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MAY 2011

HELPING PEOPLE HELP THE LAND.



Programs



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USDA-NRCS has opened a second sign-up period for organic farmers and ranchers that began on April 8th and closes on May 20th. Texas has funding for any interested applicant that may want to transition to organic or is already certified organic. Eligible practices for payment include: nutrient management, pest management, forage and biomass harvest management, prescribed grazing, crop rotation and cover crop. Applicants that need to address resource concerns above and beyond the organic practices offered are eligible to apply for “regular” EQIP and may have two contracts simultaneously on the same property.

Farm Bill financial assistance and easement programs have been nearly obligated for Fiscal Year 2011. The table below shows the original amount allocated and percentage rate of obligation for programs in Texas.

<u>Program</u>	<u>Allocation</u>	<u>Obligation Rate</u>
AWEP	\$3,270,427	97.814%
EQIP	\$64,115,100	90.658%
WHIP	\$4,502,709	93.478%
FRPP	\$2,902,023	0% ¹
GRP³ (Easements)	\$2,527,441	0% ²
WRP	\$15,758,543	96.349%



**Additional funds requested to fully fund highest ranking easement application. GRP obligations are made by FSA.*

Conservation Stewardship Program (CStP)

NRCS is working through the latest CSP signup which resulted in 219 applications for just over 508,000 acres. Nationally, there were 7.2M acres offered. CSP has an annual acreage cap of 12.7M acres and since the latest sign-up left a 5M acre gap.





New Hires, Known Losses & Vacancies Update

NRCS Currently Has 30 Vacancies:

- 4 Civil Engineers
- 5 District Conservationists
- 1 Forester
- 1 Public Affairs Specialist (Outreach Coordinator)
- 1 Realty Specialist
- 1 Soil Conservationist
- 2 Soil Scientists
- 1 Soil Scientist
- 4 Engineering Technicians (Civil)
- 1 Physical Science Technician
- 7 Soil Conservation Technicians
- 1 Human Resources Assistant
- 1 Secretary

NRCS made the following selection in March & April 2011 resulting in accessions:

Christopher C. Lester – GS-12 Soil Conservationist, Temple (Water Resources Assessment Team)

NRCS has 50 known losses to date during FY 2011.



Watershed Program

American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA)

- Construction has been completed on all but one ARRA project: Calaveras Creek 6 rehabilitation (Bexar County), which is currently 55 percent complete. Work continues on three mitigation projects (Elm Creek Centex 5A and 34; Caney Creek 3A).

Watershed Rehabilitation Program

- Design for Mountain Creek 10 (Ellis County) is near completion. Funding for construction will be requested for FY 2012.
 - Funding for rehabilitation construction of Plum Creek FRS No. 5 (Hays County) was received in February. Construction will begin as soon as land rights are cleared.
 - Design of East Fork above Lavon 2A (Collin County) will begin in the near future.
 - Rehab planning for Plum Creek 6 (Hays County) is underway.
 - Rehab planning for Olmitos-Garcias 7 (Starr County) will begin in the near future.
- Assessments of high hazard dams: 98 assessments and reports have been completed; the remaining 76 assessments will be completed by September 30, 2011.

Watershed Programs-*continued*



Watershed Operations Program

- Agreements are in place with the TSSWCB for engineering design and construction inspection of dam repair projects funded by the TSSWCB Dam Repair program.
- Construction is 45 percent complete on recreations facilities (Phase II) at Attoyac Bayou Site 23A (Nacogdoches County)

Funding for Watershed Projects in FY 2011

- Watershed Operations funding has been eliminated for FY 2011. It is anticipated that projects currently under construction will be allowed to finish with funding carried over from last fiscal year. Work on new projects will be terminated.
- Watershed Rehabilitation funding is \$18M nationally for FY 2011, which is a 55 percent reduction from FY 2010. However, funding is sufficient to continue planning, design, and construction on Texas projects that are currently underway.



Dr. Wayne Hudnall
Texas Tech University
Lubbock, TX



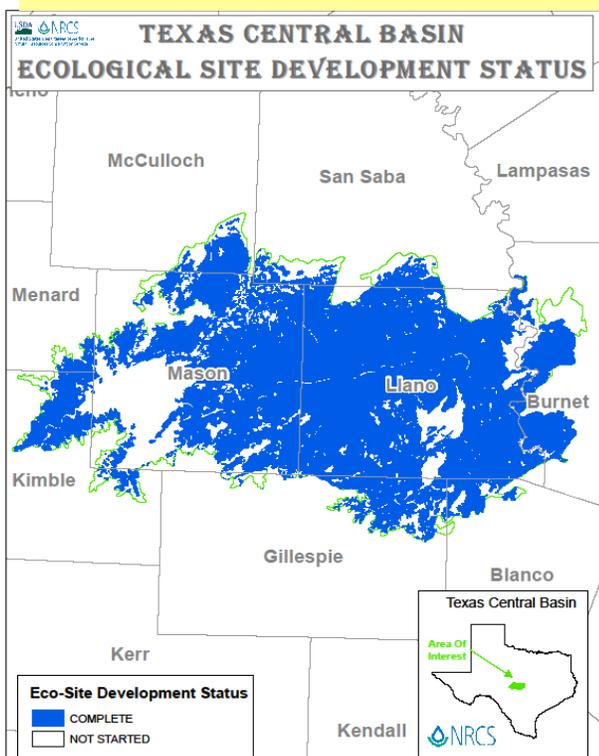
Soils

Texas Cooperator Wins Annual Award

The 2011 National Cooperative Soil Survey (NCSS) Awards were selected by the NRCS Soil Survey Division Director Mike Golden, Washington DC, in April. Dr. Wayne Hudnall, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX, won the National Cooperator of the Year award. Dr. Hudnall teaches soil science and is in charge of the soil characterization lab. He has taught and developed many students that now work for the NRCS. The lab runs soil analyses for the Texas Soil Survey offices in the western part of the state and in the Panhandle. This data supports the soil survey update work currently underway in these areas.

Ecological Site Descriptions

Ecological Site Descriptions (ESD's) for the Central Basin Major Land Resource Area covering 944,385 acres have been completed. The ESD's describe the different plant communities that occur on a soil and general guidelines on what conditions cause them to occur. Landowners, land managers, universities, and agencies can access the ESD's through Web Soil Survey. The information can guide land managers toward a landscape goal and suggest ways to help maintain the desired plant community. Currently, about two-thirds of Texas is completed to the Phase 1 level which suggests that 90 percent of the required data elements have been completed for the ESD. About 319 ESD's have been prepared-about 250 remain. These descriptions also have information a customer can use to determine the state of range health for their land.



James Gordon, assistant state soil scientist, presenting Web Soil Survey to a crowd of over 100 attendees at the 19th Annual Texas On-Site Wastewater Treatment Research Council Conference.

Web Soil Survey Demonstrated to Texas Onsite Wastewater Association

James Gordon and Jamey Douglass, soil scientists from the Texas State office, were on hand to promote NRCS programs and demonstrate Web Soil Survey during the annual meeting of the Texas Onsite Wastewater Association (TOWA) held in Mesquite Texas. Texas NRCS developed several soil interpretations that assist members of TOWA to determine the soil suitability for the installation of a sewage facility. Site Evaluators are tasked with classifying the soils into categories defined by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). Once the soil has been classified, the appropriate on-site sewage facility is designed and installed. James Gordon presented the capabilities of Web Soil Survey to a group of about 100 attendees and then provided classroom based hands-on training to about 37 participants. Everyone that attended the training said that Web Soil Survey is an outstanding tool and is very useful in their business. About 200 people stopped by the booth and received a demonstration of Web Soil Survey for their specific area of interest, learning about the soils, viewing soil interpretations, and viewing thematic maps for their specific area.

Soils-continued

Rosenberg Soil Scientists Address Viticulture Students at University of Houston

Tiffany Roberson and Jon Wiedenfeld, soil scientists with the Soil Survey Office in Rosenberg recently presented a basic soils lecture to the Geology in Viticulture class at the University of Houston. In a class of more than 30 students, the soil scientist duo presented the different roles that soils have on the growth of grapes.

Viticulture, the science or practice of raising grapes, is a growing industry in the state. Roberson discussed the ideal soil conditions for wine grape growth and where these conditions are optimal in Texas. Jon Wiedenfeld demonstrated the use of the NRCS Web Soil Survey, a tool that provides a powerful way to analyze soil data for grape production.



Jon Wiedenfeld demonstrates the use Web Soil Survey.

Tiffany Roberson provided a brief overview on soil properties and how they impact the viticulture industry in Texas.



North Texas Community College Hosts Agriculture Expo

Northeast Texas Community College (NTCC) celebrated the completion of the Elizabeth Hoggatt Whatley Agriculture Complex by hosting an agriculture expo on March 25.

NRCS employees participating in the event included John Stone, district conservationist in Quitman, Anna Stone, soil conservationist in Mt. Pleasant, and Sara Russell, soil scientist in Gilmer. Sara Russell provided Web Soil Survey information to producers and demonstrated how to obtain and utilize soils data to make land use management decisions. John Stone and Anna Stone answered numerous questions about current Farm Bill programs and conservation practices.

The event "Living from the Ground Up" provided the public with an opportunity to tour the college's new agriculture facility and visit with local producers, business representatives, and agricultural specialists. Attendees were able to listen to lectures, seminars, programs, and view booths manned by local agricultural industry representatives provided the public with information about small business start-up, organic farming and ranching, sustainable agricultural practices, and government agencies and programs designed to assist producers.

(L to R) Anna Stone, NRCS soil conservationist and Sara Russell, NRCS soil scientist promotes conservation programs at the Northeast Texas Community College (NTCC) Agriculture Expo in Mt. Pleasant.



Published Soil Survey Manuscripts

The soil survey staff are working toward completing and publishing the manuscripts and maps for all initial soil survey areas. Initial soil surveys are published documents that contain area-specific write-ups, tables, and maps of the county survey area. Once completed, these initial publications will be available in three different formats: paper, CD, and Web Soil Survey. The list below shows completed surveys this reporting period. The remaining surveys to be completed are listed as pending and are currently in different stages of the editing process:

Completed:

Big Bend National Park
Duval County

Pending:

Brewster County
Culberson County
Hudspeth County
Mason County
McMullen County
Presidio County
Zapata County



Events & Activities

The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo broke attendance records again this year with more than 2 million visitors at the 79th annual event. The USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) took part in this year's activities with a trade show booth at the Fifth Annual Ranching & Wildlife Expo, held on March 2-5 in conjunction with the livestock show and rodeo.

During the four-day event, educational sessions were held along with a FFA ranching and wildlife competition. Educational sessions covered topics such as prescribed burning, native prairie restoration and water rights.

NRCS field staff visited with a number of private landowners and students about the agency, USDA Farm Bill programs and the technical assistance it offers to landowners across Texas.



Craig Pate, NRCS district conservationist, visits with landowners at the Fifth Annual Ranching & Wildlife Expo trade show.

Events & Activities-*continued*

- The NRCS **Conservation in the Community** booth was at the 2011 Nature Day at Sea Center Texas on March 4. More than 2,000 attended the fun family event that offered a variety of educational programs and activities that introduced visitors to the wonders of nature. NRCS provided soil conservation educational material to teachers, students and parents.
- Jacksboro Service Center participated in the **Region 5 Wildlife and Recreation Management Career Development Event** in Jacksboro on April 12 at the Rick Thompson Ranch in Jacksboro. A total of 51 teams with 208 students competed in this year's contest, which was the largest student attendance in the event's history.



Texas conservation agency leaders, Salvador Salinas (NRCS) and Juan Garcia (FSA), planned and organized CRP training sessions for CRP Sign-up 41.

- USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Farm Service Agency conducted joint meetings in Amarillo, Lubbock and San Angelo in preparation for the **Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) General Sign-up 41** during March 8-10, 2011.
- **Hispanic Farmers of America** hosted an informational meeting in El Paso on March 24. Francisco Molinar, NRCS district conservationist informed participants about the NRCS conservation programs

and technical assistance. Farm Service Agency (FSA) officials talked about Farm Loan availability, terms and conditions. Discussion of the Garcia-Love settlement and community development were also covered. Dr. Rigoberto Delgado talked about the importance of the USDA programs and about his positive experience with NRCS.

- On March 18, 2011, the Broadus High School Ag class put on "**Broadus Ag Day**" for elementary school students. The ag students displayed animal projects they will show at the San Augustine Junior Livestock Show. They also invite agencies such as Piney Woods SWCD and NRCS to present. Janet Ritter, NRCS district conservationist, San Augustine, and Gail Watkins, Piney Woods SWCD, participated in the event. About 225 students attended.
- The **Texas Wildlife and Woodland Expo & Spring Fling** was held in Conroe on March 26, 2011. NRCS participated in the event with a booth. Mozelle Carter, soil conservationist in Conroe, spent the day at the NRCS booth visiting with attendees about natural resources and conservation practices. The event also offered attendees hands-on classes and live demonstrations, along with a Family Adventure Zone.
- Weatherford Field Office organized and participated in the **Weatherford College Land, Range and Wildlife Contest**, which provided approximately 200 Future Farmers of America contestants time to develop their skills in land judging, assessing rangeland conditions and wildlife habitat evaluation.

- On March 24, the TSCRA-sponsored **Rancher Gathering at K-Bar Ranch** in Matagorda County with 200 local ranchers attending. Local NRCS field office personnel manned a booth with emphasis on prescribed burning and grazing management.
- **San Angelo Area Awards Banquet** to honor those teachers, homemakers, farmers, ranchers and students that have done an outstanding job in the field of land stewardship and promotion of conservation was held in Wall, Texas, on March 24, 2011. Over 150 were present to honor the land stewards and their accomplishments.
- The NRCS along with multiple SWCD's hosted the **2nd Annual Rancher's Workshop in Big Lake, Texas**. Nearly 100 landowners, agency officials and business owners gathered at the Big Lake Community Center for educational sessions on range management and animal handling, as well as, live demonstrations from Priefert and John Deere Machinery.



Live demonstrations were part of the 2nd Annual Rancher's Workshop held in Big Lake, Texas.

Events & Activities-continued



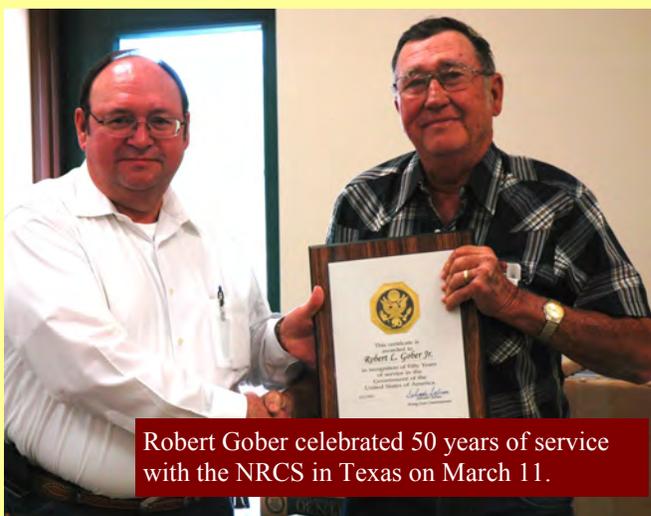
- The **Waxahachie Service Center** helped **500 6th-grade students** connect with conservation, and to understand the value of a fulfilling job working with landowners and producers. Clift Middle School in Waxahachie held the Career Day on March 10. The student's goals for the career day were to identify companies and careers that might be of interest to them, and then interview at least three professionals in selected fields and document their responses.
- **Playa Grazing Management Day** was conducted for interested landowners, agency personnel, and the general public on March 24. Those attending learned hands-on information from a prescribe grazing regime involving 43 mother cows. In addition, there were presentations on assessing the forage base in playas and understanding how playa plants respond to grazing. The workshop is sponsored by Ogallala Commons, with its partners: Dixon Water Foundation, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD) and Playa Lakes Joint Venture.
- Hays County SWCD Board had a joint tour with **Upper San Marcos Watershed, Reclamation and Flood Control District** on March 24. The tour is an annual Operation

& Maintenance event. Participants in the tour were all Hays County SWCD Board members, Hays County Judge Bert Cobb, M.D.; Hays County Road & Bridge Operations Administrator Tim VandeVorde; Jim Nuce, City Of San Marcos City Manager; Melissa Milligan, Director of Communication City of San Marcos; Kim Porterfield, San Marcos City Council Member; and Bill Taylor, Upper San Marcos Watershed Administrator.

- NRCS manned a booth and presented highlights of the GRP program to over 40 Hill Country residents during the **LCRA Conservation Easement Workshop** in Llano, Texas on March 25th.
- Chisholm Trail RC&D co-hosted a workshop entitled **Feral Hogs: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly** with the Four Winds RC&D from Knox City. Attendees came from all over the north-central Texas area.
- Part 2 of the **New Landowner Workshop series** was held in Mason by the Hill Country RC&D on March 25.
- Hays County SWCD Technician Parker Rhine along with NRCS staff from the Austin Field Office assisted Koy Coffey, Texas Wildlife Association Education Pro-

gram Specialist and others with a field day held at The Shield Ranch in Dripping Springs. The field day was put on for **Dripping Springs Middle School (7th grade) Quail Field Investigation Day**. There were approximately 380 students at the field day.

- Texas Wildlife Association hosted a **Learning Across New Dimensions of Science (LANDS) Field Day** on March 25. There were approximately 400 students learning about land stewardship. NRCS had the rainfall simulator demonstrating the effects of wind and water erosion.
- The Cherokee County SWCD sponsored the local **land judging contest held at the Kilgore College Farm**. The top two placing high-point individuals were each awarded \$1,000 scholarships. NRCS personnel from the Henderson Resource Team helped set up the contest, with Dennis Brezina, Zone 4 soil scientist, officially ranking the four sites that were used in the contest.



Robert Gober celebrated 50 years of service with the NRCS in Texas on March 11.

Events & Activities-*continued*



The Orange County March for Parks and Environmental Learning Fair was held April 15. An estimated 600 students from 2nd-6th grades participated from the Little Cypress Mauriceville ISD. Gary Barnett, NRCS soil conservationist in Beaumont set up the NRCS erosion and soil textures demonstration for the students.

- **Terlingua Green Scene**, a festival sponsored by Terlingua Recycles, and The Community Garden, was held at Terlingua's ghost town. Demonstrations and information on sustainable living practices such as water catchment, solar energy and desert gardening were covered by local NRCS and SWCD staff.
- **State-wide Cultural Resources Training** helped employees learn how to identify and preserve cultural resources (anything over 50 years old, for example structures and artifacts) during the conservation planning process. Sessions were offered in all zones and consisted of one day in the classroom and a field visit to local areas known for possessing cultural resource sites.
- FFA students from across the Panhandle and South Plains regions recently participated in the **2011 Land Judging Career Develop-**

ment Events hosted by the communities of Quanah, Clarendon, Childress, Wellington, Memphis and Lubbock. NRCS, in coordination with the local SWCDs, partnered in an effort to set up the contest sites. Sites were judged based on characteristics of the soil and observations of landscape conditions. They recommended land treatments, considering factors such as soil characteristics, vegetative conditions and planned land use.



Participants of the 2011 Land and Range Judging competition held in Clarendon, TX.

- Sonora NRCS field office and Edwards-Plateau SWCD hosted the **30th Annual 6th-Grade Conservation Field Day** at the Sawyer Ranch located in Sutton County. Over 80 students attended the event that focused on grazing management, agriculture history, wildlife and water conservation. This is one of the longest running field days in the state today.
- The San Patricio SWCD and the NRCS Staff participated in the **Make It and Take It Night at the Fulton Learning Center** in Aransas County on April 14. More than 90 people participated in this event which included teachers, parents, and 4th and 5th grade students. Participants learned about the many different aspects of the local environment. The SWCD/NRCS booth highlighted the importance of trees in our environment to coincide with NACD's soil stewardship theme: "Forests for people, more than you can imagine."
- Nearly 1000 students competed in regional **Wildlife Alliance for Youth** contests on April 12. NRCS provided assistance in compass and pacing, plant identification, range/land judging and wildlife habitat. Winners from all competitions go forth to compete at the state competition in May.

Events & Activities-continued



NRCS stressed water and soil conservation during state-wide Earth Day activities. Homeowners and landowners can take steps to protect the Earth's soil from erosion caused by factors such as wind, rain and man-made causes. Soil erosion is a naturally occurring process on all land, but the impact from erosion can be controlled and reduced through implementing conservation practices at home, work and on agricultural lands.

- The **Cherokee County SWCD held its annual awards banquet** with more than 150 people in attendance. This was the event's 55th year. The district honored five outstanding individuals in each of the district's five zones for accomplishments in beef cattle and hay production, education and conservation, community involvement, and outstanding forestry production. During the banquet, the district also honored the first and second place winners in the local judging contests of land, wildlife, and woodland. They presented the high-point individuals with \$1,000 scholarships.
- On April 26th the DeWitt SWCD hosted a **Spring Brush Tour at Clem Waskow's ranch** with 55 ranchers and farmers attending. Presentations were given by NRCS, TDA, DuPont and Winfield.
- Texas AgriLife Extension Service in Travis County hosted an **Urban Farmer and Rancher Seminar** on April 28, where Jeremy Hasty, Resource Conservationist

spoke about different programs available through the NRCS.

- Throckmorton and Graham Service Centers provided outreach education at Woodson School regarding careers in NRCS. They assisted applicants with the **Summer Employment Program through the Federal Women's Program**.
- Denton Service Center participated in **Land Conservation Tools to aid Farmers and Ranchers Workshops with the Connemara Conservancy**,

and Claude Ross, NRCS soil conservationist at the state office in Temple, gave a presentation about the GRP, WRP, and FRPP programs.

- Bandera NRCS and local SWCD hosted a **Hill Country Prescribed Burn Workshop**. Speakers included: Ray Hinnant, Sr. Research Assoc., Dept. of Rangeland Ecology & Mgmt., Texas A&M University; Bill Armstrong, Biologist, Kerr Wildlife Mgmt. Area, Tx. Parks & Wildlife (retired); Marsh Weiershausen, Pres., Hill Country Prescribed Burn Assoc.; John Payne, Pres., Ranchers & Landowners Assoc.; John Stith, Bandera County Fire Marshal.



The 2011 Scout Fair – “Treasure the Journey” – was held in Houston. An estimated 200 scouts and attendees visited with Kevin LaStrapes, Zone 4 civil engineer at the NRCS booth.

Events & Activities-continued



- More than 2,000 cattle raisers traveled to San Antonio to attend the 134th annual Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association (TSCRA) convention. The USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) took part in the event's two-day trade show which had more than 170 vendors.

A large, steady crowd of attendees took advantage of the expertise offered by NRCS employees at the booth. The Web Soil Survey drew attendees to the booth and provided an excellent opportunity to visit with landowners about their property and any resource issues.

The Texas Coalition Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI) held a well-attended business meeting in conjunction with the annual event.

- The annual **State Woodland Clinic** was held at the **East Texas Plant Materials Center in Nacogdoches**. Forty-eight FFA teams and 11 4-H teams competed in the event. Students were tested at five woodland stations in the areas of thinning,

removal. Central Heights FFA and Jasper Helping Hands 4-H placed first in their respective groups.

- **Brush Management Certification Training for Landowners, Land Managers and Brush Control Contractors** was held April 12 in Meridian, April 26 at the Kerr Wildlife Management Area and April 27 in Johnson City. Any landowner or contractor who plans to conduct brush management within Golden-Cheeked Warbler or Black-capped Vireo habitat as part of work involving NRCS was encouraged to take this training and become certified.

- The "Water Grows Our Economy" Campaign continues through a website directed by the Texas Corn Producers. NRCS provided the technical assistance for the production, including information on the latest water efficient irrigation systems for center pivot irrigation drop nozzles and subsurface drip irrigation. A 10

minute video and additional information can be found on the website at www.WaterGrowsJobs.org, with the slogan "Water grows our economy; let's make it last."

- **Kendall County Conservation Expo** welcomed over 150 landowners, ranchers and participants to the annual daylong event. The event is sponsored by the Central Texas Conservation Partnership along with City of Boerne, Kendall County SWCD, AgriLife Extension, Texas Forest Service, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, LCRA, TPWD, TSSWCB, USDA Forest Service, The Nature Conservancy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the NRCS.



regeneration, timber wildlife forage, site management concerns, pine identification, site index, compass and pacing, rate of growth, wood identification, volume, wood products, hardwood identification and cull tree re-





Information & Outreach

- Ross Brown, NRCS district conservationist in **Harrison County** attended a **cow/calf seminar** held by the **Harrison County Cattlemen's Association**. Ross presented information to producers on available programs, including EQIP and CSTP .
- The **1890 Small Scale Producer Conference** was held in New Boston in conjunction with the 1890 Cooperative Extension Agencies - University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff and Prairie View A&M University. There were 20 people in attendance. Topics included timber and wildlife management, beef selection and clovers, forage and native grass, pond management and cost-share programs available for producers.
- Denton Service Center worked with **Denton County Emergency Management Coordinator** in developing emergency action plans for six significant and high hazard flood prevention sites.
- NRCS is partnering with the **Nueces Delta Preserve in San Patricio County** to provide conservation education materials for 17 upcoming school tours and for three teacher workshops (60 teachers) that will be held three different weeks in June. The Nueces Delta is home to the Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program's educational programs that educates more than 6,000 students and 600 teachers a year as well as being a highlight of its conservation and land management efforts.
- Texas NRCS has had three blogs posted to the **USDA blog website**. Stories can be viewed at <http://blogs.usda.gov>.
- Texas NRCS has been **featured in state and national forms of media** including:
 - Texas Farm Bureau's weekly television program "Voices of Agriculture."
 - Progressive Farmer
 - RFD-TV
 - East Texas ABC news affiliate KTRE
 - Fox 34
 - Southwest Farm Press



Information & Outreach-*continued*



Salinas Named Texas NRCS State Conservationist

Salvador Salinas has been named the State Conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Texas.

Salvador, a native of Rio Grande City, Texas, was raised on a Spanish Land Grant next to the Mexico Border. He received his bachelor's of science degree in range science from Texas A&M University in 1977.

Salvador started his career as a range conservationist with the Soil Conservation Service, now the Natural Resources Conservation Service, in 1978.

He served as range conservationist in Johnson City and Mason, Texas, District Conservationist in Van Horn and Benavides, Texas.

Salvador served as the Assistant State Conservationist in Massachusetts and Texas.

He also served on a 2-year international assignment in Cuernavaca, Mexico.

Salvador has served as Acting State Conservationist in both Florida and New Hampshire.

Salvador has served on many details to NRCS national headquarters and is currently serving in an advisory capacity to the National Grazing Lands Coalition.

He is a member of the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association, the Society for Range Management, the Soil and Water Conservation Society, the National Association of Conservation Districts, and the Texas Wildlife Association and the National Association of Professional Hispanic NRCS Employees.

He is a range conservationist by education, a rancher by heritage, and a conservationist by choice.





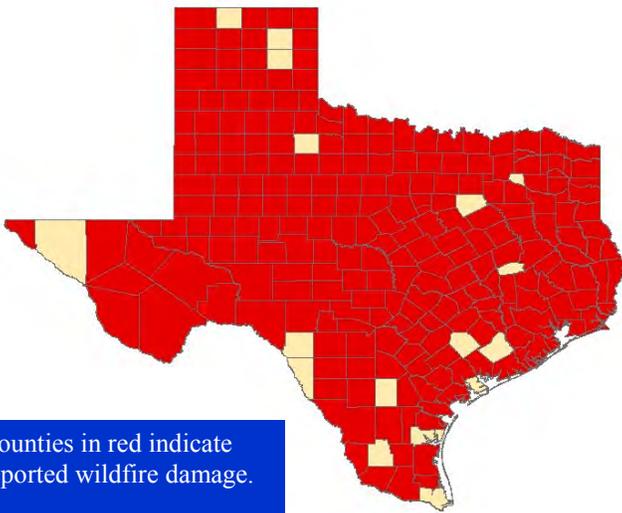
NRCS Wildfire Update

High winds, low humidity and prolonged dry conditions in Texas have been the lead factors in what has caused the state to lose over 2.5 million acres in wildfires. While some parts of the state have already been affected by damaging wildfires, other parts remain at risk. Currently 195 out of 254 counties remain in a burn ban, and less than 20 have not reported wildfire damage this season.

Landowners impacted by recent wildfires are encouraged to contact their local USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) district conservationist. The NRCS provides technical, and in some cases, financial assistance, to install measures that reduce post-fire damage and aid in the rehabilitation process.



Texas Counties with Fire Damage as of May 9, 2011



Counties in red indicate reported wildfire damage.

Since fire season started on Nov. 15, 2010, Texas Forest Service and area fire departments have responded to 10,417 fires that have charred 2,631,355 acres.



Upcoming Events

In honor of **National Wetlands Month in May**, NRCS will feature the new Texas Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) display and accompanying conservation education materials May 4-11 at the Texas State Aquarium in Corpus Christi, for an estimated 16,000 visitors to view.

Amarillo Ag Fair will be held May 4-5. NRCS and the SWCD in Canyon will be presenting a program on 'Soil and Water Conservation' at the 2011 Ag Fair in Amarillo

Ag Awareness day – Littlefield will be held May 12. NRCS and the Lamb County SWCD will be participating in the educational event presenting a program on 'soil and water conservation' for 220 students in the 4th – 6th grades.

Calhoun SWCD will host its 13th annual field trip for all third grade students on May

18 with 352 students expected. It will be held on the Calhoun County Fairgrounds. Shanna Dunn, Zone 3 NRCS soil specialist will be one of the presenters. Students and teachers will receive conservation education materials to take home for further learning.

May 25th—**Concho County Prescribed Burn Field Day** will be held in Eden, Texas. NRCS will host the event that will offer both classroom education and a field visit to a recently burned location.

Filming of the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI) on Canadian River. The National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) will be conducting a video of the CCPI Partnership work on private lands with the NRCS and Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept. (TPWD).

NRCS Rangeland Management Specialist Clint Rollins was asked to join the NWTf and TPWD partners in the planning and development of the video project.

June 7-9th-Pedernales SWCD annual **Teacher's Workshop**. Enjoy an outdoor classroom on the Franklin Family Ranch in Blanco, Texas. For more information visit: <http://www.tsswcb.state.tx.us/en/infod/summerworkshop>

19th annual State Youth Water Camp at the George and Opal Bentley 4-H Center in Monahans, Texas. This year's camp will be held July 10 – 14, 2011.

57th Annual Youth Range Workshop will be held in Junction on June 19-24. NRCS will assist with range and natural resource management.

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