



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Helping People Help The Land

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The Reverchon Naturalist

Recognizing the work of French botanist Julian Reverchon, who began collecting throughout the North Central Texas area in 1876, and all the botanists/naturalists who have followed ...

A Career Helping Landowners

*Story by John Paclik, District Conservationist
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
Graham, Texas*

As my NRCS career of 36.5 years comes to a close, I thought I would share some ideas and philosophy that may or may not benefit new employees in their career ahead of them.

First of all, I was hired two weeks out of college, and it did not take me long to realize that this was not going to be a job for me but a career. There is a difference, you know. A job is something you work 8 to 5 (or 7 to 4:30, in our case) where you watch the clock each day and can't wait until it is time to go home, and then you shoot out of the office like a rocket. In a career, you might come in 30 minutes early or stay 30 minutes late, take a few phone calls at home, even work some hours on Saturday, and never think about charging extra credit or comp time. This is not to say that I worked every day like that, as I cherish my personal hours as well as anyone else. You have to enjoy what you do and have passion not only to educate landowners daily, but educate yourself as well. Having a career goes above and beyond the call of duty.

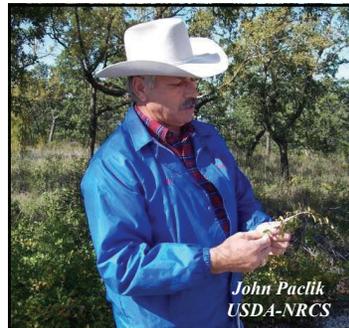
Working with landowners or clients is my favorite thing to do. When you become a natural resources manager, your time working with producers becomes very limited and this is probably the main reason that I am retiring. As I learned a long time ago, remember the client is always right, well that is, if the client meets our specifications. Remember, there is always more than one way of doing things. I prided myself in providing landowners with alternatives, while explaining the pros and cons of each action. One alternative is to do nothing, and there have been a few times when

that was the best alternative. Before you work with a client, do your homework and be prepared. Always anticipate what some of their questions might be.

It is always best to have a map outlining the place, and definitely always have a soils map as it's a great reference for us to make our conservation recommendations. Before you leave the office, ask the staff who has been around for a while, and if they know this person. You might get a good tidbit of information that will be a great icebreaker, particularly if you are going to this place cold turkey.

When I sent this to Ricky, he said that I always talk about plants and that I did not mention plants in this article for the newsletter. So, here we go. It is my belief that if you do not know a plant, how can you manage it. We as professionals must know plants. We must know them not only in the seed head stage, but in all stages of growth. Some landowners know a few plants and some do not, so we must definitely know more plants than they do to earn their respect. A pasture full of threeawn is not the same as a pasture of Sideoats grama. A good planner needs to know plant preference by all kinds of livestock as well as wildlife. I could go on for three more pages, but better stop here and get off my soap box.

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*John Paclik
USDA-NRCS*



John Paclik, above left, educates high school senior Katharyn Camp, right, about plant species in Young County, Texas. John dedicated 36.5 years to conservation and helping landowners.

See You Down the Road

By Ricky Linex
NRCS Wildlife Biologist

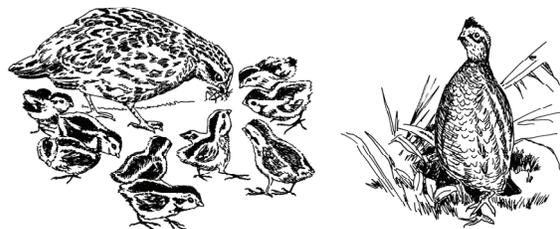
This issue marks the end of the first year of *The Reverchon Naturalist*. The effort has been rewarding, and we appreciate all the informative articles that have been submitted. We are working on additional native plant articles and hope you will submit a story in 2011. Randy and I have been in a reflective mood lately, and we decided to use reflections as the lead for this issue. John Paclik, district conservationist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Graham, Texas, for many years will be retiring at the end of 2010, and offers his thoughts on what it is to be a professional conservationist. John is looking back over a great career, and has some sage advice that would work for individuals in many different careers. Read about my trip down memory lane with a story about Kodachrome 64 slide film. Those little yellow boxes that Kodak would ship your processed slides in are now collector's items, since they will be no more made. But those little flat boxes hold memories, stories, adventures, and life histories for many of us. Keep them out of heat and sunlight for they can live again. Remember to always carry a camera with you and be ready for that "once in a lifetime" shot that comes along. Continue to study and learn about plants. We learn them one at a time so keep on learning.

(Continued from page 1)

One piece of advice that has stayed with me for years came from one of my former district conservationists (DC). Back in the early 1980s, there was a change in the way we did annual status reviews. In the past, we only had to list current year's completed practices, and now they want all prior year practices listed. As I complained about having to do the extra work this DC said, "John, no matter how much complaining you do, it still has to be done, just do it." Wow, I will remember that forever.

And finally, my last bit of advice is to always ask questions, especially if you don't know something. Don't let this be a shocker to everyone, but I have asked plenty of questions down through the years. Some have been pretty educated and the remainder probably stupid, but at least I got an answer that I could live with. NRCS has been a great career for me. So, to the new employees - always keep your head up, make your work a passion, and make NRCS a career not just a job.

See you down the road,
John Paclik, USDA-NRCS



****SAVE THIS DATE****

Friday, Jan 28, 2011, As the date for the 4th annual Distinguished Lectureship in Quail Management in downtown Roby, Texas. This year's speaker will be Brad Mueller from Tallahassee, Florida. The theme is *The Art of Quail Management*. For more information, please contact Rachel Vega at 325-653-4576 or e-mail at rrvega@ag.tamu.edu

Brad Mueller
Tallahassee, Florida



It's All About Bugs From a Caterpillar to a Moth



The photo on the left shows a Snowberry Clearwing caterpillar, *hemaris diffinis*, seen south of Ringgold, Texas, in early November. True to its name, this caterpillar is feeding on Coralberry, *Symphoricarpos orbiculatus*, which is also called snowberry. The Snowberry Clearwing moth, upper photo, mimics the look of a bumblebee to discourage predators, but unlike bees these moths do not land on the plants when seeking nectar.

Photo Credit: <http://www.dereila.ca/whispers/mothsC.html>



2011 Texas Brigades Camps

The Texas Brigades is a wildlife-focused leadership development program for high school youth (ages 13-17). There are four different camps: Bobwhite Brigade, Buckskin Brigade, Feathered Forces, and Bass Brigade. You will be introduced to habitat management, hone your communication skills, and develop a land ethic. Top wildlife professionals and resource managers serve as instructors and mentors, and each camp is 4 ½ days long.

Announcing the upcoming 2011 camp dates for Texas Brigades Camps. These dates and more information about the camps can be found at their website: <http://www.texasbrigades.org/Camps/camps.html>

***Below are the 2011 camp dates and locations!
Applications for 2011 will be available no later than January 1, 2011.***

South Texas Buckskin: June 5-9, 2011, La Bandera, Carrizo Springs
Rolling Plains Bobwhite: June 18-22, 2011, Centennial Lodge, Coleman
South Texas Bobwhite: June 26-30, 2011, 74 Ranch, Campbellton
Bass Brigade: July 11-15, 2011, Warren Ranch, Santa Anna
North Texas Buckskin: July 17-21, 2011, Stasney's Cook Ranch, Albany

A Day in the Field: Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge

*Story by Tyson Hart, NRCS Rangeland Management Specialist
Nacogdoches, Texas*

Recently, my family and I took a camping adventure to Oklahoma. The unique aspect of the Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge is the presence of elk and bison. My dad and I have wanted to hear the elk bugle, and the Rockies are too far away for a weekend adventure – so the refuge was a perfect fit. Ninety miles north of Wichita Falls and we arrived at our campground. Finding electricity during the bugling season is a little competitive, but we were lucky enough to get a spot.

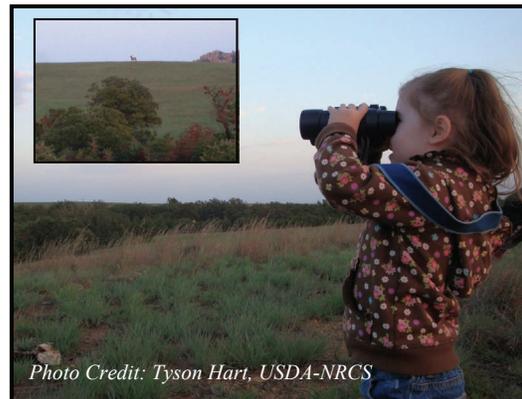
I was not mentally prepared to enter the park. There was Indiangrass, Big Bluestem, Little Bluestem, and Switchgrass as far as the eye can see, and a remnant tall-grass prairie in amber waves of perfection! Reading almanacs and historical accounts does no justice, for I was transposed back in time. My family already thinks I am strange enough, so I tried to hold back my desire to run through the prairie, but my kids and I ran and sang anyway.

Once I calmed down, I began investigating reasons why the 59,000-acre refuge was in such pristine condition. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service uses grazing (elk, bison, and longhorns) and fire as management tools. The refuge contains livestock pens, and auctions the cattle and bison in order to control the stocking rate. The refuge allows the public to harvest elk and white-tailed deer annually to prevent any over population as well. The refuge believes in conservation, and allows public involvement with their 15-year Comprehensive Conservation Plan.

The refuge boasts a plant list of 806 species. Even with the huge diversity, my eyes could not stray from prairie soils with their “Big Four” grasses and dots of Maximilian Sunflower interspersed. In the lower elevations, wooded-riparian areas Flameleaf Sumac filled the margins and I kept eating the berries, thanks to Turner’s *Remarkable Plants of Texas*. My imagination suggests Native Americans and settler’s kept them in satchels in lieu of sweet tarts. The erect dayflower became my daughter’s quick favorite, for she loved squeezing out the widow’s tears. The burned areas provided a stark contrast of green and were good places to locate wildlife and mid and low-grass communities, which consisted of side oats grama, blue grama and buffalograss.

During our kid’s nap time, my dad, brother-in-law and I went scouting for elk and exploring the refuge. After driving through the western half, a recently burned area piqued my interest. We set out on foot across a terrace that overlooked a riparian area in the distance, and there we heard our first bugle of the trip. We decided to return after dinner to watch the sunset and possibly see some elk. A little scouting paid off, for thirty minutes before dark one elk after another appeared in the distance. Four elk bugled and three buffalo grazed until the sun disappeared over the horizon.

Back at camp, my family enjoyed smores as the elk serenaded the rest of the night. Plus, the trip turned into a greater experience than we ever expected. The visitor center also has wonderful interpretive displays and a useful bookstore for visitors. Finally, I encourage anyone interested in wildlife, rangelands, ecology, and/or camping to go visit this refuge. Admittance into the refuge is free and more information can be found at <http://wichitamountains.fws.gov/>



The Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge offers many opportunities to see wildlife in their native habitat, such as bison, above left, and white-tailed deer, above right, along with elk as Taylor Hart, photo right, discovered looking through a pair of binoculars in the refuge.

Photo Credit: Tyson Hart, USDA-NRCS

Lemon Mint (*Monarda citriodora*)

Story by Znobla Wootan, Native American Seed

Photos Courtesy of Native American Seed

Lemon Mint, otherwise known as Horsemint, Purple horsemint, Plains Horsemint or Lemon Bee balm is an easy recognizable old-time favorite. The scientific name of *Monarda citriodora*, was given to this wildflower in honor of Nicholas Monarda, who was a Spanish Physician in the 1500s, and discovered several medicinal properties of plants found in the America's. The name *citriodora* refers to the citrus like scent that the plant has when the leaves are crushed. This scent makes it deer resistant and if you rub the leaves on your skin it makes a fair insect repellent as well. It contains the oil citronellol that is used commercially in some insect repellents and lotions. Native Americans, such as the Hopis, Pueblo and Tewa, used the leaves in flavoring rabbit and stews, as well as brewing the leaves for a tea to soothe sore throats and cold symptoms.

Lemon Mint does belong to the mint family which can be easily identified by their square stems. Most pollinators visit this aromatic wildflower at one time or another, but it seems to be especially popular with bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. With adequate moisture it will bloom from March until the first frost, making it a dependable nectar source for most of the year. This native would be a must have for anyone interested in attracting pollinators to their landscape.

Lemon Mint is a winter annual and reseeds readily if allowed to go to seed before mowing. This wildflower really is easy to get to come up from seed, and can be planted in the fall or in very early spring. The seeds are economical and 3 pounds will give you an acre of beautiful stalks of cylindrical purple blooms. It likes the heat and tolerates all soil types with growth reaching one to two-feet tall. Its natural range is the southern half of the United States, but would grow in many Northern regions if planted. It is not unusual to see Lemon Mint form large colonies in the wild, and at times the plant will dominate roadside landscapes.



The Lemon Mint (*Monarda citriodora*) was used by Native Americans, such as the Hopi, Pueblo, and Tewa for flavoring rabbit and stews, along with brewing the leaves for tea.



Pollinators such as bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds love this native wildflower. Here is an example, above, of a healthy seedling of the Lemon Mint.

How Many Grasses Do You Count?

A One-Act Play

Written by Skipper Duncan

San Angelo, Texas

In keeping with our “reflecting back” theme in this issue, the following *One Act Play* will test your knowledge of plant names. This play was first read at a Texas Section Society for Range Management annual meeting in the early 1980s by the writer, Skipper Duncan, a rancher from San Angelo, Texas. It was later printed and ran in the September/October 1990 issue of the TSSRM newsletter by Jake Landers, TSSRM newsletter editor at that time. Jake was then an extension range specialist with the Texas Agricultural Extension Service in San Angelo. He is a renowned rangeman with extensive knowledge of the native plants in Texas. During a recent conversation with Jake, he agreed it would be a great fit for sharing the play with readers of *The Reverchon Naturalist*.

Read the play and write down the names of plants that you recognize in the play. For a list of those plants, please see page 8 of this newsletter.

I'M BLUE GRAMA

A One Act Play by Sod Buster

Characters: Grandmother and Grandson

Grama: I'm bush', son. Flower my biscuit board, please.

G Son: Can't now. I'm blue, Grama.

Grama: How bad? Just a little blue?

G. Son: Nope, big blue.

Grama: How come, son? Why, goodness me, are you crying?

G Son: No, just weeping, Love of my life left me. Ermelo love is all I can think about.

Grama: Looks like you're might bitter. We'd better get to the bottom of this. Who is she? Which family?

G Son: Engelmann. Daisy is her name. I haven't seen her in six weeks, Grama.

Grama: What's she look like? What color dress was she wearing the last time you saw her?

G Son: Red, Grama.

Grama: You sure, son?

G Son: Well, maybe black, Grama.

Grama: Where do you think she is now?

G Son: Probably Texas, Grama. Or she could have gone to pick Arizona cotton, top one of those mesas out there. Probably living like an Indian, Grass hut or teepee.

Grama: I 'spect you are sad, son—tried smoking a joint? There's three awn the table.

G Son: Nope, I'm gonna switch grass—don't work no more. Buffalo (x) Harry Tridens, living down there in that old white Tridens home, goe sand drop seed, either blindfolded or hooded, windmill (xx) this fall witchgrass is plain, bristle, or curly—mesquite or no mosquitoes.

Grama: Sounds like a good plan to me, son. Got your chores done yet? Did you feed everything to the horses already?

G Son: Yeah. Everything 'side oats, Grama.

(x) But if old; (xx) We can mill
How many can you count?

(Continued on page 8)

Don't Take My Kodachrome Away

Story and Photos by Ricky Linex, Wildlife Biologist

They give us those nice bright colors,
They give us the greens of summers,
Makes you think all the world's a sunny day, oh yeah,
I got a Nikon camera, I love to take a photograph,
So mama don't take my Kodachrome away ...

(Lyrics from the hit single Kodachrome and album

There Goes Rhymin' Simon written and recorded by Paul Simon, 1973) Hear it at: [http://](http://www.metacafe.com/watch/3014431/)

www.metacafe.com/watch/3014431/

[kodachrome_paul_simon_momma_dont_take_my_kodachrome_away/](http://www.metacafe.com/watch/3014431/kodachrome_paul_simon_momma_dont_take_my_kodachrome_away/)

This article looks back at a tool that many photographers used regularly or may have experimented with, and that tool is Kodachrome slide film. Those of us with a little gray showing on top will now think, "When is the last time I shot a roll of Kodachrome?" Sadly even if we can remember what year it was, (I believe 2001 for me) Kodachrome is no more. Put out to pasture by digital photography much as 35mm cameras put the Brownie box camera to sleep many years ago. A nice touch by Kodak was to stamp the month and date of processing on the cardboard holding each slide so check the date on your last roll processed.

Kodachrome slide film was developed by Eastman Kodak in 1935 and was retired in 2009. It ushered in bright and brilliant colors although it took time to master the slow speed, which made taking photos in low light a difficult task. It was the tool of professional photographers who shot sports, wildlife, portraits, and businesses, among others for a living. In the old Soil Conservation Service offices if you asked the area of office for slide film you received Kodachrome 64, and it was the only slide film you knew about. But at the end of its lifespan it represented less than one percent of Kodak's business. As film processing businesses began to close it became harder to get this type of slide film developed. In the end, there was only one business still developing Kodachrome 64 film, Dwayne's Photo Service in Parsons, Kansas. Earlier in 2010, I read that Dwayne's was going to process Kodachrome up through December 31, 2010. But the lack of incoming film for developing pushed that last roll date to late-July, 2010. On December 10, 2010 the processing equipment at Dwayne's Photo Service will be mothballed, forever ending the run of Kodachrome. Here is a link to the story of the last roll of Kodachrome shot by professional photographer Steve McCurry: <http://www.kansas.com/2010/07/14/1403115/last-kodachrome-roll-processed.html>.

I shot my first rolls of Kodachrome in 1979, and began using it in earnest during 1982 taking wildlife photos wanting to be the next Wyman Meinzer. You began as an indentured servant to this film and slowly learned how to handle the shallow depth of field and show shutter speeds. More than once I heard the double tap of the mirror, clicking up to expose the film and clicking down to complete the exposure. If you could hear the *click-click* as two sounds, you knew you would see camera shake in the image on the slide, so you tried to adjust the exposure to speed up the shot, which was not always an easy fix.



Kodachrome showed high quality in greens, reds and blues even within this digital copy of Ken Cash, left, retired NRCS district conservationist and K.T. Waddell, right, an intern from Tarleton State University in July 1996 while they examined an enclosure cage in a field of lablab.



This Rio Grande Gobbler, left, photo from 1984 in Scurry County, Texas, was digitally copied from a good Kodachrome slide that still shows iridescent colors on this old tom with solid color quality.

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7) *Don't Take My Kodachrome Away*

I recently visited with Tommy Hailey, retired Texas Parks & Wildlife biologist, about using this film when he did aerial surveys of deer and antelope in West Texas. Hailey noted it was good film but he later switched to the faster Ektachrome film, which had an ASA speed of 180 in the 1970s and was increased to ASA 400 in the 1980s.

Furthermore, back then you didn't know for sure that you got "the shot" until the film was processed and returned to you. This may have been up to several weeks so going back and shooting that rare blooming wildflower was not possible. You either shot it then or didn't get the shot. This led photographers to *bracket* their shots by shooting one frame at the proper exposure, then another one notch underexposed and another one notch overexposed, trying to ensure that you had the best possible exposure at that time. This also meant that you used up a lot of film that came on rolls of 24 or 36 exposures. At the time film seemed expensive to buy and expensive to process but now, once you get past the initial cost of buying digital equipment, you don't have the expense of film and processing.

You can breathe new life into those old slides by scanning them with a dedicated slide scanner. This scanner will convert the image on the slide into a digital image that will allow you to adjust color and brightness. You can then e-mail that image to anyone, for it takes about one minute per slide to scan it into a digital image. One minute to bring to life images from the past. One minute to return to your youth and that family vacation to wherever. One minute to bring that Kodachrome image back to life. Perhaps Kodachrome images will live forever, just not in its original dressing, so maybe this digital business is a good thing after all.

How many did you count? (Answers to *I'm Blue Grama* one-act play)

Here are the plants I could see: Bush sunflower, blue grama, little bluestem, big bluestem, weeping lovegrass, Ermelo lovegrass, bitterweed, Engelmann daisy, six weeks grama, red grama, black grama, Texas grama, Arizona cottontop, Indian grass, threeawn, switchgrass, buffalograss, hairy tridens, white tridens, sand dropseed, hooded windmillgrass, fall witchgrass, plains bristlegrass, curly mesquite, and Sideoats grama. It brings the total to 25, although you might say mosquitoes could be mesquite and make it 26— it's still a neat story. *Source: SRM Texas Section Newsletter, September/October, Vol. 41, No. 5, 1990*



An intelligent outdoor skill is always watch sticking your hands down into a hollow log, for these hollowed trees make good wildlife housing. (Photo Credit: Ricky Linex)

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