

## NRCS Helps Landowner Manage Inherited Property

By Judi Craddock, NRCS Mississippi

When Mississippian Kathy Land suddenly inherited 200 acres of century-old family land, the middle school history teacher wasn't sure what to do. The idle fields were overgrown, and the Winston County native knew she needed help.

Fond of the many memories she had of the property, Land didn't want to sell it. But she wasn't sure of her next steps. Then she stumbled upon USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) while conducting Internet research.

NRCS works with farmers, ranchers and landowners—large and small—to implement conservation on their lands and improve their quality of life. Implementing conservation practices adds value to the land, whether it is through planting trees or boosting wildlife habitat.



*LEFT: Kathy Land worked with NRCS to manage the land she inherited.*

Land went to her local NRCS field office and learned the agency would show her the ropes of tree farming, even though she had no previous experience. She credits the patience of the NRCS staff and Winston County Soil and Water Conservation District Clerk Penny Barrier for helping teach her how to be a tree farmer.

Land first met Barrier and her local NRCS conservationists during a tough time. She had lost her husband and parents just a few years prior. She and her late husband had adopted a son, and she was now raising him as a single mother. But Barrier helped Land with the required paperwork, and the mother and teacher was soon able to add tree farmer to her résumé, too.

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Helping People Help the Land

Land received assistance as a beginning farmer through NRCS' Environmental Quality Incentives Program. She planted trees and began prescribed burning on 50 acres. She plans to apply again for assistance for tree planting and prescribed burning on the rest of her land.

She is glad she has reconnected with the land—especially because it's the same place where her grandfather once raised cattle. Land will continue his conservation legacy, and she is happy with the healthy forests growing on her property. The improvements are not only an investment, but have also produced great habitat for white-tailed deer and other wildlife.

Land is proud that she has a new understanding of NRCS programs and much more knowledge about growing trees. She is a testament to how lives can be changed with NRCS' assistance, helping landowners not only address problems on their land, but also enhance their opportunities for a better future.

For more information on NRCS conservation programs, visit [www.ms.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.ms.nrcs.usda.gov).

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