

CONSERVATION NEWS

JAN-MAR 25

# COMMISSION CHRONICALS

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## 80TH ANNUAL MACD MEETING

OVER \$36,000 RAISED  
FOR CONSERVATION  
EDUCATION



# 80th Annual MACD Meeting: A Huge Success with Over \$36,000 Raised for Conservation Education



The 80th Annual Mississippi Association of Conservation Districts (MACD) Meeting proved to be a remarkable success, bringing together conservation leaders, district representatives, and supporters from across the state. This year's meeting was particularly momentous as attendees and sponsors collectively raised over \$36,000 for the MACD Endowment Fund, a vital resource that provides scholarships and educational opportunities for students pursuing careers in natural resource conservation.

Held in an atmosphere of collaboration and shared commitment to preserving Mississippi's natural resources, the event featured insightful guest speakers, engaging workshops, and special recognition of individuals making significant contributions to conservation efforts.

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The MACD Endowment Fund plays a crucial role in fostering the next generation of conservationists by supporting scholarships. Each year, six \$10,000 scholarships are awarded to college students who demonstrate a strong commitment to natural resources conservation. Eligible recipients include sophomores, juniors, seniors, and graduate students who are currently enrolled in a Mississippi college or university and pursuing a degree in natural resources or conservation-related field. A \$5,000 college scholarship is also awarded to an outstanding student at the Mississippi Soil & Water Conservation Youth Camp. The generosity of donors, districts, and sponsors at this year's meeting helped ensure that future conservation leaders will have the support they need to continue their education and make a lasting impact.



This year's success would not have been possible without the dedicated volunteers who gave their time and energy to organize and execute a seamless event. From coordinating sessions to ensuring that attendees felt welcomed, their efforts were truly invaluable.





Additionally, we extend our deepest gratitude to the guest speakers who shared their expertise and insights, inspiring attendees with their knowledge and passion for conservation. Their contributions helped make this meeting an informative and impactful experience for all.

As we reflect on the incredible success of the 80th Annual MACD Meeting, we look forward to continuing our mission of promoting conservation programs, supporting education, and engaging communities in protecting Mississippi's natural resources. With the momentum from this year's event, we are confident that the MACD Endowment Fund will continue to grow and positively influence conservation efforts across the state.





To everyone who attended, contributed, or played a role in making this event possible—thank you! Your support and dedication are what drive conservation efforts forward, ensuring that Mississippi’s land and water resources are preserved for generations to come.

For more information about the MACD Endowment Fund or ways to get involved, please contact your local Soil & Water Conservation District or the Mississippi Soil & Water Conservation Commission.



## Neshoba County SWCD Hosts Successful Conservation Carnival, Educating Over 360 Students



Neshoba County, MS – The Neshoba County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) successfully hosted its Conservation Carnival from February 18th through February 20th at the Neshoba County Coliseum, providing an engaging and educational experience for local students. The event welcomed 362 students from Neshoba Central, Philadelphia, Union, and Choctaw Tribal Schools, offering hands-on learning opportunities about conservation and environmental stewardship.

The Conservation Carnival was structured as a nine-station, 15-minute rotational event, allowing students to interact with a variety of conservation experts. Representatives from state and local conservation agencies played a key role in the event, including the Mississippi Soil & Water Conservation Commission (MSWCC), Mississippi Forestry Commission, Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, and the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) with its “Adopt a Stream” program, among others.

Each station provided an interactive learning experience, covering topics such as soil health, water conservation, forestry management, and wildlife protection. Students had the opportunity to engage in hands-on activities that demonstrated the importance of natural resources conservation and sustainable practices



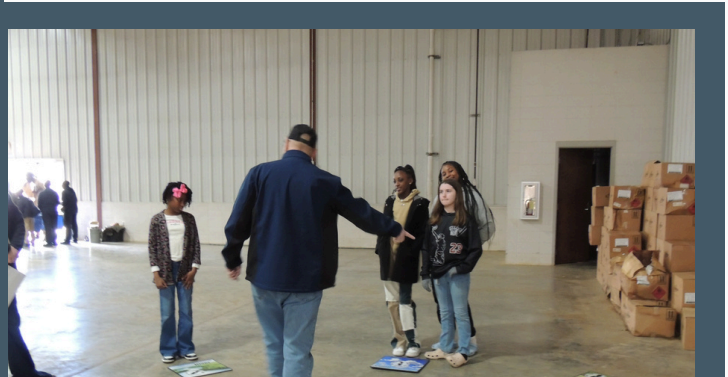
“The Conservation Carnival was a fantastic way to bring conservation education to life,” said a representative from the Neshoba County SWCD. “By engaging students with real-world applications, we hope to inspire the next generation of conservationists to take an active role in protecting Mississippi’s natural resources.”



The event’s success highlights the importance of conservation education in Mississippi and the dedication of federal, state and local agencies to fostering environmental awareness among young learners. As the Neshoba County SWCD looks ahead, they hope to continue growing this initiative and further engage local communities in conservation efforts.



For more information about future conservation programs and events, please contact the Neshoba County SWCD or visit the Mississippi Soil & Water Conservation Commission’s website at [www.mswcc.ms.gov](http://www.mswcc.ms.gov).



# Conservation Word Search

## Know Your Environment



Find the following words in the puzzle.

Words are hidden     and .

BIODIVERSITY  
CARBON  
COMPOST  
CONSERVATION  
ECOSYSTEM  
EROSION  
FORESTRY

GRASSLAND  
HABITAT  
NATIVE  
ORGANIC  
RECYCLING  
RESTORATION  
RIPARIAN  
SOIL

SPECIES  
SUSTAINABILITY  
WATERSHED  
WETLANDS  
WILDLIFE

Created using Word Search generator on Super Teacher Worksheets.

([www.superteacherworksheets.com](http://www.superteacherworksheets.com))



## The Secret Life of Soil: Why It's More Than Just Dirt



When you look down at the ground beneath your feet, you see dirt, right? But, there is so much more happening below the surface. A mind-blowing cycle of creation and destruction takes place every second! Our world is sustained by its existence. My dear readers I'm talking about Soil! Soil is one of the most important natural resources on Earth. It's a living ecosystem that supports plant life, filters water, and plays a critical role in agriculture and natural habitats.

Without healthy soil, our environment and our food supply simply wouldn't function.

Soil is formed through a long, natural process known as weathering, where rocks break down into tiny particles over hundreds to thousands of years. Influenced by factors like climate, water, plant roots, and microorganisms, these particles eventually combine with decaying organic matter to form the rich, fertile soil that sustains life.

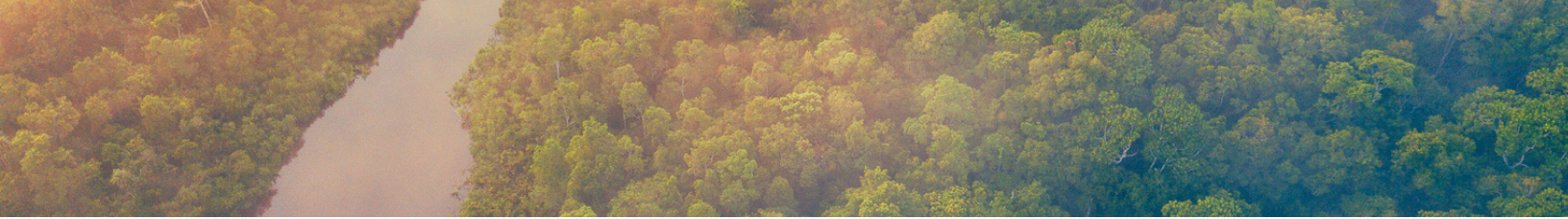
Soil is made up of layers which are called horizons. These layers work together to support healthy ecosystems and productive land.

O Horizon – A thin layer of organic material like leaves and decomposed plants

A Horizon (Topsoil) – Rich in nutrients and essential for crops

B Horizon (Subsoil) – Holds minerals that have leached from above

C Horizon (Regolith) – Partially weathered rock that stores water and minerals



That takes us to our next question. WHY IS HEALTHY SOIL IMPORTANT? Healthy soil does more than grow our food—it also plays a vital role in managing water and maintaining environmental balance. It absorbs rainfall, reducing runoff and erosion, acting as a natural water filter.

When soil becomes degraded—due to erosion, overgrazing, poor land management, or deforestation—it loses its ability to support life. This not only impacts farms and forests but the health of entire ecosystems.

The good news? We can protect and restore soil health through proven conservation practices like:



- ✓ Minimal-till farming
- ✓ Cover cropping
- ✓ Rotational grazing
- ✓ Minimizing disturbance and increasing biodiversity

These techniques are suggested because they can help build organic matter. This helps improve water retention, reduce erosion, and promote a healthy balance of soil organisms.



So, next time you step outside, take a moment to appreciate the soil beneath your feet. It may look like dirt—but it’s a powerful, life-giving resource that deserves our respect and protection.

For more on soil health and conservation practices, visit the Mississippi Soil & Water Conservation Commission website @ [www.mswcc.ms.gov](http://www.mswcc.ms.gov) or contact your local soil & water conservation district.



# Mississippi Envirothon Gears Up for Another Exciting Year

Another year has arrived, and with it comes the excitement and energy of the Mississippi Envirothon, a premier environmental science competition for high school students across the state. This annual event brings together some of Mississippi's most passionate young conservationists, all dedicated to learning about natural resources, sustainable practices, and the environment—both globally and right here in Mississippi.



On March 18, 2025, area competitions were held across the state in the South, Central, Delta, and North regions. Teams demonstrated their knowledge in core Envirothon categories, including soils, aquatics, forestry, wildlife, and the 2025 Current Issue, in hopes of advancing to the next level.

Now, the top teams from each region are preparing to compete in the Mississippi Envirothon, where they'll put their knowledge, critical thinking, and teamwork to the test.

We are incredibly grateful to see such strong dedication from students, advisors, and volunteers who care deeply about the future of our environment. Their hard work reflects a growing awareness and responsibility for the conservation of Mississippi's natural resources—something we all benefit from.

As we look forward to the state competition, we celebrate these students for their passion, commitment, and leadership in environmental stewardship.

Stay tuned for updates as the Mississippi Envirothon continues to inspire and empower the next generation of conservation leaders!

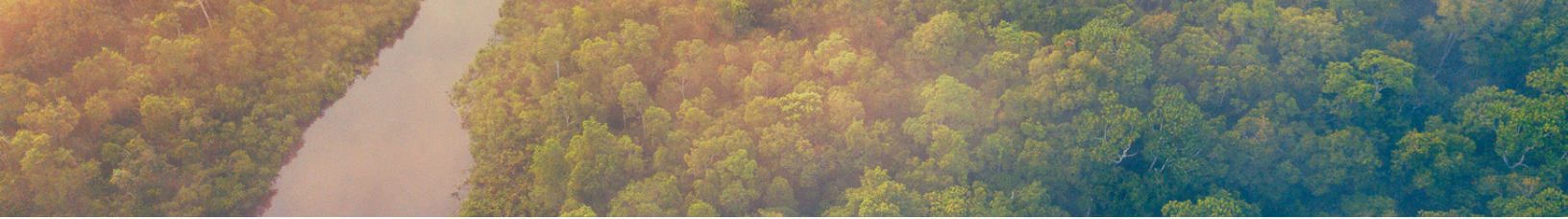
## MSWCC Offers Lake Draining Services with New Siphon System



The Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission (MSWCC) offers lake-draining services to landowners and drainage districts across the state using an aluminum siphon system. This service is designed to help maintain the safety and functionality of watershed lakes, especially when clogs or obstructions prevent proper water flow.

Watershed lakes play a vital role in managing runoff, controlling erosion, and protecting downstream communities. When these lakes overflow due to blockages, it can lead to potentially dangerous conditions for residents and property downstream. Our lake-draining service offers a proactive solution to reduce those risks and help landowners keep their watershed infrastructure functioning as it should.





### How the Service Works:

If a lake is clogged and needs draining, the landowner or drainage district can request assistance by submitting a letter to MSWCC or email our Federal Programs Director, Brad Shedd, at [bshedd@mswcc.ms.gov](mailto:bshedd@mswcc.ms.gov). This request should include:

- Location of the site
- Contact information for the person responsible for the property

If it is a watershed lake built under PL534 or PL 566 there will be no charge to drain the lake. If it is a private dam, then there will be a \$1,000.00 charge for the services.

Before MSWCC initiates the siphon system, we ask the landowner or district to provide a confirmation date for when their team will begin clearing the obstruction. This ensures our schedule aligns with their debris removal efforts for a more efficient process.

Please note: MSWCC only performs the lake-draining portion of the process. Debris removal is the responsibility of the landowner or drainage district.

By offering this service, MSWCC aims to assist in maintaining the health and safety of watershed lakes, ensuring they continue to serve their intended purpose without becoming a hazard to the surrounding environment and communities.

For more information or to request service, contact the Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission at [www.mswcc.ms.gov](http://www.mswcc.ms.gov).



# Get Ready for the 2025 MACD Draw Down!

It's almost that time again—MACD Draw Down tickets are coming soon!

Starting in April 2025, you'll have the chance to purchase a ticket for just \$50 and be entered to win one of two grand prizes of \$2,500 each! But this raffle is more than just a shot at winning big—it's an investment in the future.

All proceeds from ticket sales directly fund scholarships awarded at the MACD Annual Meeting, helping support Mississippi students who are passionate about conservation and natural resources.

There will be three easy ways to purchase your ticket:

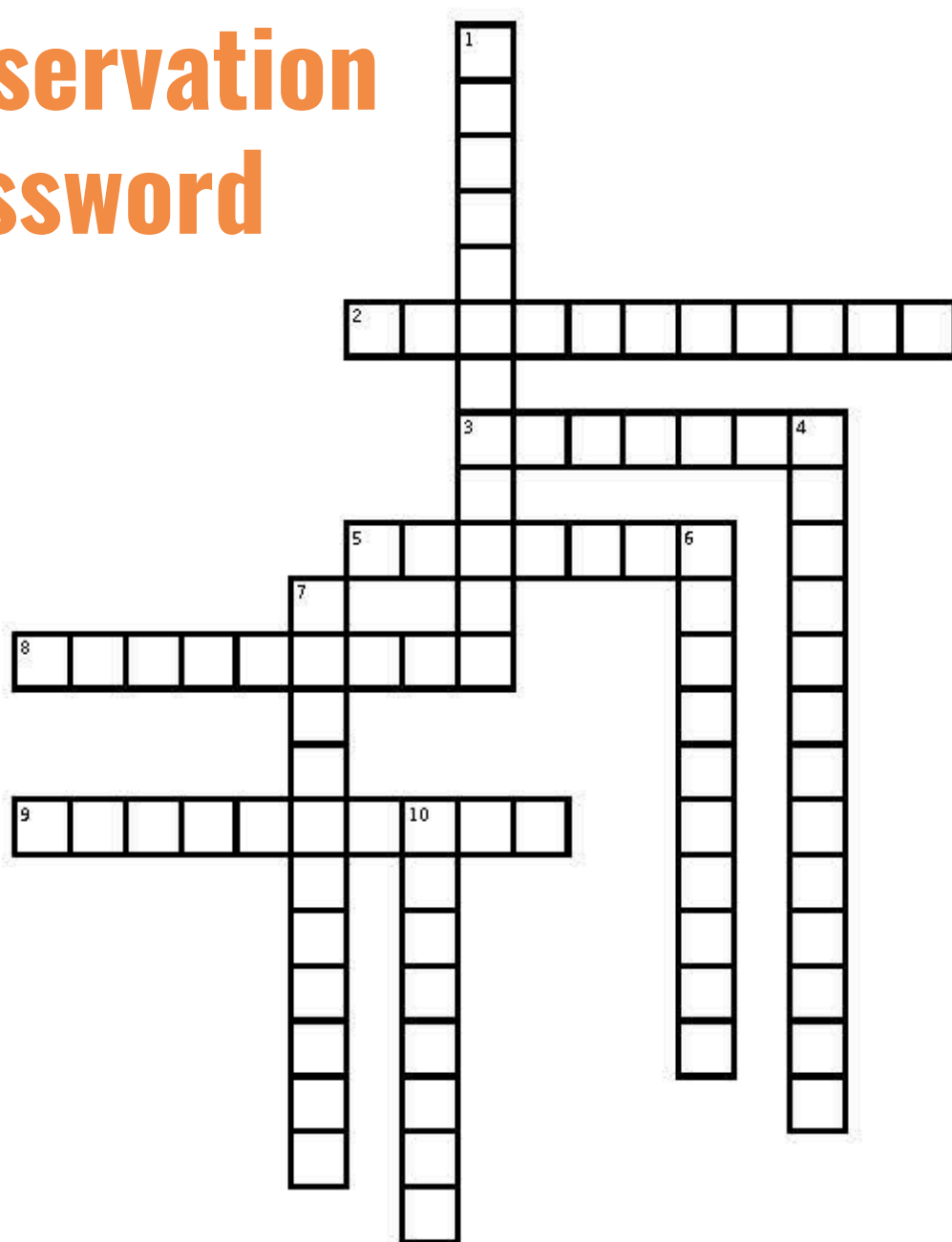
1. Contact your local Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) office
2. Reach out to MSWCC to connect with your county's Field Representative
3. Email Hope Daley, MACD Secretary/Treasurer, at [hdaley@mswcc.ms.gov](mailto:hdaley@mswcc.ms.gov)

Mark your calendar and be ready to support a great cause—and maybe even take home a prize!

Enter  
to Win



# Conservation Crossword



## Down:

1. The act of maintaining and protecting natural areas
4. Planting trees to restore a deforested area
6. At risk of extinction in the near future
7. Responsible management of natural resources
10. A non-native species that disrupts local ecosystems

## Across:

2. The science and practice of farming and raising crops
3. Underground layer of water-bearing rock or materials
5. The long-term pattern of weather in a region
8. The presence of harmful substances in the environment
9. Plant life found in a particular area or habitat