

Pulaski Conservation District
Annual Report FY 2019

By The Numbers:

Beaver Bounties Paid:	\$1,960 (196 tails @ \$10/tail)
Water Use Registrations:	277 Measurement Points
Poultry Registrations:	3 Poultry Feeding Operations
TSP Hours Claimed:	230 Hours
Plat Products Sold:	1 Book & 1 Map
Float Valves Sold:	4 Valves
Pecans Sold:	585 lbs (\$1,216.00 Profit)

Activity Highlights:

Urban Conservationist: Since September 2015, Pulaski Conservation District has employed an Urban Conservationist dedicated to working with urban and suburban groups and landowners by providing conservation-related outreach and technical assistance. Projects include school and community gardens, conservation presentations, preparation of outreach materials, and residential erosion & drainage consultations. The position is funded through a cooperative agreement with the NRCS, allowing the district to employ a conservation technician and be reimbursed for the work completed. The District was able to get its current agreement extended this year to go through September 2020.

School & Community Gardens: As part of its urban conservation program, the District has the goal of working with schools and community entities to establish new gardens as well as consult on existing ones.

- The Urban Conservationist continued the relationship developed in 2015 with the NLR Fit2Live community garden network. Fit2Live is a city-sponsored program that works with community gardens throughout North Little Rock. The program provides grant funding and technical assistance. The Mayor of North Little Rock includes approximately \$30,000 in the city budget annually to support the grant program. The District Urban Conservationist attends the Fit2Live monthly meetings and provides technical assistance as needed on conservation issues and continues to serve on the Garden Advisory Council as the “at-large” member. The council assists the Fit2Live manager with review

of the garden grant applications and with resolution of garden compliance and project funds reporting issues.

- The District continued to work with New Africa Church community garden in North Little Rock (a Fit2Live garden partner) on its pollinator garden. After the initial planting failed, the Urban Conservationist revised the garden plan to utilize the remaining Bayer Feed-A-Bee pollinator grant money as effectively as possible.
- The District continued to work with community gardens on identifying appropriate conservation practices and possible funding sources. This includes assisting NRCS North Little Rock Field Office staff to identify appropriate NRCS practices for community gardens such as high tunnels houses and micro-irrigation. This District has helped community garden leaders and other conservation organizations identify grant opportunities and provided assistance with program applications and forms.

Urban Agriculture: The District continues to promote urban agriculture in Pulaski County, often providing producers with support that falls outside of NRCS's scope.

- The Urban Conservationist continued the District's close relationship with the St Joseph's Center urban farm. She participated in a committee to prepare a resubmittal of the Center's veterans agricultural training program grant proposal to the National Institute of Food and Agriculture. However, the Center was not awarded the grant. The project was re-worked and submitted as a proposal to NRCS for conservation technical assistance funding for a similar veterans' training project. The proposal was submitted as a 3-year project. NRCS awarded an agreement to St. Joseph's for the project with funding obligated for 1 year. Funding will be available for the 2 subsequent years in future NRCS obligations.

Arkansas Monarch Conservation Partnership: The Urban Conservationist continues to be very active on the state-wide Monarch Conservation Partnership, serving as Co-Chair of the Outreach and Education Subcommittee of the Partnership's Steering Committee. She served on the committee to plan the Partnership's public forum held November 1st in Little Rock and made a presentation to the almost 100 participants outlining the outreach and education goals included in the Partnership's statewide conservation plan. The District donated flexible magnets displaying the Partnership's logo, pollinator perennial plant seed packets and notepads and provided goodie bags to participants.

The District also agreed to sponsor a milkweed seed propagation project awarded to the partnership by Arkansas Audubon. The District will work directly with the Partnership's coordinator to identify schools state-wide that have greenhouses and would be able to propagate native milkweed. Propagation kits and seed will be distributed to the schools. The District will then work with the Partnership's coordinator to select schools with pollinator

and/or vegetable gardens to receive the seedlings. The project is scheduled to be initiated in Fall 2019.

The Urban Conservationist has attended events and made presentations on behalf of the Monarch Conservation Partnership as listed below:

- Staffed an outreach table at the River Valley Horticulture nursery fall fair on Saturday October 6, 2018.
- Presented two, 1 & ½ hour seminars (morning and afternoon) at River Valley Horticulture nursery February 2, 2019, discussing monarch conservation efforts of the partnership, the monarch migration, pressures threatening monarchs, citizen science initiatives, and native nectar and host plants appropriate for monarchs. There were approximately 52 to 54 folks at each presentation.
- Staffed an outreach table at the Jefferson County Home and Garden show on February 9, 2019.
- Presented a 20-minute presentation at the Arkansas Flower & Garden Show at the LR Fairgrounds on March 2, 2019 discussing the monarch migration and the importance of native plants in Arkansas gardens.
- Staffed an outreach table at the Faulkner County Master Gardener plant sale on May 11, 2019.
- Presented a 30-minute seminar at the Pulaski County Master Gardener monthly meeting on June 18, 2019 discussing the monarch migration and the importance of native plants in Arkansas gardens.
- Presented a 30-minute seminar at the LR Headquarters of Arkansas Electric Cooperatives as part of their pollinator week celebration, discussing the monarch migration and monarch habitat needs.
- Staffed an outreach table at the LR Zoo Pollinator Day on June 29, 2019.

Outreach & Education: The District places a high priority in fostering conservation education, particularly those efforts that enhance Pulaski County youth's knowledge of and concern for conservation and environmental issues. However, the District also strives to conduct conservation outreach in critical areas of the county to increase conservation knowledge and participation across all age groups. Some of the District's outreach efforts include the following.

- The Enviroscape was presented to several classes of 3rd, 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th graders (approximately 50 students) at the STEAM festival at The Anthony School on April 5, 2019, a day-long festival celebrating science, technology, engineering, arts, and math.
- Lawson Elementary hosted a family night on May 10, 2019. The District staffed a display table on native bees. Jessica Bursk, Earth Team Volunteer, assisted and helped the kids make bee finger puppets out of pipe cleaners. We also had freeze-dried bee specimens (carpenter bee, bumble bee, and honey bee) the kids could look at under a magnifying glass. There were approximately 20 families in attendance.
- Lake Maumelle Watershed Small Acreage Outreach: The District signed a cooperative agreement with NRCS in 2017 to conduct outreach to small acreage landowners in the Lake Maumelle watershed. The District partnered with Central Arkansas Water to hold a landowner's conference in Spring 2018 to discuss best management practices as well as NRCS programs that small landowners can participate in. With money still left in the agreement, the District has received an extension from NRCS to continue to conduct landowner outreach through 2020 to help increase conservation participation in the watershed.
- The District continues to provide outreach via the following means: District website, Facebook page, newsletters, brochures/handouts, and other educational materials.

Community Grants and Sponsorships: The District applies for grants to help fund conservation work in addition to providing support for projects that might not have an outside funding source.

- The District was awarded an Arkansas Game & Fish Education grant for owl pellet dissection kit distribution. Five (5) kits were purchased and awarded to the Flightline Academy middle school at the Little Rock Air Force Base. The District installed a pollinator garden at the school's nature trail last year and continues to work with the school on conservation education.
- The District was awarded a Grants to Districts grant from ANRC. The project total was \$4770.00 with \$3150 to come from ANRC and \$1620 from District match. The funding will be used to install a pollinator garden at The Anthony School in Little Rock. The school has an active vegetable garden, a green house, and an active monarch butterfly rearing program. Part of the project will include a native plant care and maintenance seminar for parents and teachers so they can maintain the garden effectively in the future. The garden will be installed in Fall 2019.
- The District awarded a grant of \$2,045.00 in January 2019 to the Arkansas Agriculture Department to fund native plants for the pollinator garden at the Department's Headquarters building in West Little Rock.

FY 2020 Goals:

- Administer Grants-to-Districts award to install a pollinator garden at The Anthony School.
- Apply for another Grants-to-Districts project to install a pollinator garden at an identified site.
- Properly cull old files in preparation for the NRCS field office move anticipated in FY 2020.
- Host Lake Maumelle landowner expo as part of fulfilling the District's agreement with NRCS.
- Increase outreach by utilizing digital platforms such as e-newsletters (ex. MailChimp) and new social media (ex. Instagram).
- Work to bring delinquent water-users back into registration compliance.
- Reapply with NRCS to renew the District's agreement covering our Urban Conservationist position.