

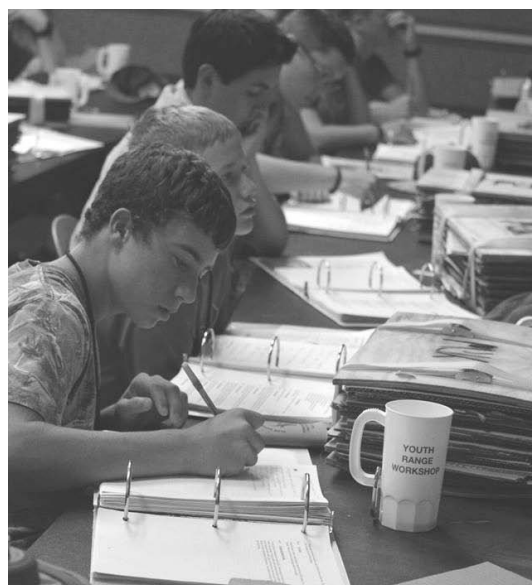
NEWSLETTER



Winter 2015

Sideoats Grama, Texas State Grass

Annual Texas Youth Range Workshop.



Left: Eli DeLong along with Dr. Cody Scott receiving his certificate of recognition.

Middle: Eli and Kaiden attending one of the many workshops at the Texas Youth Range Workshop.

Right: Kaiden Itz with Dr. Cody Scott receiving his certificate of recognition.



The Gillespie Soil and Water Conservation District along with the Farm Bureau sponsored Eli DeLong and Kaiden Itz for the 61st Annual Texas Youth Range Workshop. The Workshop was held on June 21-26.

The Youth Range Workshop provides 4-H and FFA youth from across the state with an intensive 6 days of hands-on training and learning by seventeen volunteer range professionals in the state. A total of 40 youth were accepted for the 2015 workshop. The workshop was conducted at the Texas Tech University located in Junction, Texas. The first Youth Range Workshop was held in Junction in 1955.

The purpose for the workshop is to recognize outstanding young individuals, develop leadership skills, and provide advanced training to 4-H and FFA members interested in practical range ecology, ranch and natural resource management.

One goal of the workshop is hope that the youth participants will re-

turn to their local communities and serve as leaders to educate other young individuals and audiences about value and management of the rangeland resource.

The workshop curriculum is structured to provide knowledge and understanding in the following areas: land stewardship, range ecology, plant growth, plant-soil-water relations, primary and secondary plant succession, watershed management, livestock and wildlife needs, tools of range and natural resource management, prescribed burning, the impact of management decisions on the range resource, and the landowner.

Hands-on activities provide curriculum reinforcement, visual examples and opportunities to learn skills in plant identification, plant collecting, plant species composition, total resource planning, stocking rate determinations, estimating forage standing crops, and estimating brush densities and ecological trend.

Special sessions on wa-

ter and range health provide the participants with skills for teaching youth and adults in their home communities.

A media program is conducted which encourages youth participants to use and train others on what they have learned. Extending the knowledge learned or gained to others is one of the highest goals of this program.

Kaiden is a 4-H council delegate. He is in FFA, and is on the range, wildlife and livestock judging team. He plans on attending college to become a game warden.

Eli is a member of the Willow City 4-H club. He greatly enjoys the experience in the club. He enjoys the opportunity to learn more about range judging and land conservation.

The Gillespie County SWCD looks forward to sponsoring future students who are interested in the Texas Youth Range Workshop.

Below: Rain Simulator



Conservation Continues in the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

No one knows more about conservation than NRCS. We can develop a conservation plan tailored to your land and your goals to help you increase the productivity and protect the value of your land.

USDA recognizes that conservation by farmers, ranchers and forest owners today means thriving and sustainable agriculture for our future.

Seventy percent of the nation's land is privately owned and conservation of our nation's private lands not only results in healthy soil, water, air, plants, animals and ecosystems, but it also provides productive and sustainable working lands.

NRCS offers the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) which provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers in order to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits such as improved water and air quality, conserved ground and surface water, reduced soil erosion

and sedimentation or improved or created wildlife habitat.

Benefits: Eligible program participants receive financial and technical assistance to implement conservation practices, or activities like conservation planning, that address natural resource concerns on their land. Payments are made to participants after conservation practices and activities identified in an EQIP plan of operations are implemented. Contracts can last up to ten years.

Eligibility: Agricultural producers and owners of non-industrial private forestland and tribes are eligible to apply for EQIP. Eligible land includes cropland, rangeland, pastureland, non-industrial private forestland and other farm or ranch lands.

Socially disadvantaged, beginning and limited resource farmers, Indian tribes and veterans are eligible for an increased payment rate and may

receive advance payment of up to 50 percent to purchase materials and services needed to implement conservation practices included in their EQIP contract.

Applicants must: Control or own eligible land; Comply with adjusted gross income limitation (AGI) provisions; be in compliance with the highly erodible land and wetland conservation requirements; develop an NRCS EQIP plan of operations.

Additional restrictions and program requirements may apply.

For more information, visit with NRCS in Fredericksburg at 1906 North Llano Street, #106, call 830-997-3349 ext. 3, or consult the NRCS website.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Dr. Todd Sink, AgriLife Extension fisheries specialist at College Station, provided the leadership to develop the new tools geared toward pond owners and managers.

Fall Range Tour

The Fall Range Tour was held on Oct. 14 at the Gillespie County Fair Grounds.

The Tour was presented by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Gillespie County Soil and Water Conservation Service, and Natural Resources Conservation Service.

About 60 people attended event which begin at 5:30pm.

Dr. Todd Sink, Aquaculture & Fisheries Extension Specialist – Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, presented aquatic plant/weed identification along with effective control measures.

He also talked about different stocking strategies to enhance the production and enjoyment of our ponds and tanks.

This information was particularly useful this year as many of our stock ponds have regained some water.

A helpful website that Dr. Sink suggested using is AQUAPLANT at <http://aquaplant.tamu.edu/>.

This site is designed to help pond owners and their advisors in the identification and management of aquatic vegetation.

Aquatic vegetation management can be a perplexing problem. The first part of that problem is proper identification. Management of most aquatic plant species depends on properly identifying the desirable or nuisance plant.

Two Continuing Education Units were offered: One General and One Integrated Pest Management (IPM).

THANK YOU to All Who Support the Gillespie County SWCD

Businesses & individuals support the SWCD in many ways, and we appreciate all their help! They donate door prizes, assist with Field Days, sponsor conservation awards, help with funding district activities, provide meeting or field day locations, publicize events by newspaper and radio, loan us equipment, and assist the District all year long.

- | | |
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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, sex, national origin, 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."

2015 Area Conservation Awards Banquet

Each year the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board holds a poster and essay contest for students to enter. The Gillespie SWCD organizes the contest for their local students.


These entries are judged and the local soil and water conservation district level. These winners are honored here in Fredericksburg with an Awards Banquet and Hamburger Supper for the winners and their families.

Each winner is then entered in the TSSWCB for completion on the area level.

This year we had two students from Fredericksburg win at the area level. They were honored in Wall, at the Area II Conservation Awards Banquet on May 5th 2015. In the Essay contest, Ages 13 & under, Charles Schmidt who attends Fredericksburg Christian School, won 1st. Isaac Busshaus placed 3rd in the Essay Contest for ages 14-18.

The Gillespie County SWCD also had The Lions Club receive the runner-up award for Friends of Conservation. Garet von Netzer received first place for Wildlife Conservation.

Along with the winners who were able to attend our Gillespie SWCD District Directors also attended the Banquet.



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 web:www.hillcountrywaterwell.com

Call Gillespie SWCD For Grass & Wildflower Seeds

Gillespie County SWCD's main purpose is to provide support to landowners.

To help earn funds for our conservation district, we sell grass seed, and wildflower and wildlife seed. A few of the grass seeds offered are Kleingrass, Wilman Lovegrass, WW-B Dahl, Sideoats grama, Indiangrass, and Little Bluestem. The best time to plant this type of grass seed is February - May.

However, other seed mixes are more for fall planting, like fall deer mix, fall grazing mix, or fall clover mix. Wildflower mixes for fall planting are available, too. Bluebonnets especially need to be planted in the fall, so that they can come up in November or December.

We have several Texas sources for seed, and you can choose from a large selection of grass, wildflower, and wildlife seeds in bulk. We can give you a list of available seeds and prices, and can help select your seed and recommend seeding rates. If we can't answer your questions, NRCS is happy to help.

We order seed for you; it's shipped to us - and we call you when it arrives. You pay for seed when you pick it up. Depending on the price per pound and quantity ordered, a small shipping charge may be added.

Why not come by or call us to see how we can help with your next seed order.

Pond Management

A pond is a complex system, but the principles under which a pond operates are quite simple.

In fact, most pond owners are able to quickly understand the important principles, most importantly the cycle of pond life and the food chain. Knowing all the inputs and potential outcomes allows individuals to implement pond management techniques to achieve their goals.

Small Ponds: Most ponds in Texas are less than one acre in size, and many are less than one-half acre. These waters are generally used for livestock and fish management is usually not considered when the pond is constructed.

When the pond becomes full of water, the owner often becomes interested in stocking fish. Before stocking your small pond, remove any existing fish.

New ponds should present no problems.

Older ponds may have many different combinations of fish that will interfere with overall population health.

Catfish are recommended for stocking in small ponds since they provide the most fishing

recreation. If you are feeding catfish, feed them daily during the growing season (April through November), giving them the amount of feed they will eat in 10 to 15 minutes, but not more than 10 pounds per acre per day.

To avoid poor water quality resulting from feed and fish waste, a feeding ration of less than 3 pounds per acre per day is recommended.

An aeration system should accompany feeding rations at higher rates.

Feed them once a week during the other months (December through March). If daily visits to the pond are not practical, you can use an automatic feeder.

Commercial catfish feed is available from your local feed stores. Pond owners should choose a good commercial floating or sinking pellet with at least 30 percent protein. Floating feeds may be more expensive, but they allow you to watch the fish while they feed, which reduces waste and provides entertainment.

Large Ponds: Ponds larger than 1 acre are considered "large

ponds." Many large ponds are stocked with largemouth bass and perch.

Species stocked primarily to provide forage for bass are bluegill, redear sunfish, minnows, and possibly threadfin shad.

Bluegill are the most popular forage fish for bass in this area. A well-managed farm pond should support 300 to 500 pounds of fish per surface acre.

Channel catfish can be stocked to provide additional support and will not interfere with the critical balance between bass and forage.

Successful multi-species management in large ponds requires stocking combinations of species to achieve a balance between predators (largemouth bass) and their principal forage species (bluegill).

Once you have made the decision what type of fish to stock your pond with it is important to know how to release them. Some fish need to be acclimated to the water. Bass, Bluegill, Sunfish, Red Ear Sunfish need to be acclimated to the water's temperature.

If you do not take this step

you may cause them to go into shock, which may result in death loss.

Here is some helpful hints on releasing your newly purchased fish into the pond:

1) Leave the plastic bag inside the paper bag.

2) Open the top and pour a small bucket of water from your pond into the plastic bag. Continue to do this for four to five minutes while checking the temperature of the water in the bag.

3) Once you have the water the same temperature you may gently pour the fish into the pond.

Catfish and minnows do not need any special attention, you can simply pour them straight into the pond.

Aquatic Weed Management: Native aquatic plants are an important part of the ecosystem, but invasive aquatic weeds degrade the pond habitat and limit the use of affected waters.

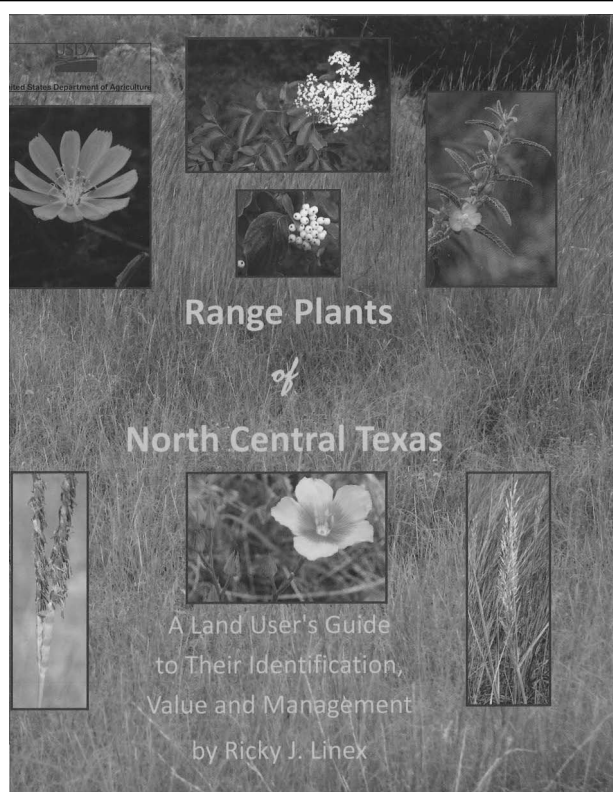
Most aquatic weeds have been intentionally introduced, so exclusion or prevention is the first line of defense against them.

Once a pond has been invaded, a number of strategies can be used to manage aquatic weeds, including cultural, mechanical, biological, and chemical control.

One of the most popular aquatic weed control methods is the use of herbicide. When you use herbicides to control aquatic weeds in your pond, special precautions must be taken to ensure that fish and other aquatic organisms are not harmed as a result.

Only a few aquatic herbicides are directly dangerous to fish, but fish kills are always a major concern when treating ponds. The main reason fish kills occur after aquatic herbicide application is a reduction in dissolved oxygen.

Pond owners should first identify the invasive species, then select a product labeled for that weed and for the particular situation, making sure to apply the product according to label instructions to avoid damage to native plants and fish.



Range Plants of North Central Texas Book

This book is more than just another plant identification book. It also contains good, relevant and practical information on the values and management of each plant species.

It is more of a manual or handbook rather than an ordinary field guide.

Landowners will become especially fond of the book, which contains useful information about grazing value, wildlife value and management tips.

This book describes 324 plants, each on a separate page, arranged alphabetically by plant family. There is an index by common name and an index by scientific name, as well as a glossary and references.

The Gillespie County Soil and Water Conservation District currently have these Range Plant Books in the office. Please stop by our office and pick up your copy today. The Book is a donation of \$25.

We are located at 1906 North Llano, in the Service Center Building.

Advertise with us! Gillespie County SWCD writes a newsletter twice a year. It's published with the Fredericksburg Standard-Radio Post. If you want to place an ad in our newsletter, or want copies of the newsletter to distribute at your business, please call the SWCD/NRCs office at 830-997-3349 x 3. Thank you.

Master Gardeners Will Answer Gardening Questions by Phone or Email

Hill Country Master Gardeners are happy to answer gardening questions from residents of local and surrounding areas. Master Gardeners is a service group helping Texas AgriLIFE Extension to meet the community's horticulture needs.

To ask questions, please call 830-257-6568; send an email to kerr@ag.tamu.edu, or visit www.hillcountrymastergardeners.org. Contact them, they'll be happy to help you.

Utilities Inventory - Call Before You Dig

Construction of conservation practices on your property could endanger life and property involvement of utilities located in the construction area.

Because of this, NRCS is required to inform you of the state law requiring you and/or your contractor to notify:

One Call Board of Texas at
1-800-545-6005,

no more than 14 days nor less than 48 hours excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays, prior to starting construction/excavation activities.

You and/or your contractor are also responsible for notifying utilities who are non-members of the Texas One-Call System.

Some local utilities, including water, waste water, slurry and overhead utilities are not required to join a notification or one-call center.

NRCS can provide the form to use for Co-operator Confirmation of the One-Call Utility Safety System; people with EQIP contracts are required to have the completed One-Call form on file.

Spring Fish Sale

The Gillespie County SWCD will hold a Fish Sale this Spring. The date will be announced in the newspaper.

Just some of the fish that will be available are: Bluegill Sunfish, Red Ear Sunfish, Crappie, Largemouth Bass, Channel Catfish, Minnows (Fathead or Golden Shiners) and Goldfish. Grass Carp will also be available, you must have a permit for these.

You can stop by our office and pick an application or they are available on the Texas Parks & Wildlife website.

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Gillespie County SWCD Equipment Rentals

The District owns rental equipment for agricultural use in the county. Weed sprayers and a seed spreader are kept at Beyer Fertilizer & Feed, 3446 Highway 16 North, in Fredericksburg.

You can make rental arrangements with Dwayne Beyer at (830) 997-9880. The sprayers each rent for \$2.50/acre with a \$50 minimum. The grass seed spreader with 700 lb.

capacity rents for \$35/day.

The District's drip torch and small seeders are kept at the NRCS/SWCD office at 1906 North Llano. To rent our small equipment, call the SWCD at (830) 997-3349 x3. The drip torch and cyclone hand seeder each rent for \$5/day. The seeder for a 4-wheeler rents for \$15/day.

SWCD equipment rentals are taxable unless used for



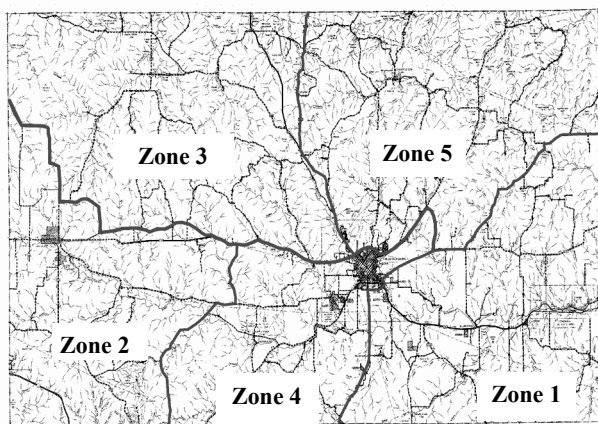
Gillespie County SWCD General Info.

www.gillespiecountyswcd.org

We are a member of the Assoc. of Texas Soil & Water Conservation Districts, National Assoc. of Conservation Districts & Texas Assoc. of Watershed Sponsors.

SWCD Directors are:

- Zone 1 Guenther Ottmers, Jr., Secretary-Treasurer
- Zone 2 Patrick Kunz, Vice-Chairman
- Zone 3 Kurt Geistweidt, Director
- Zone 4 Cade Bonn, Director
- Zone 5 James Wahrmond, Chairman



We share office space with NRCS at 1906 N. Llano, Fredericksburg, TX 78624. Phone is 830-997-3349 x 3. SWCD office hours are Mon., Tues., Thurs. from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm (closed 12:00-1:00).

NRCS hours are M-F 8:00 to 4:30 (closed 12:00-1:00), but staff may be out in the field on any given day.

Please call before driving in to meet with the SWCD or NRCS, to be sure the person you need will be there.

Please note: When you attend future educational events to earn CEUs toward renewing your private pesticide applicator license, bring your license number with you. When you register for CEUs, you will need to have your pesticide license number in order to receive a CEU certificate. Texas AgriLife can no longer accept your Texas Driver's License number in lieu of your private pesticide applicator license number when you register.

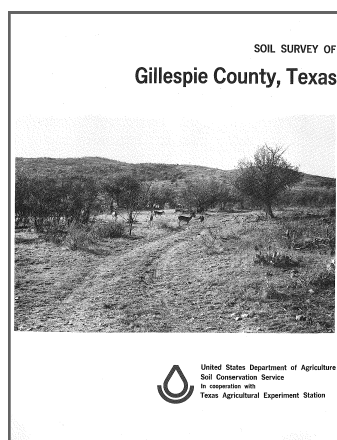
Free Soil Survey Book at NRCS Office 1906 N. Llano # 106 Fredericksburg, TX 78624

Our Fredericksburg NRCS office has extra copies of a book, *Soil Survey of Gillespie County, Texas*, published in 1975 by USDA Soil Conservation Service with Texas Agricultural Experiment Station.

While supplies last, anyone who wants a free copy may drop by the office & ask for one.

It has a color General Soil Map for Gillespie County and 77 detailed (b&w) soils maps which together cover the whole county. Soil types are described in detail and there are 40 pages about use and

management of the soils. The maps are also online at http://soils.usda.gov/survey/online_surveys/texas/. But if you'd rather read maps in a book, please come & get one.



Farm Service Agency

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is committed to delivering the highest level of customer service, helping to ensure a strong safety net for America's farmers and ranchers.

FSA is equitably serving all farmers, ranchers, and agricultural partners through the delivery of effective, efficient agricultural programs for all Americans.

They are a customer-driven agency with a diverse and multi-talented work force, dedicated to achieving an economically and environmentally sound future for American Agriculture.

Important dates: Insurance Final Planting dates: Barley, Dec. 15; Oats, Dec. 15; Wheat, Jan. 15; Corn, April 15; Gr. Sorghum, May 31.

Final Reporting Dates: Native & Improved Nov. 15; Oats Jan. 15; Small Grain Feb. 15; Hay, Corn & Gr. Sorghum July 15.

Livestock Forage Program: Jan. 30

The FSA office is located in the Service Center Office at 1906 N Llano St. Ste 107, Fredericksburg, TX (830)997-3453 Hours are M-F 8-5.

Texas Master Naturalist

Land Management Assistance Program is sponsored by TX AgriLife Extension and Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept.

The Hill Country Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists can provide trained volunteers to visit your property to help identify trees, shrubs, wildflowers and grasses, and to discuss your goals, plans and concerns.

For a free volunteer consultation on your property in Gillespie County, contact Jim Stanley at

Gillespie County Fair Grounds Hosted Spring Field Days 2015, 2014, 2013, 2012, 2011, 2010, 2009, 2007, 2006, 2004, 2002, 2000, 1996, 1990, & 1984

Terry & Joan Bonn, Fredericksburg, 2008

LBJ Historical Park Show Barn, Stonewall, 2005

Snaffle Bit Ranch/ David Dewhurst, Fredericksburg, 2003

Camey Stewart, Willow City, 2001

Henry Louis Welge Ranch, Doss, 1999

Ronald Stehling, Fredericksburg, 1998

Ted Masser, Harper, 1997

Presley Arhelger, Doss, 1995

LBJ Ranch, Stonewall, 1994

Billy Teague, Crabapple, 1993

Calvin Weinheimer, Stonewall, 1992

Kermit Kothe, Fredericksburg, 1991

McGinley Ranch, Harper, 1989

LBJ Ranch, Stonewall, 1988

Red Stone Ranch, Stonewall, 1987

Marvin Grona, Fredericksburg, 1986

Ken Sultemeier, Fredericksburg, 1985

Selma Apelt Farm/Vernon Fluitt, Fredericksburg, 1983

Authur Lynn Hahn, Doss, 1982

Max Schmidt (Estate)/Rex Glover, Fredericksburg, 1981

Kenneth Wahl, Stonewall, 1980

Melvin Bonn, Fredericksburg, 1979

Calendar of Events Beginning November of 2015

Fall Farmers Market: Every Thursday from 4-7 at the Pioneer Museum Grounds, 325 W Main. Local farmers, ranchers, and wineries bring locally grown fall produce and products.

Fredericksburg Trade Days: Every 3rd weekend of the month. Located at 355 Sunday Farms Lane, Fredericksburg, TX.

Now until February 1, 2016: Conservation Poster & Essay entries accepted at Gillespie SWCD office. Schools can call 997-3349 x3 and request that entries be picked up. Judging will be the first week of February.

October 1 - May 31, 2016: Gillespie Co. Predator Contest; help control coyote, bobcat, fox and feral hogs. Sponsored by Gillespie County Agricultural Commodity Assn. Call 830-997-3452 for rules and prize info.

Nov. 21, 2015: Wild Game Dinner, Gillespie County Fair Grounds.

Nov. 27-29, 2015: Country Peddler Show, Gillespie County Fair Grounds.

Jan. 8, 2016: Gillespie County Youth Livestock Show, Gillespie County Fair Grounds

March 23, 2016: Annual Hamburger Dinner and Conservation Awards, sponsored by the Fredericksburg Lions Club, Security State Bank and Trust, and Gillespie County SWCD.

2015 Annual TSSWCB Meeting

The Annual Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board held its Annual meeting on Oct. 26-28th, 2015 in Corpus Christi TX. Gillespie County SWCD Directors Guenther Ottmers Jr., James Wahrmond and Patrick Kunz, attended the meeting. They attended various meetings to examine issues relevant to the conservation of the state's natural resources. There were speakers from local, state, and national levels who addressed a wide variety of agricultural and conservation topics. There were close to 650 conservation leaders, including district directors, district employees, and federal and state employees who attended.



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Fredericksburg field office provides technical assistance to land users in Gillespie County. The NRCS District Conservationist for Fredericksburg is Wayne Seipp. NRCS Rangeland Management Specialists Amanda Kirchner and Jess Anderson will also be happy to help you with conservation concerns. NRCS' office hours are 8:00 to 4:30. The phone number is (830) 997-3349 x3. The NRCS Texas web site is at <http://www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov/>.

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