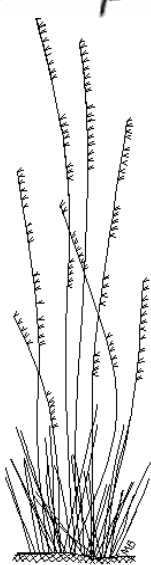


NEWSLETTER

Gillespie County Soil and Water Conservation District

Fall/Winter 2009



Sideoats Grama, Texas State Grass



Soil & Water Conservation District Directors Attended Annual State Meeting in Arlington

District directors from the 216 soil and water conservation districts in Texas attended the 69th annual meeting of Texas Soil and Water Conservation Districts October 19-21 in Arlington, Texas. Directors Royce Herbert, Patrick Kunz, James Wahrmond, Clayton Grona and Guenther Ottmers, Jr. from the Gillespie County SWCD and Tom Hammer, USDA NRCS attended the three day event.

Speakers from the local, state, and national level addressed attendees on a variety

of agricultural and conservation related issues. Key speakers Oct. 20th included State Senator Wendy Davis of Fort Worth, and Bill Thomas, Jr., president of ATSWCD.

At a series of concurrent workshops, Judon Fambrough, attorney with the TAMU Real Estate Department, College Station, discussed issues related to easements associated with electrical transmission lines. Randy Smith, biologist with Texas Wildlife Services Program, San Antonio, and Johnny

Oswald, Program Supervisor for the TSSWCB spoke on Predator Control and Invasive Species. John Foster, Programs Officer for TSSWCB, lead a workshop on their new Operation and Maintenance and Structural Repair Grant Programs for Flood Control Dams.

In May, 2009, Gillespie County SWCD won Outstanding District for Area 2. At the State Meeting, we received an award for Outstanding District in Texas.

Prepare Now for Next Year's Prescribed Burn

This year's planning means next year's success when it comes to preparing for a prescribed burn.

According to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) conservationists, prescribed burning is an effective tool for improving rangeland productivity, improving forage and soil quality, increasing plant diversity, improving wildlife habitat, and controlling regrowth juniper.

"Planning for a prescribed burn should begin a year before the fire is carried out," said Tom Hammer, NRCS District Conservationist. "A sound grazing management program is the key to producing adequate amounts

of fine fuel for a successful prescribed burn."

In planning now for next year's burn, steps to take include:

Consulting with NRCS, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), Texas AgriLIFE Extension Service, The Nature Conservancy, Gillespie Chapter of the Prescribed Burn Association, and neighbors with prescribed burn experience.

Developing a written prescribed burn plan based on your goals and objectives that will be followed on burn day.

The plan will include details of the prescribed fire, such as detailed description of the area to be burned, the de-

sign of the fireguards, the removal of brush piles and slash at least 500 feet into the burn area, personnel needs for the burn, required weather and fuel conditions, and other details of the burn that meet your prescription.

"Burning is an inexpensive and effective way to manage your grazing resources," Hammer said. "But you won't get the results you want if you don't plan ahead."

If you would like more information about planning a prescribed burn on your property, call your local NRCS field office at 830-997-3349 ext.3, or visit the NRCS Texas Web site at www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov.

SWCD Director James Wahrmond Re-Elected

James Wahrmond of Fredericksburg was recently re-elected to Gillespie County SWCD's board of directors. James represents Zone 5, the northeast part of the county.

The conservation district's boundaries are the same as for Gillespie County. Its 675,000 acres are split into five zones; each zone has one director elected once every four years. Directors are rural landowners from their zone

of the county.

The district gives technical assistance to all land users in Gillespie County through the USDA NRCS, the Texas AgriLIFE Extension, and Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI). We help educate people about range and wildlife management, and how to preserve and protect soil and water resources.

The district is a separate legal subdivision of state

government organized by local agricultural landowners with the help of the Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board. Conservation programs managed by the district are voluntary to the landowners or operators, or other potential users of the SWCD programs.

Poster & Essay Contest Deadline is December 16

Gillespie Co. SWCD's annual Conservation Poster and Essay Contests are open to boys and girls living in Gillespie County.

The POSTER contest is for students 12 or younger.

Options for poster themes are: "Conservation Habits = Healthy Habitats" (about how your everyday habits affect the environment and the habitats all around us), or "Dig it!" *The Secrets of Soil*, covering the resource that is our nation's foundation - Soil.

Posters should be made on poster board cut to 22" x 14". Submit poster entries flat; not rolled or folded.

The ESSAY contest has two divisions: ages 13 and under have a maximum of 300 words; and ages 14 to 18 have a maximum of 500 words.

The Essay theme is: "What Soil & Water Conservation Means to Me".

Essay requirements are on the entry form. Probably the most important thing to remember is to stay focused on the specific topics.

Contest entries are due by Wed., Dec. 16, at our office, and judging will be in Jan. All 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners receive savings bond certificates from Security

State Bank & Trust, and engraved wooden plaques funded by LCRA. The Lions Club will host a hamburger dinner for the winners and their families in March 2010.

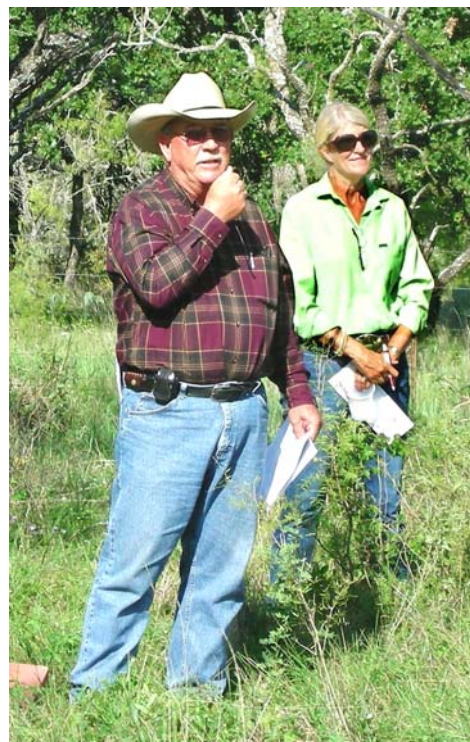
Winning entries will be entered in the Area 2 competition, and state winners will be chosen from the winners in the five areas. For details, call the district office at 830-997-3349, x 3. Entry forms were distributed to schools in Gillespie County and more are available at our office.



Fall Field Day was held on Oct. 1 at Lewis Ranch, Fredericksburg



Plant ID was a big hit! Participants studied plants that were flagged and identified beforehand. Dr. Charles (Butch) Taylor and Liza Lewis talked with the crowd.



Liza and Jack Lewis hosted the Oct. 1 Fall Field Day at their ranch, which formerly was the Usener Ranch, located just off of White Oak Road. The event began mid-afternoon with Plant Identification, where 55 plants were flagged on the ground to be identified by participants. Willard Dearing, Mark Moseley, Decky Spiller, Tom Hammer, and Steve Nelle ran Plant ID, explaining about the plants as people matched them to prepared lists.

For the program, Jack and Liza Lewis gave opening remarks concerning ranching and wildlife. Dr. Charles (Butch) Taylor presented Laws & Regulations for Prescribed Burning; he's Manager of TX A&M Experiment Station at Sonora, and Advisor for the Edwards Plateau Prescribed Burning Association.

Steve Nelle of NRCS and Mark Moseley, Range Management/State GLCI coordinator presented informative

Grazing Management topics.

Participants at Field Day earned 1 CEU in Laws and Regs and 1 General CEU toward renewal of their private pesticide applicator's licenses. Approximately 125 people attended the event.

Field Day is sponsored by USDA NRCS, Texas AgriLIFE Extension, GLCI, and Gillespie County SWCD. We want to thank all who helped with the event to make it such a success.

Gillespie Chapter of Edwards Plateau Prescribed Burning Association Meets December 4th — Members & Prospective Members Are Invited

The local prescribed burn association will hold its annual membership meeting on Friday, Dec. 4, 2009 from 5:30 to 8:00 pm, at the Gillespie Co. Agriculture Extension Building at 95 Frederick Road, in Fredericksburg.

Dinner will be served at 5:30, and the meeting should begin at 6:00 pm. The general business meeting before the program will give an overview of the year's activities. We'll talk about new equipment obtained in 2009 and what additional equipment or tools we might want to buy individually or as a group. NRCS Fredericksburg Field Office staff will present the program. B.J. Lange will demonstrate how programs on the internet can be used to map a prescribed burn's latitude and longitude. Tom

Hammer will talk about critical parameters for prescribed burns and will give rules of thumb for writing burn plans. Several handouts will be available for references. A question and answer period will follow the presentations. All GPBA members and prospective members are invited. If you plan to attend, please RSVP by noon on Thurs. Dec. 3 (the deadline was extended). Call 830-997-3349 ext. 3 or email Pat.Kroll@tx.nacdnet.net.

If members' mail or email address or phone numbers have changed recently, they should call with an update so that our roster will be current when it's given out at the meeting. Also, if you haven't told GPBA whether you want to help with others' burns, now is the time to do that, so

the list can be updated.

Our chapter of EPPBA was formed in 2005. With over 100 members, we are the second largest and one of the most active chapters of the Edwards Plateau Prescribed Burning Association (EPPBA). If you're interested in joining GPBA, or want more information about the association, please email Allen Ersch at agritech@ctesc.net or call the GPBA office at 830-997-3349 ext. 3.

GPBA meeting was postponed due to inclement weather on Dec. 4. It will be rescheduled for Jan. or Feb. 2010. Watch the Fredericksburg Standard for an update.

The Gillespie County Soil and Water Conservation District provides technical assistance to all land users in the county through the Natural Resources Conservation Service field office at 1906 North Llano Street, #106, in Fredericksburg, (830) 997-3349 ext. 3.

The Gillespie County Soil and Water Conservation District prohibits discrimination in its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, and marital or familial status. (Not all prohibited bases apply in all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotapes, etc.), should contact the SWCD office at (830) 997-3349 ext. 3. "An Equal Opportunity Employer."

