

# NEWSLETTER



## Gillespie County Soil and Water Conservation District Spring 2017

### Annual Conservation Awards Dinner was March 22



Presenters and students whose poster or essay won Soil and Water Conservation District awards are, in front from left, Cuatro Rodriguez, Lainey Clark and Salas Sanders, essay contest, and Emily Rodriguez and Gary Seidenberger, poster contest. Presenting the awards were, in back, Gillespie SWCD directors Cade Bonn, James Wahrmund, Guenther Ottmers, Patrick Kunz and Neal Eckert along with Cheryl Hahn and Irene Sanchez from Security State Bank and Trust, donors of gift cards for the winners. Not pictured is poster contest winner Trenton Lewis.



Recognized with awards by the Gillespie County Soil and Water Conservation District during the annual awards banquet on March 22 were, in front from left, Vernon and Linda Treibs, winners of the Conservation Rancher Award, and Mary and A.C. Kast, recipients of the Pioneer in Agriculture Award, while in back are SWCD directors Cade Bonn, James Wahrmund, Guenther Ottmers, Patrick Kunz and Neal Eckert.



Vernon and Linda Treibs Conservation Rancher (right) AC and Mary Kast Pioneer in Agriculture (top).

Winners of Gillespie County SWCD's Conservation Awards were honored Wednesday, March 22. The Fredericksburg Lions Club hosted the annual event for the winners, their families, teachers, and County officials. The awards were given after a hamburger dinner. Approximately 80 people attended.

Six students won in the conservation poster and essay contests. A.C. and Mary Kast received the 2017 Pioneer in Agriculture award. Vernon and Linda Treibs were honored as the Conservation Rancher.

SWCD directors presented the Poster and Essay winners with engraved plaques. Security State Bank & Trust gave students prizes in the amounts of \$75 for 1st place, \$50 for 2nd place, and \$25 for 3rd place.

For the poster contest, Emily Rodriguez, had the 1st place poster, Trenton Lewis, 2nd place poster, Gary Seidenberger had the 3rd place poster.

In the junior division essay contest, Cuatro Rodriguez, won 1

st. Lainey Clark, placed 2nd. Silas Sander, placed 3rd.

These awards are part of the TSSWCB annual Texas Conservation Awards Program. Gillespie County is in Area II, which includes 44 southwest Texas counties. The Gillespie SWCD enters all their local winners in this contest.

The Pioneer in Agriculture Award honors families who have farmed or ranched most of their lives and had a positive impact in Gillespie county. A.C and Mary Kast have been involved with the American Herford Association for many years, and have produced quality bulls and show cattle. The couple's three sons, Matt, David, and John, have been involved in the ranching operation alongside their father for many years. Over the years A.C. and Mary recognized and strived to make conservation a priority.

The Conservation Rancher honors someone who has and is currently performing conservation work on their land. Vernon and Linda

Treibs possess a deep appreciation for their land and livestock, and have been cooperators with the Gillespie SWCD since 1975. They have been involved in a commercial cow calf operation, and have tried various breeds of cattle to determine which is most suitable and effective on the land they operate. They also manage Angora goats and Rambouillet sheep. This diversified livestock operation allows them grazing management flexibility on their operating units. The continuous conservation activities are an integral part of the Treibs' operation.

The SWCD thanks all the teachers who inspired their students to enter the contests, the Fredericksburg Lions Club for providing the hamburger dinner, Security State Bank & Trust for donating the prizes, and HEB for providing cookies for dessert.



### 2017 Beef & Range Field Day

The Gillespie County Soil and Water Conservation District hosted the Beef and Range Field Day at the Gillespie County Fair Grounds, on May 11. There were nearly 300 attendees. There were 17 exhibitors at the event, which included a plant identification booth as well as feed and seed companies, ag chemical information, agricultural and livestock equipment and many other information booths. Just after the program, the Gillespie County Soil and Water Conservation District provided a catered barbecue meal.

During registration, Willard Dearing hosted Plant Identification, including early summer plants. He brought a wide variety of different plants which he had identified. This gave the attendees a chance to identify some of the different varieties they may have on their property. This is

important to know how to control a certain plant. The program started with a demonstration by Ron Gill, Professor and Extension Livestock Specialist on Low Stress Cattle Handling.

It does take a commitment to change how you handle livestock, Gill assures. If you're willing to take the time to learn how to use cattle behavior to your advantage, you can sure save a lot of time and money. Gill is also quick to admit that not all benefits of effective stockmanship are monetary. There are many spin-off benefits, including the sustainability of ranching operations and of families who can harmoniously work together. If everybody can stay quiet and calm, the cattle stay better, the help stays better.

Local program updates were given by Brad Roeder, County Agent of the Gillespie County AgriLife Extension Office. Jess Anderson, Rangeland Management Specialist for the Natu-

ral Resources Conservation Service gave a update from NCRS.

The Gillespie County Soil and Water Conservation District, through the generosity of many donors and sponsors, gave away numerous door prizes and had a prize drawings with eight special items.

Attendance at field day earned two CEUs toward renewal of a private pesticide applicator license. one CEU was offered before registration on Laws & Regulations.

The Gillespie County Soil and Water Conservation District would like to thank all the exhibitors, donors, and sponsors that made the field day a success.

The event was sponsored jointly by Gillespie County Soil and Water Conservation District, United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Texas AgriLife Extension Service.



Ron Gill, Professor and Extension Livestock Specialist



**“Sore Thumb Plants”**  
**By Beth McMahon, Gillespie County Horticulture Extension Agent**

For some plants, it takes a trained eye to identify. But with others, they stick out like a sore thumb. This short article will cover four unusual “sore thumbs” that you can find here in the Texas Hill Country.

Wild mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*), also known as lambs ear, is found in overgrazed or disturbed pastures, as well as the corners of your garden. It has soft broad leaves that actually feel like a young lamb’s ear. Being a biennial, it will live a year as a rosette of whitish-green leaves. The next year during summer or early fall, it will produce a tall flower stalk. Dried, this stalk will have many round seed pods on the top.

This plant is low on the desirability scale for livestock and wildlife. It isn’t native, and was originally introduced from Europe due to its medicinal uses. If you find that it’s common on your property, eliminate bare ground and the chances of it popping up will decrease.

Rabbit tobacco or spring pygmy cudweed (*Diaperia verna*) is an annual forb with woolly whitish-blueish-grayish coloring. It usually is no taller than six inches. Despite being in the sunflower family, it has very inconspicuous blooms.

As to its desirability, that depends on your management goals. Forage wise, I suspect that, despite the name, even rabbits would turn their noses up at eating this plant. Additionally, it can be weedy in fields.

On the other hand, it’s one of the few things that will grow on caliche and shallow soils without many problems. While there are many more preferred plants, having it as a ground cover on those soils could potentially decrease erosion and catch litter.

Golden Dalea, aka Yellow prairie clover (*Dalea aurea*), is a perennial legume plant. Foliage is usually sparse, but that doesn’t stop livestock and deer from chomping down on it when they find it. This flower has a yellow cone-like bloom that emerges in the summer. It likes dry rocky soils.

This plant is rare, though in years with good amounts of rain, it may be on certain roadsides in Gillespie County. There is also a nice population of it just outside of Leakey.

Eastern gamagrass (*Tripscaum dactyloides*) is a candy grass to livestock. The leaves look similar to johnsongrass, but the leaf blades have a disappearing white margin. It grows in a large bushy clump with flat bases that mirror each other.

What makes this plant stick out (besides finding it in your pasture) is its seed head. Most flowers have both stamen (pollen producing) and stigma (pollen receiving) in the same area. Eastern gamagrass has both parts, but the stamens are in a different, higher section than the stigmas. This creates an odd seed head that reminds some people of corn.

You can find this grass in historically lightly grazed pastures, near deeper soils or water. It occurs on roadsides too. The strangest place that I have found this plant was growing out of an old rock field wall outside of Harper.

These are just four odd looking plants that you may find around your property. There are plenty more, and if you need help identifying a plant, please contact the NRCS office at 830-997-3453 or the AgriLife Extension Office at 830-997-3452.



Wild Mullein (Verbascum Thapsus)



Rabbit Tobacco (Diaperia Verna)



Eastern Gamagrass (Tripscaum Dac-)



Golden Dalea (Dalea Aurea) (left)

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**Gillespie County Agricultural Commodity Assoc.**

This is an association of farmers and ranchers in Gillespie County. The objectives are to control the predators (coyotes, fox, bobcats and feral hogs) by offering incentives for hunters that harvest these animals by legal means so as to protect domestic animals, desirable wildlife and birds, damage to field crops, prevent the outbreak of diseases associated with the controlled predators, and prevent pollution of our streams and water supply.

The incentive to harvest these animals includes a bounty for coyotes, red fox, and bobcats for anyone who is a member of the Commodity Association. Coyotes - \$125, and \$25 each for red fox and bobcat.

A county-wide contest that runs from October 1 thru May 31 each year is for anyone and you do not have to be a member. Two thousand dollars in prize money is offered. The categories include hogs, fox, bobcats and coyotes. For more details, contact the AgriLife Extension Office at 830-997-3452.



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NEWS UPDATES**

Acreage Reporting Deadlines for 2017 are as follows:

Corn, Grain Sorghum, Hay grazers and other spring seeded crops is July 15, 2017.

ARC/PLC (Farm Program) signup is underway and will continue thru August 1, 2017. This program is for farms which have a history of wheat, oats, barley, corn and grain sorghum. This history was established back many years which still makes the farm eligible to participate even if no longer planting these crops.

If you participate in the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), we ask that if conditions dry up this summer, that you stop by the office to sign for and file a notice of loss.

Farm Record update, to participate in any USDA program, you must have a farm record established with FSA. We will need a survey plate, deed, name and address of the owner and/or operator. This information must be identified in the FSA software mapping system.

Changes are occurring this year in the drawing of your farm on the mapping system. We are required to take out houses, barns, roads, water bodies, pens, and other areas that cannot be grazed by livestock. Please review these maps when you visit the office.

Text message alerts are now available. This system will allow us to send a text message alerting you of program deadlines, local events, reporting reminders and program notifications. To sign up is easy. Text TX Gillespie in the body of the message and send to FSANOW (372669) on your phone. Yes 372669 is the phone number to send the message TXGillespie. If you have complete the project successfully ,you will receive a welcome message in a few seconds after sending text.

For information about these programs, or question you may have please stop by the FSA office at 1906 North Llano Ste 107 in Fredericksburg or call 830-997-3453 Ext 2 or 830-997-3713 Ext 2.



## 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 \$50.00 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 agricultural purposes and an ag/timber number is provided for the tax exemption.



### Thank You

Fredericksburg Lions Club, Security State Bank & Trust, & H-E-B for the hamburger dinner, dessert, and for donating such fine prizes for the poster and essay contest. The Conservation Awards Banquet was held on March 22.

### Thank You to the 2017 Beef and Range Field Day Supporters, Exhibitors and Donors

First United Bank, Bonn Ranch, Custom Air, Boos Quality Deer Processing, Arrowhead Bank, Bar-O-Bar Ranches, Inc., Royce and Karen Herbort, Lochte Feed and General Store, NAPA, Behrends Feed and Fertilizer, Capital Farm Credit, Willard Dearing –Plant ID, Mike and Mary Porter, Eckert and Son Auto Salvage, Dittmar Lumber, Gillespie County Fair and Festivals Association, Texas and Southwest Cattle Raisers, McLane Ford, Bernice Jenschke Kunz and Sauer Fencing Kramer's The Outdoor Store Ranchers ATV and Tractor Security State Bank & Trust Stay-Tuff Fence Mfg. Inc., Oak Valley Outdoor Repair, Texas AgriLife Extension, Vernon and Linda Treibs, Turner Seed Company, Allied Ag Services, Chem Air, Gillespie Livestock Co., Fbg. Farms Lyssy and Eckel Feeds, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Dow AgriSciences, Reeh Brangus, Central Texas Electric Coop., Wal-Mart, Bar 7 Ranch, Drymala Concrete, Beyer Fertilizer and Feed, Tractor Supply

## 2017 Annual Fish Sale

The Gillespie SWCD held its annual fish sale on April 21. With the rain we had, the tanks were filling up slowly. We had a very good turnout at the sale. There were a variety of fish available. The most popular was the channel cat. Many people like to restock their tanks with fish to allow a new crop of fish. With all of the rain we have had this past month, most of the tanks and ponds are full. The SWCD will most likely hold another fish sale in September. Please check with us for those upcoming dates.

### 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 SWCD/NRCS office at 830-997-3349 x 3. Thank you.

## Thank You to All Who Support the Gillespie County SWCD

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## Gillespie County SWCD General Info.

[www.gillespiecountyswcd.org](http://www.gillespiecountyswcd.org)

We are a member of the Assoc. of Texas Soil and Water Conservation Districts, National Assoc. of Conservation Districts and Texas Assoc. of Watershed Sponsors. We co sponsor the Williams Creek Watershed Dams with Gillespie County WCID.

SWCD Directors are:

Zone 1 Guenther Ottmers, Jr., Secretary-Treasurer  
Zone 2 Patrick Kunz, Vice-Chairman  
Zone 3 Neal Eckert, Director  
Zone 4 Cade Bonn, Director  
Zone 5 James Wahrmund, Chairman

The Gillespie SWCD shares office space with NRCS at 1906 N. Llano, Fredericksburg, TX 78624. Phone is 830-997-3349 x 3.

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.

### Texas Master Naturalist Land Management Assistance

Program is sponsored by Texas AgriLife Extension and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. The Hill Country Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists has 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, call Jim Stanley at 830-257-2094.

### Master Gardeners Will Answer Gardening Questions by Phone or Email

Hill Country Master Gardeners can answer gardening questions from residents of local and surrounding areas. Master Gardeners is a service group helping Texas AgriLife Extension to meet community horticulture needs. To ask questions, call 830-257-6568; visit [www.hillcountrymastergardeners.org](http://www.hillcountrymastergardeners.org) or send email to [kerr@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:kerr@ag.tamu.edu).

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## GILLESPIE SWCD ANNUAL REPORT

### Activities

- Completed Program and Plan of Work. Renewed Cooperative Working Agreement with NRCS, USDA, TSSWCB and Gillespie SWCD.
- Attended 2016 Annual State Meeting of SWCDs in Waco, TX on Oct. 17-19.
- Attended Texas Assoc. of Watershed Sponsors (TAWs) March 27 meeting.
- Co-sponsored Annual Conservation Awards Dinner with the Fredericksburg Lions Club and Security State Bank & Trust on Mar. 22, 2017;
- Held Fish Sale on April 21, at Gillespie County Fair Grounds.
- Gillespie WCID directors and NRCS, inspected dams on April 25.
- Attended Area 2 Awards dinner in Wall, TX on May 2.
- Directors met w/ Hill Country Assoc. of SWCDs at the Premier Ranch in Mason County on May 10.
- Co-sponsored Beef/Range Field Day at Gillespie County Fair Ground Show barn, May 11.
- Participated in Ag in the Class Room held at The Gillespie Co. Fair Grounds on May 18.
- Exhibited educational booth at Gillespie County Fair Aug. 21-23.
- Co-Sponsored Oct. 13, 2016 Fall Field Day, Doss Community Center.

### MAJOR CONCERNS OF GILLESPIE SWCD

Gillespie County SWCD will focus long-range planning on: Water quantity and quality; Critical area erosion; Proper grassland and brush management; Prescribed burns to control brush re-growth and improve wildlife habitat; Maintaining conservation practices; and Continue application of EQIP.

### PROGRESS SUMMARY - NRCS

In addressing our major concerns, these are some of the conservation practices applied during FY 2016/17 in Gillespie County through the NRCS Fredericksburg Field Office:

- 71.6 acres of pasture planting and range seeding were completed.
- 23,113.0 feet of cross fencing for grazing distribution were installed.
- 21,152 feet of pipeline for grazing distribution were installed.
- 7 wells were drilled for livestock water development.
- 11 pumping plants (pumps) were installed for delivery of livestock water.
- 48 water storage or drinking facilities were installed to improve grazing distribution.
- 4,340.2 acres of brush controls were completed.
- 54,880 sq. ft. of high tunnel system was installed.
- Prescribed grazing management was applied on 4,019.6 acres.
- Currently, there are 42 active Long-Term Cost Shared Contracts (EQIP, WHIP, and CSTP)

## Calendar of Events Spring-Summer 2017

**Spring Farmers Market:** Every Thursday 4-7 p.m. Located at Marktplatz Kinder Halle.

**Fredericksburg Trade Days:** Every third weekend of the month Located at 355 Sunday Farms Lane, Fredericksburg.

### July 31, 2017 Hay Show:

Deadline for hay entries Contact Gillespie County Extension office at (830)997-3452 for details.

### Gillespie County Fair:

August 24-27 at the Gillespie Fair Grounds.

### Scholarship Fest

September 23

Have fun while raising funds for Gillespie County youth!

### Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Dinner

October 24 [tscra.org](http://tscra.org)

Range Plants of North Central Texas Book is available at the Gillespie County SWCD. It is a donation of \$25.00. You can pick yours up today at the office located at 1906 N. Llano Office # 106. Please call the office at (830)997-3349 ext. 3 with any questions.



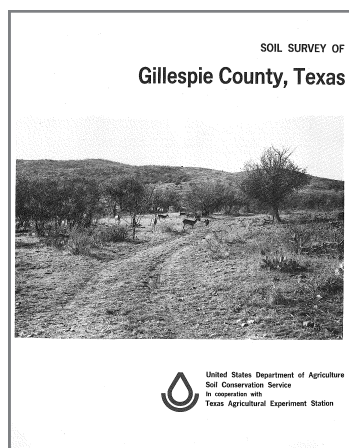
## Free Soil Survey Book at NRCS Office

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 & management of the soils.

The maps are also online at [http://soils.usda.gov/survey/online\\_surveys/texas/](http://soils.usda.gov/survey/online_surveys/texas/). But if you'd rather read maps in a book, please come & get one.



## Utilities Inventory Call Before You Dig

Construction of conservation practices on your property could endanger life & 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, & legal holidays, before starting construction/excavation.

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 Cooperator Confirmation of the One-Call Utility Safety System; people with EQIP contracts are required to have the completed One-Call form on file.

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."

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**Natural Resources Conservation Service**

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Fredericksburg field office provides technical assistance to land users in Gillespie County. The NRCS Rangeland Management Specialists 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/>.