

Texas Section Society for Range Management

*Providing Leadership for the Stewardship of Rangelands
Based on Sound Ecological Principles*

July - August 2006

Volume 58, Number 4

President's Notes



*Charles Anderson
President, TSSRM*

The 2006 Texas Section SRM Annual Meeting is just around the corner. October 11 will be here before we know it. This issue of Grassroots

will focus on the annual meeting.

The annual meeting committee, co-chaired by Butch Taylor and Chad Ellis, has been working since the first of the year. The theme for this year's meeting is *Sustainability on Rangelands*. How appropriate a time for this subject since almost all of Texas is experiencing some level of drought.

I also want to take some time to discuss the importance of the annual meeting to the Texas Section.

- First, it is always good to see old friends. This is one time of the year I can be assured of renewing many friendships.
- It gives us an opportunity to recognize those individuals that make a commitment to protecting the rangeland resources of Texas and the world.
- We learn about new technology and research findings so we can take them back to our jobs. I view the annual meeting as a great technology transfer event.
- The annual meeting is also the largest fundraiser we have.

TSSRM would not be able to operate at its current level if it were not for financially successful annual meetings. It takes contributors, commercial exhibitors, and each one of us attending to make a financially successful meeting.

Your registration packet will be arriving in the mail in a couple of weeks. Please seriously consider attending the annual meeting. I know not all our membership can attend. In fact, the annual meeting committee would probably have heart failure if we did.

Last year, we had reduced numbers because of high gas prices and red tide. I can guarantee we will not have the red tide problem at Del Rio, but gas prices are still high. I know how the higher gas prices are impacting family budgets. My self-inflicted daily commute is having an impact on the Anderson budget. The motel rate this year is \$70.00 for 1-2 persons per room. This price also includes a hot buffet breakfast. As in past years, the luncheon and banquet meals are included in the cost of registration. I think you will find that this year's annual meeting is reasonably affordable.

You will also find some requests from committees in this newsletter. We still have some awards that have no nominations. I know how busy we all are, but we need to recognize those individuals that are making a difference. We have no nominations for our Outstanding Rangeland Management award. Surely someone

knows of a ranch that is doing a great job. If you know of a deserving ranch, please call Wayne Seipp.

Dan Caudle tells me there are still some award categories with no nominations. Do not forget the County Level and Publication awards. Diane Arnold chairs the County Level Awards committee and David Briske chairs the Publication Awards committee. Give these persons a call if you have someone in mind. Do not wait. Time is of the essence.

I hope to see you in Del Rio from October 11-13. Just remember, if you do not show up that means more Border Buttermilk for the rest of us on Wednesday night!

Charles

The Inside Story...

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TSSRM Awards - LAST CHANCE

Award Nomination Deadline AUGUST 15, 2006

This year we have extended the deadline for nominations for the following TSSRM Awards:

1. **Outstanding Contribution to Rangeland Management** – TSSRM's most prestigious award. Nominees must be actively engaged in ranching and/or professional fields related to rangeland management. Recognized leader who has made a particularly significant contribution to the art and science of range management that is worthy of special recognition.
2. **Fellow** – TSSRM member for at least 10 years who has performed exceptional service to the Texas Section and has a history of continuous contribution to TSSRM.
3. **Outstanding Achievement** – Individual or team which has made a professional contribution to rangelands that is eminently

noteworthy which is at least state-wide in scope.

4. **Special Recognition** – Not an annual award. Presented occasionally to recognize individuals for outstanding contributions to the general field of range management. Not an annual award.
5. **Outstanding Young Range Professional** – TSSRM member who has not reached 39th birthday by January 1 of the year the award is conferred. Must demonstrate extraordinary potential and promise as a range management professional.

Go to the TSSRM website (pages 21-23 of the Administrative Handbook) to review the complete purpose, criteria, and nomination format for the OCRM, Fellow, and Special Recognition Awards. Contact Dan Caudle to receive an electronic version of the current criteria and nomination form for the Out-

standing Achievement Award and the Outstanding Young Range Professional Award. Review Appendix K (pages 92-93 of the handbook) to see lists of past recipients. Then, take a little time out of your busy schedule to nominate someone who should be recognized and honored by their peers in the Texas Section for their activities or contributions related to TSSRM and/or rangeland management. Surely each of you knows someone who is deserving of one of these Texas Section SRM awards.

Nominations for these TSSRM Awards must be received by the TSSRM Awards Committee no later than **August 15**. Send completed nominations to Dan Caudle, Chairman of the TSSRM Awards Committee at:

Email dan.caudle@ftw.usda.gov
Mail 3406 Cliff View Loop
 Weatherford, TX 76087

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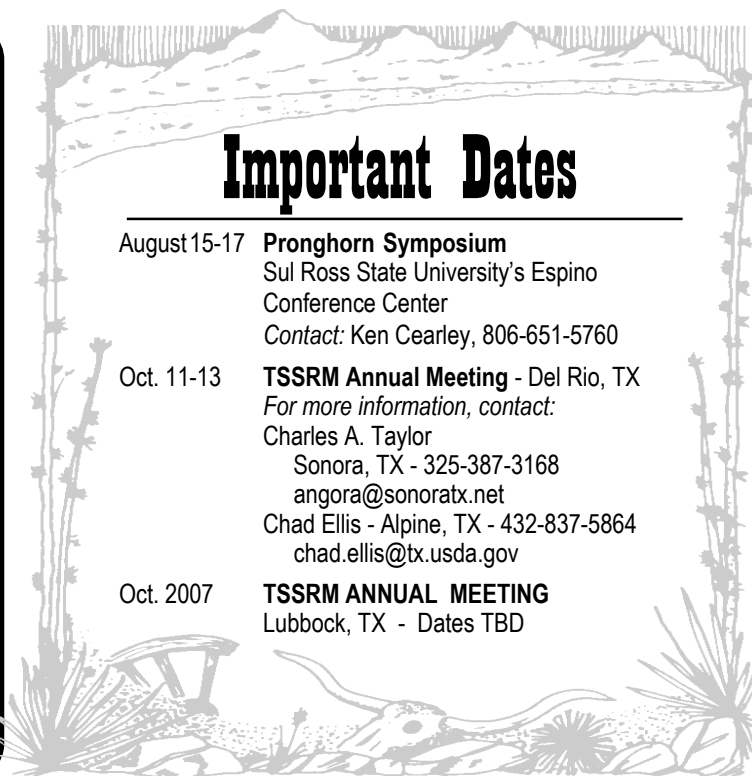
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Important Dates

- August 15-17 **Pronghorn Symposium**
 Sul Ross State University's Espino Conference Center
 Contact: Ken Cearley, 806-651-5760
- Oct. 11-13 **TSSRM Annual Meeting - Del Rio, TX**
 For more information, contact:
 Charles A. Taylor
 Sonora, TX - 325-387-3168
 angora@sonoratx.net
 Chad Ellis - Alpine, TX - 432-837-5864
 chad.ellis@tx.usda.gov
- Oct. 2007 **TSSRM ANNUAL MEETING**
 Lubbock, TX - Dates TBD



Meet Me in Del Rio at the TSSRM Annual Meeting

Nick Garza

It's hard to believe. Summer is mostly past us, and Labor Day will soon be upon us. That will lead us into October and our Annual Meeting. This is actually my favorite part of the year. Past summer and going into fall when the temperatures begin to drop enough that I am almost able to forget how hot it was in July and August. The warm-season, perennial grasses are curing, if enough rain has fallen, and we have a chance to look at our pastures and decide if our management practices were on the mark or not.

This time of year can be a time of reflection, visitation and learning if you make the Annual Meeting part of your schedule. Look through this issue of *Grass Roots* and find something that piques your interest, or call a friend or colleague and invite them to meet you in Del Rio in October for a visit.

The theme for the meeting this year is "**Sustainable Agriculture on Rangelands**". I don't presume to know everything that concerns our members or rangeland owners and managers, but, I do know that the structure of rangeland ownership is changing in Texas, and the Texas Section, SRM is trying hard to meet the information needs of the people out there managing rangelands. The meeting is broken into two parts this year. Beginning at 1:00 pm on Wednesday, October 11th there will be a pre-conference workshop. This is open to the public and will cost \$10 (to cover refreshments and hand-outs). We have four good speakers lined up and CEU's will be offered for TDA and CPRM.

- Joe McCarley, with TDA will speak on *Laws and Regulations in Texas*.
- Keith Blair, a certified prescribed burner in Texas will discuss *Prescribed burning on rangelands in Texas* and has a wealth of personal experience which he will pass along

to those who are interested.

- Allan McGinty, an Extension range specialist with Texas Cooperative Extension and one of the creators of the "Brush Buster" program, will discuss *Follow-up brush management treatments on rangeland*.
- Mark Mosley and John Walker will discuss *Prescribed grazing*. Mark is with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, back in Texas from Oklahoma, and John is the Resident Director for Research at the Texas A&M Research and Extension Center in San Angelo. Both will offer insights and experiences that can be helpful to rangeland managers.

Wednesday evening there will be a social where people can visit, snack and make plans for the rest of the meeting.

Thursday, October 12, the technical session will begin at 8:00 am. Topics for the morning session will include;

- An explanation of *How the Farm Bill May Affect Rangelands* by Dennis Thompson, an NRCS National Range & Grazing Lands Ecologist.
- Charles "Butch" Taylor will talk about the development of *Prescribed Burn Associations* in Texas and other states. Butch is the Superintendent of the Sonora Experiment Station.
- Mort Kothmann, a professor in the department of Rangeland Ecology and Management at TAMU, will present a *History of Prescribed Burning and Current Legislation*.

After a break and a chance to look at the exhibits we return to the program with;

- A discussion of *White-tailed Deer Management Under High Fence* by Jim Cathey. Jim is an Associate Professor in the Wildlife and Fisheries Dept at TAMU.
- *Deer Genetics* will be discussed by Randy DeYoung with the Caesar

Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute at TAMU Kingsville.

- Rich Machen will talk about *Alternative Livestock*. Rick is an Extension Livestock Specialist in Uvalde.
- The program will end before lunch with a *Question and Answer* session.

Those of you who register for the meeting will have tickets to the Awards Luncheon and Banquet. The luncheon will be held at the convention center, and the Banquet will be at the Ramada-Del Rio.

- After lunch the program continues until about 4:00 pm with presentations by Young Range Professionals and Undergraduate Students. After that there will be a short business meeting and a little time to relax before the Awards Banquet at 7:00 pm.

Friday, October 13

- The last day of the meeting begins at 6:30 am with a breakfast for the Past Presidents.
- Volunteer papers will be presented on a variety of topics followed by a break for refreshments and a chance to view exhibits at mid-morning.
- The meeting will continue after the break with a rancher panel. Bob Brockman of Sonora will talk about his livestock operation, Jack Fields of Kinney County will discuss his wildlife program and Stan Meadors of Eldorado will talk about his eco-tourism program.
- The meeting will officially end with some closing remarks and the presentation of awards.

I hope this preview of our upcoming meeting will spark an interest in attending. I know it will be entertaining and educational. It will also be a chance to add a few TDA continuing education units (CEU's) as well credits for CPRM credentials. I, myself, am looking forward to seeing old friends and making new ones. Please join me in Del Rio in October.

Requiescat in Pace



John Ray Hunter, 78, of Lubbock, died Tuesday, July 4, 2006 at his residence. Memorial services were held at 10 a.m. Friday, July 7th, at the First United Methodist Church in Lubbock, Texas.

Mr. John Hunter was reared in Motley County, Texas and completed his college education at Midwestern University. After serving in the U.S. Military as a medic, he returned to Roaring Springs to farm and to teach. He married Kathryn Sellers in 1964; John and Kathryn have one

daughter, Susanne.

John came to Texas Tech in 1958 to further his education and to teach basic agronomy courses. John also taught Range Management courses and subsequently started and coached the Range Plant Identification Team. Thus, from the beginning of what today is the Department of Range, Wildlife, and Fisheries Management, John Hunter was a steady, focused patriarch of one of Texas Tech University's strongest departments. John enjoyed hunting, fishing, and gardening and was very active in his church.

John Hunter's dedication and contributions to Texas Tech were numerous and varied. First, John was an outstanding teacher as evidenced by his many awards for teaching excellence. His classroom performance was eclipsed only by his dedication to students. John's door was always open to students, and they came by frequently. John Hunter helped virtually every student that passed through the department in some way. He encouraged, counseled, and on occasion demanded a higher level of performance not only in class but in every aspect of his students' lives. Sec-

ond, John Hunter started and nurtured the department's scholarship program. Today, the department awards scholarships to nearly one-third of all undergraduates each year. Many of those come from the John and Kathryn Hunter Endowed Scholarship Fund and a significant number of the remainder from scholarships encouraged by John Hunter or a direct result of his example of generous giving. Lastly, John was a mentor and advisor to new faculty as they started their careers at Texas Tech. This was a great benefit to the success of our faculty and the department.

John is survived by his wife, Kathryn of Lubbock; daughter, Susanne Long, and husband, Trent of Lubbock; brother, Sam Hunter of Iowa Park; and sister, Fay Chastain of Snyder. For those interested in a remembrance, the family suggested contributions to the First United Methodist Church, Texas Section of the Society for Range Management, the Society for Range Management Endowment Fund or the John and Kathryn Hunter Scholarship Endowment Fund, c/o Texas Tech Foundation, P. O. Box 42123, Lubbock, TX 79409, or Hospice of Lubbock.

Last Call for Papers

Texas Section, Society for Range Management Annual Meeting Del Rio, Texas – October 11-13, 2006

We are inviting submissions for oral presentations at the Texas Section, Society for Range Management annual meeting in Del Rio, Texas. Presentations are solicited for a general session and a "Young Professionals" session. The general session is open to anyone desiring to present results of original research or idea relating to ecology and management

of the diverse rangelands and wildlife habitats of Texas. The young professionals session is open to undergraduate and graduate students and young professionals working in natural resources management who have been out of school for 5 years or less. Presentations will be 20 minutes in length.

Please send abstracts to Bob

Lyons (rk-lyons@tamu.edu). Abstracts should be 250 words or less and must be in MS Word, Wordperfect, or pdf format. Abstracts will be accepted until **1 August 2006**. Please indicate in your e-mail to us whether you will be giving a powerpoint or a slide presentation. Check the May-June *Grass Roots* for an example abstract.

Attention Fellow Conservationists! Second and Last Call for Nominations Open for Texas Section SRM County Level Awards!

As you are working, take time to think of and recommend a worthy applicant for the TSSRM's County Level Awards. This is a way to recognize outstanding individuals who make noteworthy contributions to the art and science of Range Management in Texas. And, those receiving this recognition will have earned the award. You may re-nominate those from previous year's list of nominees who may not have made the cut.

Please take some time to visit with your co-workers as you nominate worthy candidates, and most likely more candidates will surface. Anyone can nominate these good people, and they don't have to be a member of SRM. There are a lot of

deserving nominees in our great state. Let's find some more of them to honor with County Level Awards!

There are 4 categories for the County Level Awards. They are 1) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) employee, 2) Friend of TX Section of SRM (this could be other agencies, Ag businesses or companies, news reporters, etc.), 3) County Extension Agent, and 4) High School Ag Science Teacher.

As you go about your work in range and conservation, think of those who would be worthy of recognition, who selflessly plug away at making the world a better place just because it is the right thing to do.

Let's make the effort and recognize them by finding them and sending their qualifications to your committee representative.

Your 2006 County Level Awards Committee members are: Diane Arnold, Port Lavaca; Jed Elrod, Fort Stockton; Brad Teplicek, Eden; Kim Stine, Tolar; Ray Schmicek, Midland; Vivian Garcia, Corpus Christi; Deeann Cameron, San Angelo; JR Bell, Amarillo; Stan Reinke, Corpus Christi, and Phillip Wright, Hondo.

These submissions are due before August 30, 2006.

Please don't hesitate to call or e-mail any one of us with questions or nominations.

Notice . . .

Nominations are requested for Outstanding Junior and Senior Range Management Majors from each of the Universities before August 31st. Please include the following information for each student:

1. name
2. address
3. completed conference registration, if they plan to attend
4. brief statement regarding background and career objectives

Send nominations to:

Emmett Miller, Chair TSSRM College Activities
ACU Box 27986
Abilene, Texas 79699
millere@acu.edu

ATTENTION !

**The Outstanding
Rangeland
Management
Committee
will extend
nominations
for the 2006
ORM award
until
August 21, 2006.**

TSSRM Publication Awards Nominations

The Texas Section-SRM annually recognizes literary and scholarly efforts in publicizing range management practices, philosophies, and research activities. Therefore, the TSSRM Publications Awards Committee is soliciting nominations for the following categories:

1. *Technical Writing*: articles directed primarily toward fellow scientists who advance the knowledge of range management/science in Texas;

2. *Popular Article*: articles directed primarily toward range managers, landowners, or the general public;
3. *Special Category*: contributions that do not fit in either (1) or (2) (e.g. book chapter, poetry, editorials, etc.).

All nominations must have been published since October, 2004. Membership of at least one author is required for both the Technical Writ-

ing and Popular Article categories but not for the Special Category. Please send one copy of each publication (pdf file preferred) you wish to nominate along with a one-paragraph description of its importance by August 31, 2006 to:

David D. Briske
Department of Rangeland
Ecology and Management
TAMU 2126
Texas A&M University
College Station TX 77843
dbriske@tamu.edu

BLM Releases New Grazing Rule

Courtesy of E-Notes, NACD, July 11, 2006

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has issued new grazing regulations designed to improve the agency's working relationships with public land ranchers, conserve rangeland resources and enhance administrative efficiency. The BLM is making regulatory changes aimed at improving the Bureau's management of public lands grazing in the rural West.

Leading up to the final publication, the BLM analyzed over 18,000 public comments on the rule and the required Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which was completed in June 2005. An addendum to the EIS was released in March, which responded to additional public comments submitted to the BLM. The new rule will take effect in 30 days.

Highlights of the new regulation include:

- New authority for the BLM and a grazing permittee to share title in future range improvements;
- A phasing in of grazing-use decreases and increases (of more than 10 percent) over a five-year period;
- Encouraged emphasis by BLM managers in considering and documenting the social, cultural and economic effects of decisions that determine levels of authorized grazing use;
- Removal of a restriction that has limited temporary non-use of a grazing permit to three consecutive years;
- Require greater efforts to monitor grazing allotments that fail to meet rangeland health standards;
- Allow up to 24

months - instead of prior to the start of the next grazing season - for the BLM to analyze and formulate an appropriate course of action in cases where grazing practices are at issue.

To view the BLM press release, Final Regulations and other information go to: <http://nacdnet.org/govtaff/Grazing/>.



A Difficult Journey

Riparian Notes - Note Number 13

Steve Nelle, NRCS, San Angelo, Texas

The traditional vacation season is almost here. Imagine taking a long driving trip with the entire family, including three kids and two dogs. What kind of trip comes to mind as you think about the following words: Rough; Difficult; Bumpy; Arduous; Slow; Sluggish; Complicated; Interrupted; Grueling; Time-Consuming; Laborious; Obstacles; Detours; Barriers; Blockages; Impediments; Obstructions; Diversions. In our fast-paced world, where waiting is considered a form of torture, these words probably do not bring pleasant thoughts of an enjoyable trip.

These words should, however, describe one of the most important things that happen on the land: the flow of water downhill. From the place where each raindrop hits, the journey of water to its destination should be slowed and impeded by as many obstacles and barriers as possible.

The law of gravity and our own common sense tells us that water runs downhill. Geometry teaches us that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line. But when it comes to land and water stewardship, the goal should normally be to upset these two truths as much as possible.

Land stewardship can either help or hinder this journey of water downhill. In rangeland and forest-

land areas, good land stewardship usually means slowing the movement of water. In this condition, the land serves more like a “water catchment”. Poor land stewardship usually results in a quick and efficient movement of water downhill. In this condition the land serves more like a “water shed”. The difference between these two is important.

As water flows downhill, the slower it moves, the longer it remains in contact with the soil, and the greater opportunity it has to soak in. Fast runoff means limited infiltration. Slow runoff means greater infiltration. A robust blanket of grass and plant litter on the soil surface provides the millions of small obstacles needed to slow the water down. Not only does this blanket of grass or plant litter allow good infiltration, but it also filters and intercepts soil particles that may have been detached by raindrop splash.

In this ideal trip downhill, much of the water soaks into the earth where it can be stored in the soil profile, used by plants, or percolate even more deeply into underground water tables. But during heavy rainstorms, all of the water cannot soak in and some if it continues downhill until it reaches a creek. By this time, the combined water from many acres of uplands may have formed quite a large flow. The continuing trip

downhill still needs to be interrupted by a continuous matrix of obstructions and detours. As this flow gathers together and gains momentum, riparian obstacles are needed to dissipate energy and slow the erosive momentum of water.

Trees, bushes, logs, boulders and heavily vegetated banks all contribute to this effort to slow down the water. Dense upright riparian vegetation is crucial to help retard the flow. In the channel itself, meanders, bends, sinuosity and bars help slow the water. As floodwaters spread out from the channel on to the floodplains, energy can be dissipated and velocities slowed due to the surface area of the floodplain and the roughness caused by the vegetation. Sediment laden waters are allowed to drop some of their load thus enlarging and enriching the floodplain even more. Every ton of sediment that can be caught up and trapped by riparian vegetation is one ton that will not end up filling pools or covering riffles downstream.

The next time it rains hard, put on a raincoat, go outside, and watch what happens to water as it moves downhill. Consider how a properly grazed pasture, a well managed forest or a healthy riparian area protects the earth, filters sediment and processes the rainfall for maximum benefit. Truly amazing.

Bountiful Beans, Sturdy Sprouts, Mowing Madness, Coastal Calamity

Jake Landers

The title summarizes what has happened more than once to excellent pastures of Coastal Bermuda grass planted in our area. Grazed by cattle or hayed, these pastures respond to water and fertilizer for many years with productive summer growth that provides higher quality forage than most native rangeland.

Like all successful agricultural enterprises, one of the necessary ingredients is proper management. Managing Coastal for its maximum production is like managing a dairy. Things can deteriorate in a hurry, especially if the manager isn't paying attention and the weather turns dry or it doesn't get fertilized or the weeds take over. I have been in on several situations in my career in which the manager called for help ahead of time, but I've seen a few where the calamity had already happened.

Here's a specific example. When cattle have access to Mesquite

beans while grazing Coastal, or the seeds are there to start with, Mesquite seedlings will always appear. I've seen more than 50 seedlings come up in a single cow pie. Despite the competition from a vigorous stand of grass, Mesquite seedlings can come up in a wet year and extend a root deep enough to survive the next dry spell. If grazed, burned, or mowed off, they resprout and continue to develop a root system, usually much larger than the part above ground. I've dug up plants at least 20 years old that have a root as big as your thumb, but the sprouts are no larger than a pencil because they have been cut off several times.

Annual mowing for weed control or hay-making will keep Mesquite sprouts suppressed in a Coastal field, but 5 years without mowing will allow some of them to start producing beans of their own, and a heavy shredder is needed to cut them to ground level again. That's

the mid stage of a "Coastal Calamity". Whatever you do, it's going to cost money to get back into productive Coastal, and if you let it go, it will turn into a Mesquite forest, which is the real calamity.

Burning just before spring regrowth is cheap and effective in suppressing knee high Mesquite. Basal treatment with diesel and Remedy herbicide is effective and easy when individual stems can be seen, but it's hard to get all the stem bases covered when there are many of them and the grass is high. With multiple stems it would probably be best to use a foliar spray containing Reclaim in summer. Individual grubbing is always an effective option if you need the exercise.

Specific procedures are described in L-5144 Brush Busters – How to Beat Mesquite – Texas A & M Extension and Research Leaflet, available at your County Extension Agents office.