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# POST OAK RC&D

NEWS LETTER

JUNE 2007

## Canola Field Trials

Post Oak RC&D along with their partners; Texas A&M Extension, Common Sense Agriculture, Stratta Brothers and NRCS completed field trials in Wharton and Robertson counties. The trials tested 21 varieties of Canola, Mustard, Rape and Radish. The primary goal was to determine species and varieties that will thrive in the Brazos Bottom. Varieties were planted in replicated plots and were observed for tolerances to moisture, drought, cold, disease, insects, and, fertility. Other important factors that were noted were planting density, lodging, shatter, soil type, oil content and quality and days to maturity. Both trials were planted in mid November. The earlier maturing varieties were harvested in mid May and

the later maturing varieties were harvested in early June. Maturity is a very important factor; early harvest will allow farmers to fit canola into their current cropping rotation. Top varieties which excel in production will be planted in the fall of 2007 in larger strip trials.

Rape, Canola, Mustard, and Radish seed all have an oil content of over 40% and have been widely used as feed stock for the production of biodiesel. Long range plans for this project call for the construction of a mobile oil extraction mill, and a mobile biodiesel batch reactor. Post Oak along with it's partners plan to use the extraction mill and batch reactor for field demonstrations, extracting the oil from the seed

and producing biodiesel on farms.

The development of a cool season vegetable oil crop will give farmers the option of raising and producing their own fuel or simply selling the crop for additional cash flow. The success of this project will give both farmers and citizens in the Post Oak area one more choice in their search for alternatives to petroleum based fuel.



*Harvesting field trial in Wharton, Texas.*

## S.A.F.E.R.

Pineywoods RC&D, Southeast Texas RC&D, Sam Houston RC&D and Post Oak RC&D have teamed up to expand the Rural Emergency Pilot Program. The new program identified as SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response) will be funded through a grant awarded from FEMA. SAFER will work with 33 non-urban counties with 308 Volunteer Fire Departments

and 5603 volunteer firefighters. The primary focus will be training volunteer fire departments on a systematic approach to obtaining and retaining more volunteer fire fighters. The program calls for a marketing/outreach coordinator to assist the RC&D councils in administering the program. SAFER will be carried out over a three year period in four phases which include; Staffing Needs

Assessments, Best Practice Workshops, Volunteer Fire Department Procedure Manuals and Educational Workshops. By assisting volunteer fire departments in recruiting new firefighters along with retention of trained volunteers, the councils feel this program will make a significant impact to the fire departments' safety, efficiency and effectiveness.

# Supplemental Environmental Program



*Installing a rural Waste Water System in Brazos County.*

Post Oak RC&D has been involved with the Supplemental Environmental Projects (SEP) for several years. SEP allows organizations being fined by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to direct the money to a local project with direct environmental benefits. A unit of government can give 100 percent of the fine back to the community and private entities can give 50 percent. Post Oak RC&D entered into an agree-

ment with TCEQ and the Texas State RC&D Association to allow us to administer these funds as a third party contractor.

Post Oak RC&D current projects are the following; Brazos County Waste Water Treatment, two of the four rural systems scheduled for repair have been completed. Free-stone County Household hazardous Waste Cleanup, Robertson County Waste

Water Treatment, two rural systems have been scheduled for repair. Waller County Waste Water Treatment and Washington County Waste Water Treatment.

For information concerning the SEP program contact Post Oak RC&D at (979) 846-0819.

# Community Computer Class Ministry



*One of CCCM's 2007 graduating classes.*

In September of 2004, Ms. Emily Thomas and her husband Joe started CCCM. The program works with senior citizens in rural areas teaching basic computer skills. Upon completion of the course, if enough computers are available, the student is donated the computer which they were trained on. This program

serves the communities of Richards, Navasota, Anderson, Lola, Montgomery, Huntsville, Plantersville, and Willis. In January of 2006 Post Oak RC&D approved a grant to assist CCCM in delivering its program. Post Oak also assisted CCCM in receiving a grant from the Gifts in Kind Dell foundation. This grant

provided 20 copiers/fax machines to CCCM. As a result of CCCM's program eleven of their 2006 graduating students were able to secure jobs and two started their own small business. In 2007 Post Oak has granted CCCM additional funds for the purchase of computers and continues to support the program.

# Rural Emergency Protection Program

*Mel Goodwin coordinator for the REPPP program training firefighters in Robertson County.*



Post Oak continues to work with volunteer fire departments in the ten county area. Preliminary meetings are now under way with Madison County. The volunteer fire departments are currently filling out their surveys.

Post Oak received great news from the Office of Rural Community Affairs; it appears that Jimmy Woodard of ORCA, located in the Bedias Creek field office will now be able to work with the Rural Emergency Protection Program as an official part of his job.



# Important Notes & Dates

Post Oak RC&D Council would like to thank Mr. George Delfeld for his many years of service and dedication as a board member and officer. The Council would also like to say welcome aboard to our newest board member Thom Karels.

July 12th—11:00 a.m. Texas Association of RC&D Councils Quarterly Board meeting, San Antonio, meeting location to be announced.

July 19th—10:00 a.m. Post Oak RC&D Quarterly Board meeting. (Location to be announced.)

September 5th & 6th—2nd Annual Texas Biodiesel Conference & Exposition at the Renaissance Austin Hotel.



*Marva Beck Past Chairman addresses group at Post Oak RC&D Annual Meeting*

## Thanks to our Sponsors!

*Without the support of our many sponsors and volunteers, Post Oak would not be able to complete the wonderful projects we take on!*

- |                       |                                       |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Bedias Creek SWCD     | Freestone County SWCD                 |
| Brazos County SWCD    | Washington County SWCD                |
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| Navasota SWCD         | Burleson County Industrial Foundation |
| Burleson County SWCD  | Brazos Valley Council of Government   |
| Robertson County SWCD | City of Navasota                      |

- Brazos County Commissioner's Court
- Burleson County Commissioner's Court
- Freestone County Commissioner's Court
- Grimes County Commissioner's Court
- Lee County Commissioner's Court
- Leon County Commissioner's Court
- Madison County Commissioner's Court
- Robertson County Commissioner's Court
- Waller County Commissioner's Court

## Post Oak RC&D

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*“Regional partners offering knowledge and resources for rural betterment.”*



## Walter Wilcox Scholarship Fund

Walter Wallace Wilcox, a strong supporter of RC&D and long time council member and past chairman for Big 8 RC&D passed away April 12th 2007. Walter will always be remembered for countless contributions he made to his community.

While serving on the Big 8 RC&D council Walter was the corner stone of the Dry Fire Hydrant Program in the state of Texas, it was something he was very passionate about.

In addition to serving on the Big 8 RC&D council, Walter

was also a board member of Alexander United Methodist Church, he was a very active Mason and served in several leadership roles. He served on the board of the Brazos County Youth Livestock Show, and was a Brazos County Commissioner for 24 years.

The Post Oak RC&D Council is currently establishing an annual scholarship in Walter Wilcox's name. The scholarship will be provided to volunteer fire fighters to help cover training and/or schooling costs. If you are

interested in contributing to this fund, please contact Post Oak RC&D at (979) 846-0819, ext. 4.