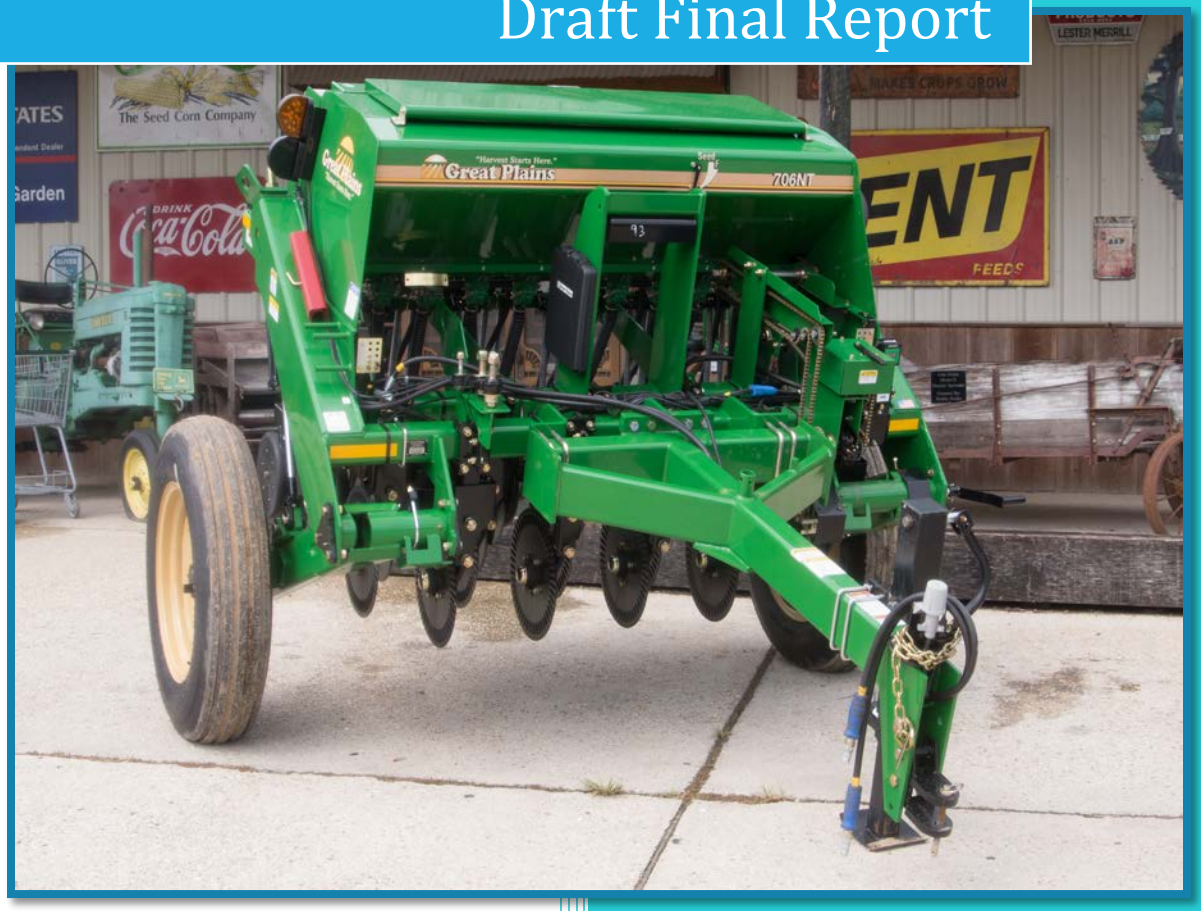
2017

No-Till Grain Drills to Improve Water Quality in Washington and St. Tammany Parishes

Draft Final Report



Capital Resource Conservation and Development Council

RC&D

Nonpoint Source PROGRAM

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

DEQ LOUISIANA

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Project Overview

Project Title: No-Till Grain Drills to Improve Water Quality in Washington and St. Tammany Parishes

Project: No-Till Grain Drill Equipment: reduces soil erosion and fertilizer runoff on pastures

*Goal: P*urchase two no-till grain drills for use throughout Washington and St. Tammany parishes Louisiana

Objective: To reduce soil erosion and the amount of fertilizer applied in an effort to improve water quality in areas affected by livestock.

Project Timeline: 15 months

Project Area: Watersheds in Washington and St. Tammany Parishes

Grant Number: FFY 2012; C9-996102-19; project 24

Grant Source: Section 319 Federal Funds

Initiation Date: June 1, 2016 *Expiration Date:* September 30, 2017

PROJECT COST:

Categories	Federal	Match	Total
Purchase of two No-Till Grain Drills	$51,708.56	$33,867.70	$85,576.26
Administration	$801.50	$0.00	$801.50
Outreach	$300.00	$0.00	$300.00
Quarterly Reports	$2,091.45	$0.00	$2,091.44
Final Reports	$300.00	$0.00	$300.00
Total	$55,201.51	$33,867.70	$89,069.21

Table 1 Expenditures for "No-Till Grain Drills to Improve Water Quality in Washington and St. Tammany Parishes"

Introduction

Washington and St. Tammany parishes in southeast Louisiana consist of significant cattle and horse farms that clean-till for winter pasture production. Figure 1 illustrates the locations of Washington and St. Tammany Parishes in Louisiana. Clean-till disking means to cultivate by stripping the soil clean of weeds and other growth to prepare for planting. These soils consist of highly erodible lands that are normally disked in the winter for preparation of rye grass and wheat crops in this area. Approximately 730 producers disk close to 39,749 acres of pasture in the winter months. The disking of highly erodible soils has contributed to excessive soil erosion and runoff of soil sediments, nutrients, and pesticides. Clean-till disking of these soils is contributing to nearby streams, lakes, and rivers being placed on Louisiana's list of impaired waterbodies. Using no-till grain drills would be beneficial to producers in these areas; therefore, the grain drills were purchased to aid cattle farmers in converting conventional clean tillage seedbed methods to drilling into ground cover. The farmers use bermuda and bahia for permanent pasture establishment. Winter crops for cattle include ryegrass and winters oats, while sorghum is usually used as the summer crop, for grazing. In addition, the producers used the no-till grain drills on native crops such as switchgrass, little bluestem, big bluestem, and love grass. In the summer of 2016, a rental program was established, allowing farmers access to the equipment. In a little over one year, the program resulted in 24 participating producers and no-till demonstrations have been applied to approximately 534 acres.

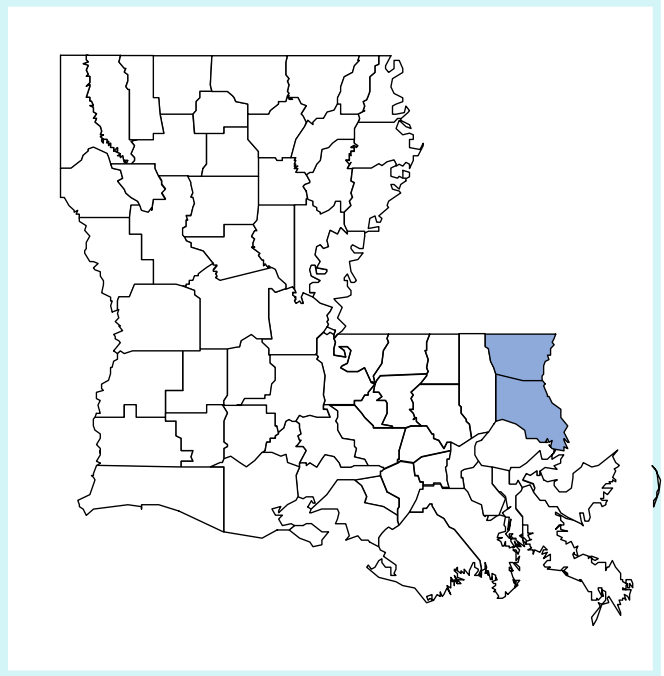

Figure 1 Location of Washington and St. Tammany parishes in Louisiana

Goals and Objectives

The goal of this project was to use Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 319 federal funds to purchase and utilize two no-till grain drills. Figure 2 illustrates a tract of land before the use of no-till grain drills. The equipment was placed at Circle T Co-operative in Franklinton, LA. By applying no-till grain drill demonstrations throughout the parishes, the objective was to reduce soil erosion; the amounts of fertilizer applied; and improve water quality in areas that are affected by the livestock industry north of Lake Pontchartrain. The use of these drills allowed for direct seeding into permanent pastures, thus resulting in a reduction of sediment, pesticides and nutrients from reaching nearby streams; therefore, improving water quality in those areas.

Figure 2 Tract of land before the use of no-till grain drills

Water Quality Impairments

According to the Louisiana 2014 Integrated Report (IR), there are thirteen subsegments within these parishes that were not meeting the standard for their designated uses. Table 2 provides information for each of the waterbodies not meeting its designated use support. In an effort to improve water quality across the two parishes, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality's (LDEQ) nonpoint source (NPS) section and the Capital Resource Conservation and Development Council (Capital RC&D) partnered on the project, "No-Till Grain Drills to Improve Water Quality in Washington and St. Tammany Parishes", on June 1, 2016. The use of the no-till grain drill allowed producers to directly seed their pasture sod without tilling the landscape, which reduced the amount of sediment, pesticides, and fertilizer runoff from entering Washington and St. Tammany Parishes waterways.

Louisiana's 2014 Integrated Report		
Subsegment	**Description**	**Impairment(s)**
040702	Tangipahoa River-From I-12 to Lake Pontchartrain	Mercury in Fish Tissue, Chloride, Dissolved Oxygen, Sulfates, Total Dissolved Solids and Water Temperature
040803	Tchefuncte River-From LA-22 to Lake Pontchartrain (Estuarine)	Mercury in Fish Tissue, Chloride, Total Dissolved Solids, Fecal Coliform and Water Temperature
040901	Bayou Lacombe-From headwaters to US-190 (Scenic)	Chloride, Dissolved Oxygen, Sulfates and Total Dissolved Solids
040902	Bayou Lacombe-From US-190 to Lake Pontchartrain (Scenic) (Estuarine)	Chloride, Sulfates, Total Dissolved Solids
040903	Bayou Cane-From headwaters to US-190 (Scenic)	Chloride, Dissolved Oxygen, Sulfates and Total Dissolved Solids
040905	Bayou Liberty-From headwaters to LA-433	Mercury in Fish Tissue, Chloride, Dissolved Oxygen, Sulfates and Total Dissolved Solids
040907	Bayou Bonfouca-From headwaters to LA-433	Chloride, Copper, Dissolved Oxygen, Sulfates, Total Dissolved Solids and Benzo(a)pyrene (PAHs)
090106	Holmes Bayou-From Pearl River to West Pearl River (Scenic)	Mercury in Fish Tissue, Sulfates and Turbidity
090201	West Pearl River-From headwaters to Holmes Bayou (Scenic)	Mercury in Fish Tissue, Sulfates and Turbidity
090205	Wilson Slough-From Bogue Chitto to West Pearl River (Scenic)	Mercury in Fish Tissue, Sulfates and Turbidity
090206	Bradley Slough-From Bogue Chitto to West Pearl River (Scenic)	Mercury in Fish Tissue, Sulfates and Turbidity
090207	Middle Pearl River and West Middle Pearl River-From West Pearl River to Little Lake	Chloride, Mercury in Fish Tissue, Dissolved Oxygen, Sulfates, Total Dissolved Solids and Turbidity
090501	Bogue Chitto River-From Mississippi state line to Pearl River Navigation Canal (Scenic)	Mercury in Fish Tissue and Turbidity

Table 2 Waterbodies in Washington and St. Tammany parishes not meeting the standard for their designated uses, as listed in Louisiana's 2014 Integrated Report.

Introducing the Program: working towards project goal

On August 15, 2016, a press release (Appendix A) was issued explaining the opportunity for local producers to reduce the amount of runoff of pesticides, fertilizer, and sediment, through the use of no-till grain drill equipment (Figure 3). The RC&D also conducted an opening ceremony on August 15, 2016, to introduce the program. The opening ceremony was held at the Circle T in Franklinton, LA. Those who attended were members of Capital RC&D, Circle T Farm Supply, Bogue Chitto-Pearl River Soil and Water Conservation District, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and Great Plains Ag (Figure 4). Potential users were educated on the many benefits of using the no-till grain drill equipment as a conservation measure, such as reducing the runoff of sediment. Once the grain drills were purchased and placed at Circle T, a rental program was put in place to cover the maintenance and storage of the equipment and also to ensure their availability to the producers. Capital RC&D was the principal lead for the project. Together, with Circle T, the progress of the rental program was monitored. In-kind match was provided by the producers as a result of the costs associated with project demonstration (Table 3).

Figure 3 Seven foot no-till grain drill located at Circle T in Franklinton LA

Figure 4 No-till grain drill opening ceremony, August 15, 2016 at Circle T in Franklinton, LA.

COST	ACTIVITY
$250	Pick-up and delivery fee
$200	Co-op service fee for handling and maintenance
$135 per hour	Tractor rental fee to pull the no-till grain drill
$15 per hour	Labor fee to drive the tractor
$28 per hour	Fuel fee to power the tractor
$178 per hour	Total cost for use of the no-till grain drill (excluding pick-up, delivery and service fee).
$44.50 per acre	Estimated cost planting 4 acres per hour.

Table 3 Activities and associated costs used as in-kind match

How it Works

Why No-Till?

According to *Conservation Currents*, County of Fairfax Virginia's online website, advances in farming practices have brought about methods to control weed growth without relying on the plow. One of the most advanced and effective of these new methods is called no-till agriculture. As the name implies, no-till agriculture allows a farmer to plant the crop and control weeds without turning the soil. While traditional plowing is effective for weed control, it generally reduces a farm's long-term productivity by exposing the organic-matter-rich top soil to the surface and breaking up the clods that slowly and naturally form in soil.

A high organic matter content and good clod formation are both crucial aspects of fertile soil. Organic matter attracts and holds onto water, thus ensuring proper hydration for plant roots, even during dry periods. The slow breakdown of organic matter in the soil releases vital nutrients, such as nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium, which are essential for plant growth. Organic matter also causes the soil to clump into the tiny granules that are the basis of soil clods. When a soil clumps together into clods, large pore spaces form in the soil. These pores become conduits for water and air passing through the soil. Plant roots use a portion of this air and water. The remainder of the water slowly percolates through the soil and into the groundwater.

When soil is turned, the organic matter is exposed to the atmosphere and can quickly oxidize into carbon dioxide.. Less organic matter in the soil means less water retention, less nutrient release and less clod formation. Along with encouraging the oxidation of organic matter, plowing physically breaks up pre-existing clods and exposes them to the direct force of rainfall. The force exerted by raindrops is enough to break up the remaining clods and form a structure-less soil "crust" on the field surface. This crust has virtually no pores and as a result, plant roots do not get the water and oxygen that they need, and surface runoff and soil erosion become a large problem. The crust can also be strong enough to make it difficult for seedlings to push through to the surface.

No-Till Method

In no-till agriculture, the farmer uses a disk or chisel plow to prepare the field for seeding. Rather than turning the field, these plows create a narrow furrow, just large enough for the crop's seeds to be injected. Tractor attachments inject a band of fertilizer in with the seeds, thus negating the need to fertilize the whole field, and close up the furrow after the seed and fertilizer have been planted. With these new plows, the farm field can be seeded with minimal disturbance of the soil.

No-Till Farming

The advantages of no-till farming are economic as well as environmental. The no-till farmer will see an increase in the organic matter of the soil, and a decrease in the amount of erosion. More organic matter and less erosion mean more fertility, less fertilizer, and higher yields. Additionally, with the advances in cover crops and green manures, the no-till farmer can greatly reduce the use of high-cost herbicides. Given the combined environmental and economic benefits of the practice, it is easy to see why no-till agriculture is catching on across Louisiana and the country.

Benefits of No-Till Farming

The most obvious reason that soil is tilled is to loosen it so oxygen and water can reach the area where roots will grow. It seems logical that friable, loose earth would allow roots to spread evenly and to proliferate, and this is indeed the case. But using a moldboard plow doesn't necessarily produce such soil. Plowing and disking a field results in a soil with broken structure lying atop a heavily compressed plow pan (the undisturbed layer that the plow does not reach). The broken soil is prone to being compacted by rainfall. In addition, many passes must be made over the field with very heavy equipment, the wheels of which further compress the soil. Untilled ground starts off being less compacted than a heavily machine-worked field, and it stays that way. Soil that has become compressed by tillage or machinery will return to a less compacted state after a few years of no-till planting *(Conservation Currents, 2005).*

According to *Mother Earth News*, studies have shown that the accumulation of surface material levels off after a few seasons of no-till practice. Utilizing the correct equipment, these ingredients can be placed directly into the planting trench during seeding. Plowing incorporates fertilizers and crop residues into the soil, making nutrients readily available to the roots of the plants. Turning organic matter under also has the benefit of preventing planters from becoming fouled with surface trash. In no-till farming, crop residues are left on the surface, where the nutrients that result from their decay can leach into the soil. Fertilizers, including anhydrous ammonia, phosphorus, and potassium, are at least as effective on the no-till fields where they have been dispersed as on the plowed plots. In normal tillage, the entire field is turned into a seedbed that may be mounded for planting. With no-till, one simply prepares a narrow trench of the appropriate depth. Studies have shown that plant roots develop at least as well in a no-till field as in a plowed one and that the lack of mounding exposes less of the soil to air and evaporation *(Mother Earth News, 1984).*

Conventional plowing is also performed across the contours of the land to prevent soil erosion; however, this rationale does not hold up against the results with no-till. The crop residues on a no-till field prevent runoff to an amazing extent: on slopes that are steeper than can normally be planted, no-till fields have consistently shown next to no topsoil loss after downpours of several inches per hour. The vegetative cover also makes the no-till field less susceptible to the effects of wind erosion. This type of agriculture

offers a solution to the problem of topsoil loss. Figure 5 illustrates no-till farming versus conventional and conservation tillage.

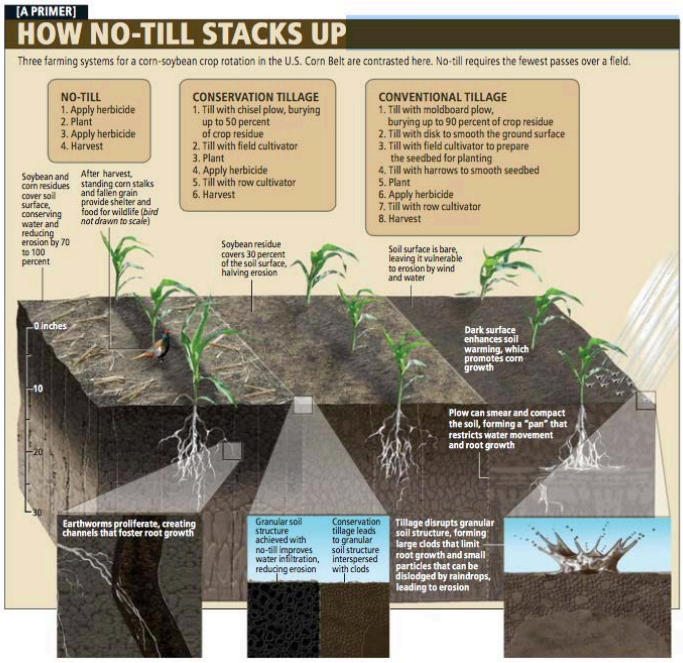

Figure 5 No-till farming versus conservation and conventional tillage

A benefit of the retention of runoff is that no-till soils remain moister than those in tilled fields. The surface residues trap water and protect the earth below from the evaporative effect of the wind. One of the main problems with conventional agriculture's heavy use of nitrogen fertilizers is the leaching of these compounds into surface water during runoff. By retaining rainfall, the untilled field also better holds the chemicals that have been applied to it, thereby decreasing their pollution potential.

The list of environmental benefits that no-till farming has over conventional practices is numerous. Beyond its ability to create a more natural soil that retains nutrients and water, prevents soil erosion, and compacts less, the no-till technique offers a number of immediate financial advantages to the farmer. In addition to saving fuel, reducing wear and tear on tractors, no-till drilling also requires fewer pieces of equipment. Plows, cultivators, and disk harrows become obsolete. Because a smaller tractor is required to drag a disk or plow to pull the no-till planter, money can be saved on the size of no-till equipment, as well.

Yields are generally as good with no-till agriculture as they are with plow techniques. The soil stays cooler until a little later in the spring, because of the insulating layer of residue, the day/night soil temperature fluctuations are smaller. A no-till field rapidly

makes up its deficit in growth rate, as the weather turns warm. If the summer is hot and dry, no-till yields will nearly always exceed those of plowed ground. Since soil moisture levels can be more than 10 percent higher in late July in an unplowed piece of ground, plants thrive in a field covered with mulch. An article in *Modern Farmer titled "No-Till Farming: What's the Deal?" highlighted* additional pros for no-till farming, which include: savings, water conservation, less herbicide runoff, higher crop yields. Overtime, no-till farming can save significant money in labor and fuel, simply by cutting the added step of plowing each year. No-till farming also leaves crop residues on the surface, which absorb water and limits runoff. This water retention can be a benefit to farmers in drought-stricken areas. No-till farming is also responsible for less herbicide runoff. The lack of water runoff prevents herbicides and other pollutants from getting into nearby water supplies. Lastly, in areas with low moisture levels, no-till farming can significantly increase crop yields (Hirsch 2013). Figure 6 Illustrates a farm utilizing tilled farming compared to a no-till farm.

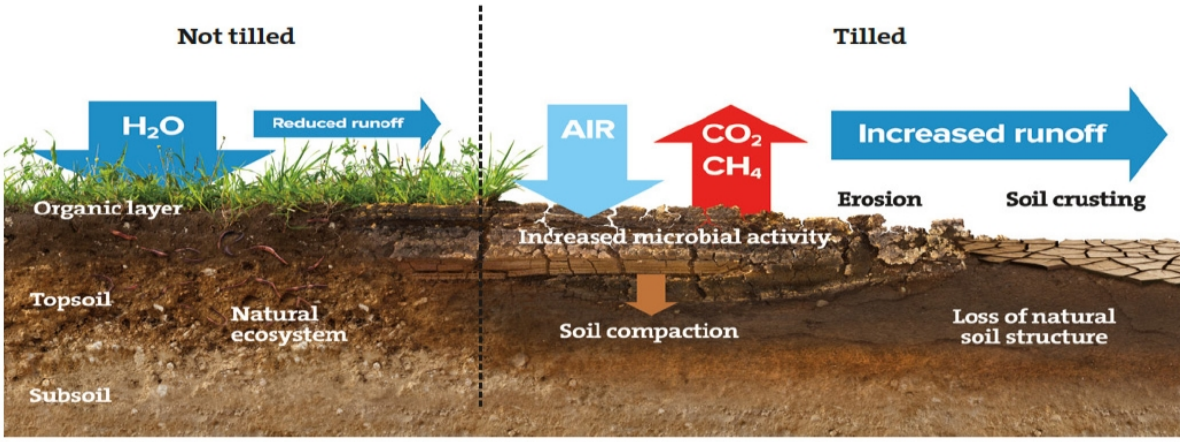

Figure 6 No-till farming compared to tilled farming

Reductions/Improvements Due to No-Till Grain Drill Demonstration: working towards project objectives

As part of the program, Capital RC&D and the co-ops monitored the progress of the rental program to determine the effectiveness of the equipment on the soil. The number of rentals, acres planted, and estimated soil saved determined the amount of reductions accomplished (Table 4). There has been an approximate total reduction of 1,077 pounds of phosphorus, 1,077 pounds of potassium, and 1,077 pounds of nitrogen, in St. Tammany and Washington parishes.

Time Period	# of Rentals	# of Acres Planted	tons/soil/saved	Transportation/Reduction into Waterbodies		
				Phosphorus	Potassium	Nitrogen
7/16 – 9/16	2	101.6	508.04	203.2 lbs.	203.2 lbs.	203.2 lbs.
10/16 – 12/16	10	180	900	360 lbs.	360 lbs.	360 lbs.
1/17 - 3/17	3	84	420	168 lbs.	168 lbs.	168 lbs.
4/17 - 6/17	6	126	630	252 lbs.	252 lbs.	252 lbs.
7/17 - 9/17	3	47	235	94 lbs.	94 lbs.	94 lbs.
Totals	**Total Rentals**	**# Acres Planted**	**Tons/Soil/Saved**	**Phosphorus**	**Potassium**	**Nitrogen**
	24	**538.6**	**2,693.04**	**1,077.2**	**1,077.2**	**1,077.2**

Table 4 No-till grain drill rentals, acres planted, tons of soil saved, and approximate reduction of phosphorus, potassium, and nitrogen to the waterbody, from July 2016 through September 2017.

The environmental benefits of the no-till grain drills project are plentiful. In an effort to illustrate how the reductions were obtained, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) used RUSLE2 in the soil erosion calculations. For nutrient reduction, NRCS assumed 6.9 tons of soil loss per acre/per year difference, and assuming about 50 parts per million (ppm) of potassium (P) and phosphorus (K) in a soil test, that is equivalent to a loss of approximately 2 pounds per acre/per year of phosphorus and potassium. Nitrogen is at a direct loss of about two pounds/acre. In a clean tilled situation, there may be a loss of infiltration capacity on plowed ground, as well as soil health and function. The transport of nutrients, is often ten times the amount of what is calculated above, to nearby waterbodies. Figure 7 illustrates a tract of land after the use of a no-till grain drill.

Figure 7 Tract of land after the use of no-till grain drill

According to the 2016 IR, the 13 subsegments referenced in "Water Quality Impairments" as not meeting the standards for their designated uses, remain listed as impaired; however, impairments have been removed from subsegment 040702 and 040803 (Table 5). With additional persistence from community leaders for the landowners to partake in additional demonstration, using no-till grain drills, the waterbodies may eventually be restored.

Louisiana's 2014 and 2016 Integrated Report Impairments				
Subsegment	**Description**	**2014 IR Impairment(s)**	**2016 IR Impairment(s)**	**Impairments no longer listed as of 2016 IR**
040702	Tangipahoa River-From I-12 to Lake Pontchartrain	Mercury in Fish Tissue, Chloride, Dissolved Oxygen, Sulfates, Total Dissolved Solids and Water Temperature	Mercury in Fish Tissue, Water Temperature	Chloride, Dissolved Oxygen, Sulfates, Total Dissolved Solids
040803	Tchefuncte River-From LA-22 to Lake Pontchartrain (Estuarine)	Mercury in Fish Tissue, Chloride, Total Dissolved Solids, Fecal Coliform and Water Temperature	Mercury in Fish Tissue, Water Temperature	Chloride, Total Dissolved Solids, Fecal Coliform
040901	Bayou Lacombe-From headwaters to US-190 (Scenic)	Chloride, Dissolved Oxygen, Sulfates and Total Dissolved Solids	Chloride, Dissolved Oxygen, Sulfates, and Total Dissolved Solids	Not applicable
040902	Bayou Lacombe-From US-190 to Lake Pontchartrain (Scenic) (Estuarine)	Chloride, Sulfates, Total Dissolved Solids	Chloride, Sulfates, and Total Dissolved Solids	Not applicable
040903	Bayou Cane-From headwaters to US-190 (Scenic)	Chloride, Dissolved Oxygen, Sulfates and Total Dissolved Solids	Chloride, Dissolved Oxygen, Sulfates and Total Dissolved Solids	Not applicable
040905	Bayou Liberty-From headwaters to LA-433	Mercury in Fish Tissue, Chloride, Dissolved Oxygen, Sulfates and Total Dissolved Solids	Mercury in Fish Tissue, Chloride, Dissolved Oxygen, Sulfates and Total Dissolved Solids	Not applicable
040907	Bayou Bonfouca-From headwaters to LA-433	Chloride, Copper, Dissolved Oxygen, Sulfates, Total Dissolved Solids and Benzo(a)pyrene (PAHs)	Chloride, Copper, Dissolved Oxygen, Sulfates, Total Dissolved Solids and Benzo(a)pyrene (PAHs)	Not applicable
090106	Holmes Bayou-From Pearl River to West Pearl River (Scenic)	Mercury in Fish Tissue, Sulfates and Turbidity	Mercury in Fish Tissue, Sulfates and Turbidity	Not applicable
090201	West Pearl River-From headwaters to Holmes Bayou (Scenic)	Mercury in Fish Tissue, Sulfates and Turbidity	Mercury in Fish Tissue, Sulfates and Turbidity	Not applicable
090205	Wilson Slough-From Bogue Chitto to West Pearl River (Scenic)	Mercury in Fish Tissue, Sulfates and Turbidity	Mercury in Fish Tissue, Sulfates and Turbidity	Not applicable
090206	Bradley Slough-From Bogue Chitto to West Pearl River (Scenic)	Mercury in Fish Tissue, Sulfates and Turbidity	Mercury in Fish Tissue, Sulfates and Turbidity	Not applicable
090207	Middle Pearl River and West Middle Pearl River-From West Pearl River to Little Lake	Chloride, Mercury in Fish Tissue, Dissolved Oxygen, Sulfates, Total Dissolved Solids and Turbidity	Chloride, Mercury in Fish Tissue, Dissolved Oxygen, Sulfates, Total Dissolved Solids and Turbidity	Not applicable
090501	Bogue Chitto River-From Mississippi state line to Pearl River Navigation Canal (Scenic)	Mercury in Fish Tissue and Turbidity	Mercury in Fish Tissue and Turbidity	Not applicable

Table 5 Comparison of subsegment impairments in St. Tammany and Washington parishes, according to Louisiana's 2014 and 2016 Integrated Report's

Conclusion

Capital RC&D's goal to purchase two no-till grain drills which would be rented to local producers throughout St. Tammany and Washington parishes was fulfilled. The education and outreach portion of the program educated the land users on the benefits of utilizing no-till grain drills on their property while improving the NPS conditions in the watersheds. The RC&D aimed to rent the grain drills to 20 farmers per/year to demonstrate the drills' functionality and foreseeable positive outcomes of utilizing the drills on 350 acres per/year. The objectives to reduce soil erosion reduce fertilizer runoff and improve water quality in St. Tammany and Washington parishes were also accomplished. Allowing the local farmers to utilize the conservation tillage grain drills has lowered the annual soil erosion rate and reduced runoff of fertilizer and pesticides from entering their local streams. At the conclusion of the project, there were 24 rentals, and 539 acres planted, resulting in approximately 2,693 tons of soil saved and sediment prevented from washing into local waterways. Approximately 3,232 pounds of fertilizer, nutrients, and pesticides, were stopped from leaving the fields and draining into local streams. From the demonstration of the no-till grain drills, there has been an approximate total reduction of 1,077 pounds of phosphorus, 1,077 pounds of potassium, and 1,077 of pounds of nitrogen, within the two parishes. The project was completed on September 30, 2017; however, the rental program will be self-sustaining and beneficial for many years to come.

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Appendix A

RC&D

ASCENSION . ASSUMPTION . EAST BATON ROUGE
EAST FELICIANA . IBERVILLE . LIVINGSTON
POINTE COUPEE . ST. HELENA . ST. JAMES
ST. TAMMANY . TANGIPAHOA . WASHINGTON
WEST BATON ROUGE . WEST FELICIANA

CAPITAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, INC.
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Date: August 15, 2016

Contact: Donny Latiolais
Phone: 985-276-3000

Release No. 0006.09

SUBJECT: "NO-TILL GRAIN DRILLS TO IMPROVE WATER QUALITY"

Hammond, LA – The Hammond Capital Resource Conservation & Development Council (RC&D) secured a $52,000 Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality 319 Contract, which will address non-point source pollution on lands in the Washington and St. Tammany Parishes. The contract has allowed RD&C to purchase two No-Till Drills be placed at the Circle T Fertilizer & Seed Franklinton, La, in an effort to reduce the amount of run off of pesticides, fertilizer and sediment. A rental program for the use of the drills has been set up at the two area local farm business in order to create an opportunity to engage livestock farmers, who will be able to use the new equipment rather than the normal clean tillage application.

"There exists a need to conserve our natural resources and improve our water quality in south Louisiana," states RC&D President, Don Ashford. "Our environmental efforts, while effective, are at times limited. More opportunities for in-depth application of Best Management Practices are needed."

A ribbon cutting ceremony for the rental program will take place at the Circle T Fertilizer & Seed, located at 1106 16th Ave in Franklinton on Monday, August 15th at 10:00 a.m. Members of the public, especially livestock farmers, as well as the media are encouraged to attend. Also in attendance will be representatives from Washington/St. Tammany Parish Soil & Water Conservation and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

"Our farmers will have an opportunity to plant their sloping lands that are in some cases, considered highly erodible for winter pastures, along with the possibility of introducing clover in the spring in permanent pastures, and the establishment of native grasses. This will reduce the runoff of sediment, nutrients and pesticides into our streams and rivers", states Alvin Tris, local Soil & Water Conservation board member.

The mission of the RC&D is to provide leadership in the wise use of our area resources and provide economic opportunities in Southeast, Louisiana. RC&D is a unique program that is led by local volunteer councils. RC&D is a way for people to work together to plan and carry out activities that will make their area a better place to live. Such activities lead to sustainable communities, prudent land use and the sound management and conservation of natural resources. Program objectives focus on "the quality of life" improvements achieved through natural resources conservation and community development.

-end-

"We Make Things Happen"