

# SWCD Spotlight

# Sabine SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

The Sabine Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) was established in 1939 to guide conservation assistance to private landowners in Sabine Parish. The SWCD's efforts in conservation are complimented by cooperating partner agencies and other professionals for development of a comprehensive conservation plan which includes a detailed natural resources inventory and conservation practice prescriptions, all at the landowners' request.

Each plan includes identification of natural resource concerns and their interrelations, then determining the best whole-system management approach to addressing each, also known as a Resource Management System (RMS) plan.

To that end, each year Sabine SWCD hosts a locally led meeting, inviting all local stakeholders to discuss local resource concerns. Those concerns are then assessed and prioritized thereby helping direct technical and financial assistance decisions that the district, along with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) make throughout the year.

For example, recent meetings revealed a heightened awareness and concern about the overpopulation of feral hogs and their impact on natural resources in Sabine Parish. Feral swine compete for food with native wildlife, prey on small animals, reptiles, and birds, and



**Rep. Jack McFarland's amendment to the 2022 Supplemental Appropriations Bill provided support for Louisiana SWCDs to purchase net style traps to remove invasive hogs statewide.**

can transmit diseases. They root up plants and crops, induce soil erosion on cropland, pasture, and hay lands. In fact, according to the LSU AgCenter feral hogs cause \$76 million a year in agricultural damage in Louisiana.

Through collaboration with LDAF's Office of Soil and Water Conservation, Sabine SWCD purchased two Pig Brig net traps. In two years, the district has provided the trap to 40 landowners, who have trapped over 130 hogs on private lands. This has been a huge asset for local landowners and the entire parish as we all work toward preserving our valuable natural resources.

Sabine SWCD "at a glance"	
Land area	647,500 acres
Water area	97,000 acres
Forestland	478,500 acres
Grazing land	51,000 acres
SWCD cooperators	864

To further public awareness of natural resources in Sabine Parish, the Sabine SWCD reaches over 2,000 students and 120 educators through the many conservation events they conduct throughout the year. Here are a few of them:

- Zwolle Tamale Fiesta is an educational day for third grade students in the parish, with over 300 students attending. Held the second weekend in October, it celebrates the area's Spanish ancestry and teaches the importance of being good stewards of the land, as well as native plant species in wetlands and other habitats.
- For over 30 years, Sabine SWCD has hosted a youth Fish Fest to encourage youth outdoor involvement and highlight the district to local cooperators, businesses, and partners. The Toledo Bend Lake Association (TBLA) has partnered for the last 15 years, providing \$3,000 to the event, as well as donations and sponsorships from local businesses. This outdoor fishing tournament on Toledo Bend Lake and is open to the public from 6-18 years old, testing their angling abilities and teaching contestants about the watershed, aquatic life it supports, and the importance of keeping our water clean. Over 40 students participated in this year's event, which took place June 22, 2024.



**Above: 7.41-lb. turtle, bass winners, and group of participants at this year's Fish Fest**

**Below: Fishing at Toledo Bend Lake and Grand Prize "Living the Dream" winner**



- Sabine SWCD also takes part in the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) poster contest each year, open to students in grades 4-12. In 2023, four schools participated, with over 100 entries submitted.

Sabine SWCD believes that educating our youth on the importance of conservation and protection of our natural resources is critical to Louisiana's future.



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**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).**