads, LA 70760-3506

Email: [upperdeltaswcd@gmail.com](mailto:upperdeltaswcd@gmail.com)

Web: <http://upperdeltaswcd.wixsite.com/upper>

Phone: (225) 638-7746, ext. 3

To learn more about SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS in Louisiana, or to find your local SWCD office, visit [www.ldaf.la.gov](http://www.ldaf.la.gov).