

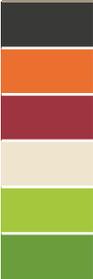
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*Helping People Help the Land*



JULY 2010



# Activity *report*



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## Programs

NRCS has introduced several new initiatives through EQIP and WHIP over the last two months (May and June 2010). These include the Ogallala Aquifer funded at \$3M, Lesser Prairie Chicken funded at \$5M, Long Leaf Pine funded at \$324,000, and the Migratory Water Fowl at \$1M. All of these funds were in addition to our initial program funding which has raised our conservation programs allocation considerably in Texas—to approximately \$90M in FY10.

Payment Schedules are under development in preparation for program implementation for Fiscal Year 2011. Representatives from all five NRCS Zones met in Temple June 15 and 16<sup>th</sup> to coordinate consistent practice costs across the state. It is anticipated that these payment schedules will be completed well in advance of the beginning of the new fiscal year.

### Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP)

Financial assistance allocation for the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) has been allocated to the three active projects which include the Leon River, Lake Arrowhead, and Ogallala Aquifer. To date, we have obligated 122 contracts on 23,291 acres involving \$3,767,146.

### Conservation Stewardship Program (CStP)

Texas has completed the initial sign-up and funding period for the Conservation Stewardship Program. We funded 693 contracts on 1,403,110 acres involving \$9,750,708. Currently NRCS has announced June 25<sup>th</sup> as a second ranking deadline date for current applications. A number





## Programs—Continued

of changes have taken place in the program since the final rule was issued earlier this month. Most notably is the initiation of a minimum payment of \$1000 for Historically Underserved and Socially Disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, and a doubling of the payment limitation for joint operations from \$40,000 annually to \$80,000 annually and from a total program perspective, from \$200,000 to \$400,000. Please check our website for more information if you are interested.

### **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**

We are in the final stages of funding EQIP contracts for FY 2010. NRCS has a national obligation deadline of July 2 for EQIP funding. To date there are 3,152 contracts funded on 1,454,648 acres obligating \$59,129,281. We have a current backlog of \$15M in our county based accounts and an additional backlog of \$12M in the state wide resource concerns. We requested additional funding from NHQ on June 18<sup>th</sup> for the balance of the fiscal year.

A special Agricultural Energy Conservation and Efficiency Initiative was available until July 16. This program is funded through EQIP as a conservation activity plan. Texas has targeted poultry and dairy operations for this

initiative. Participants will choose a Technical Service Provider (TSP) to conduct agricultural energy management plan.

### **Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)**

An additional \$14 million in GRP funding has been requested to approve 16 additional easements and 53 more rental contracts. Field offices are continuing to accept applications for both enrollment options.

### **Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program (FRPP)**

Two proposals were received for the \$2.5 million available in funding. NRCS has approved one application for \$1.5M and the other remains pending for funding.

### **Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI)**

The Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative funding was released for the two projects in Texas in late February. One project located in Lee and Bastrop Counties is designed to improve habitat for the endangered species, the Houston toad. For FY10, we have funded 1 contract on 552 acres obligating \$17,790.

The second project is for eradicating Salt Cedar from the Canadian River from Lake Meredith to the Oklahoma

state line. Currently 4 contracts have been approved on 651 acres for \$75,711.

### **Requests for Proposals**

Texas submitted 14 proposals for funding under the Conservation Innovation Grant, 3 under the Co-operative Conservation Partnership Initiative, and 5 under the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program. Letters of Review have been completed for these proposals and forwarded to National Headquarters for funding consideration. We expect to hear funding decisions next month.

### **Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)**

NRCS is making progress toward the goals for the Wetlands Reserve Program. A total of 38 applications have been received for a total of 31,061 acres. NRCS has enrolled 3,794 acres to date with initial funding allocations. Additional funding of \$14.4 million has resulted in a total budget of \$19M and we are poised to enroll another 16,181 acres. We would encourage anyone who may be interested to sign up and check the program benefits as they have changed since the last Farm Bill.

### **Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)**

Texas NRCS has funded 129 contracts on 122,894 acres obligating \$3,745,999, another banner year for us with this program. The special initiatives identified for the Lesser Prairie Chicken, Long Leaf Pine, and Migratory Fowl habitat improvement have been major reasons for this success. We continue to have a large backlog of regular WHIP applications that will be addressed should additional funding be received.

# Watershed Program

## American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) >>>

- Construction is underway on 19 projects, but progress is delayed because of wet weather.
- All 19 projects were accelerated to finish by September 30, 2010, but wet weather has caused performance time on 7 dams to be extended into fiscal year 2011.
- Two projects (Little Elm 19 repair and Plum 5 rehab) have been cancelled because sponsors could not obtain the land rights within the required time frame.
- Contracting for construction of Calaveras 6 rehab should begin in late June.



Completed embankment repair of Trinity-Pilot Grove Site 28.

### Two projects have been completed:

- Trinity-Pilot Grove Site 28 repair (first ARRA project in Texas to be completed);
- Trinity-Little Elm and Laterals Site 16 repair



Roller compacted concrete spillway on East Fork above Lavon Site 1A rehab.

## Watershed Rehabilitation Program >>>

- Roller compacted concrete spillway on East Fork Above Lavon Site 1A rehab. Mountain Creek 10 (Ellis County) rehab plan is complete and submitted for review
- Planning underway on East Fork above Lavon 2A (Collin County) and Plum Creek 1 and 6 (Hays County)
- Planning for Olmitos-Garcias 7 (Starr County) will begin around September
- Construction has been completed on rehab of East Fork Above Lavon Site 1A;

- Contract has been awarded for construction of recreations facilities (Phase II) at Attoyac Bayou Site 23A (Nacogdoches County)
- Construction of boat ramp and parking area is underway at Elm Fork Site 19MP (Muenster Lake; Cooke County)
- Work has begun on the 404 permit application for construction of Elm Creek (1250) Site 1A Rev. in Taylor County

## <<< Watershed Operations Program



## Watershed Program, cont'd



From this aerial view, Richland Creek dam site No. 14 shows the flood-retarding structure (FRS) functioning as designed while retaining rainfall runoff from the heavy storms in June that could have caused damage to surrounding communities and infrastructure downstream. This FRS is located in Navarro County, which was the hardest hit county within the Richland Creek watershed, receiving 10-18 inches of rainfall in approximately seven hours.

### Flood Retarding Structures Doing Their Job

– News coverage of the heavy rainfall in June to Navarro, Limestone, Hill, Henderson, Kaufman and Van Zandt counties was sent to the media for distribution and noted the success of the flood-retarding structures (FRS) preventing floodwaters from damaging communities, infrastructure and possible loss of life downstream of the FRSs in those counties.

**Heavy Rainfall** - The Southeast corner of Van Zandt County received from 10-15 inches of rain June 10, 2010. The Kaufman-Van Zandt-Rockwall SWCD has 10 watershed structures in the area that received the high rainfall. All 10 structures in this area had flow through the emergency spillway and 3 of them overtopped the dam at some location. The NRCS is working with the District to obtain EWP exigency funds to repair one of the structures that water overtopped the dam and created a large hole in the back slope of the dam.

## New Hires & Vacancies

### NRCS Currently has 38 Vacancies:

- 2 Agricultural Engineers
- 1 Assistant State Conservation Engineer (Job Opportunity Announcement (JOA) closed – Selection Pending)
- 2 Civil Engineers
- 1 Clerk (JOA Posted to USAJOBS)
- 2 District Conservationists – (JOA Posted to USAJOBS)
- 2 Engineering Technicians (Civil)
- 1 Forester
- 3 Rangeland Management Specialists (GLCI)
- 1 RC&D Coordinator
- 10 Soil Conservation Technicians
- 13 Soil Scientists

### NRCS has made the following 23 selections, 22 of them from the Career Intern Program, resulting in accessions since our May 2010 report:

- 1 Agricultural Engineer
- 8 Rangeland Management Specialists
- 1 Secretary
- 8 Soil Conservationists
- 4 Soil Conservation Technicians
- 1 Soil Scientists

Civil Engineer Mark Northcut has joined the state office staff. He will provide field assistance on general EQIP and CTA-general type projects.

Shane Harrington is the new Texas Forest Service liaison to NRCS and has an office in the Temple State Office.



## Soil Survey Accomplishments

- Conducted 7 additional soil survey details to complete the “once-over” soil survey for Texas. 25 Soil Scientists participated in the details.
  - 2 details to Presidio County
  - 2 details to McMullin County
  - 2 range details to Guadalupe Mountains National Park (GUMO)
  - 1 detail to Big Bend National Park
- Assisted over 244 organizations, groups, and other land users, providing technical support and solving natural resource issues and concerns.
- Moved the Graham MLRA Soil Survey Office to Stephenville, Texas.



**Texas Land Stewardship Award Video and Presentation**— On May 3, Matador Cattle Company, Bob Kilmer, manager and Molly Burleson Ranch, LTD, Marisue Powell - owner/operator from Motley County were both recognized for the land stewardship awards for 2010. The landowners requested that NRCS representative James Gillespie be present during the videoing to help discuss the land management practices that have been implemented on the their land.

The **Texas State Aquarium** in Corpus Christi featured the **Restoring America's Wetlands display** and had an information table about wetlands, conservation planning and educational materials for students and teachers during May.

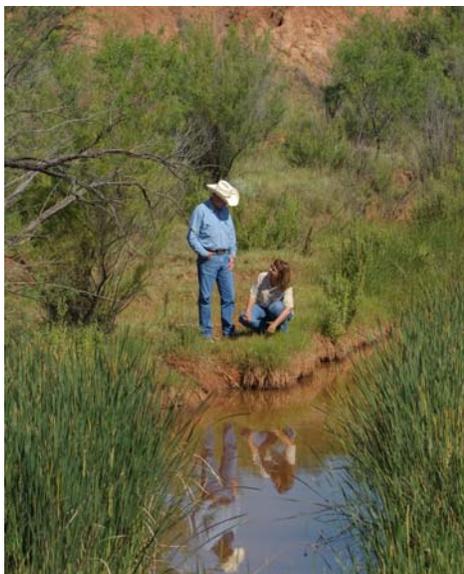
**“Benefits of a Conservation Plan”** article in “The Cattleman Magazine” – Published in the May 2010 issue of the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers magazine, the article discusses the value of a land conservation plan, steps in its development, and how it should be used. The article will also include an interview and photos with rancher who has worked with NRCS to install several conservation practices and is working with us to accomplish his land management goals through conservation planning.

**Riparian Workshops for landowners** – NRCS partnered with the Nueces River Authority and others on May 3-5 to teach landowners how management of riparian areas are important to maintain health of watersheds, which can reduce runoff and improve water quality and quan-

tity in the streams, rivers and oceans they feed.

**Landowners Workshops and Field Days** - The Alamo Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D), USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Texas Coalition Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI) and the Texas AgriLife Extension Service partnered to host three workshops in April and May. More than 150 livestock and wildlife producers, land managers and others learned about managing and optimizing their grazing lands.

**Texas Brigades Program** - NRCS will be providing staff and instructions at the TWA Texas Brigades Programs across Texas in June and July. Texas Brigades are “boot camps” on quail, deer, turkey, and fisheries management. Since they started in 1993, the Texas Brigades program has grown to include six summer wildlife leadership camps throughout the state. Each camp is 4 ½ days long and consists of 25-30 youth attendees (ages 13-17) in a curriculum ranging from the hunters role in conservation, to plants important for wildlife, to giving power point



**Field Days** –The Coleman field office conducted four field days for more than 360 attendees discussing NRCS programs and handing out information about the agency.

**Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) Workshop** – hosted by the NRCS in New Boston on May 6. The workshop provided private property landowners with information on the voluntary program.

**Farm Safety & Spray Equipment Workshop and Grazing Management Workshop** – Hosted by the Walker County SWCD/NRCS and AgriLife extension.

**Henderson County Farm & Ranch Tour** – sponsored by the Trinity-Neches SWCD and the NRCS.



**Forest Field Day** - The Harrison County SWCD and NRCS sponsored two field days with the Agrilife Extension and the Texas Forest Service to teach landowners about forest site prep methods and tree establishment.

## Information & Outreach, cont'd



**Congressional Tour in Coleman** - The NRCS joined approximately 50 local sponsors, partners, stakeholders, landowners and producers with U.S. Representative Mike Conaway from the 11th Congressional District of Texas for a ranch tour at JMR Ranch in Coleman, Texas. The meeting focused on agricultural issues within the district, and the tour showed environmental benefits using the financial and technical assistance provided by NRCS on the ranch. The ranch tour was hosted by the Association of Texas Soil and Water Conservation Districts (ATSWCD), Central Colorado Soil and Water Conservation District, along with Mike and Jan Rogers, owners of JMR Ranch.

**Vertisol Hydrology Workshop** - Soil scientists from the Bryan Soil Survey Office recently participated in a Vertisol Hydrology workshop hosted by Texas A&M University and the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) on the Texas A&M University campus in College Station. The main purpose of the workshop was to promote technology transfer between researchers involved in the Gulf Coast and Blackland Prairie Vertisols and researchers studying Vertisols in playa lakes on the Southern High Plains in Texas.

**Agricultural Communicators in the High Plains Meeting** - Lubbock on May 10. Meetings scheduled two times each year, the purpose is to acquaint those trying to tell agriculture's story - whether that is from a commodity organization, government or other stand-

point. These meetings allow us to "put a face with a name" and get to know each other, what we have to offer and how we can help each other.

**Phosphorus Reduction Systems Tour in Liberal, Kansas** - Representatives from Texas Cattle Feeders (TCFA) and NRCS (Greg Sokora, Kelly Attebury, Brandt Underwood, Willie Durham and Catherine Nash), met with the Kansas Livestock Association and Kansas State University representatives to tour and discuss a feedyard wastewater phosphorus removal project in place at Supreme Cattle Feeders near Liberal on May 13. The practice has been approved by the NRCS through Kansas for the payment schedule under EQIP. NRCS in Texas is evaluating the phosphorus production system for use in animal feeding operations.



**Beef Field Day** - Approximately 235 producers attended the annual Llano Beef Field Day held in Llano, Texas.

**Conservation Easement Workshop** - A multicounty conservation easement workshop targeting private landowners was held in Hempstead. More than 60 individuals from surrounding counties such as Lee, Walker, Austin, Harris, Montgomery and Fort Bend, attended.

**Knox City PMC Open House** - NRCS hosted an open house for the public at 9 a.m. on June 8, 2010, at the James E. "Bud" Smith Plant Materials Center in Knox City, Texas, to showcase the latest conservation plant releases and plant technology, provide conservation training for personnel and celebrate NRCS's 75th anniversary. The event, which had front page coverage in the Knox City News, was attended by more than 150 people each day.



*Wagons were used to show participants the facility and various plant species grown at the PMC. The tour encompassed the new plant materials center facilities and laboratory, as well as a field tour where all presentations were delivered by at field stations on the site.*



*Mike Petersen, left, retired NRCS soil scientist, gave a demonstration on how various conservation tillage implements work. NRCS Texas State Conservationist Don Gohmert, center, and Andy Spencer, right, NRCS zone agronomist in Weatherford, Texas, look on.*

NRCS held a **Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) signing ceremony** at the Dahlstrom Ranch in Buda. Through the FRPP, NRCS provided \$4.5 million of the \$9 million to purchase a conservation easement on the historic and environmentally-sensitive ranch. The project is a collaboration between NRCS, Hays County,

the City of Austin, and the Hill Country Conservancy (HCC).

*(L to R) Jack Dahlstrom Jr, Austin Mayor Lee Leffingwell, Hays County Commissioner Pct. 2 Jeff Barton, Gay Dahlstrom, David Braun with Braun & Associates, Hays County Commissioner Pct. 4 Karen Ford, Frank Davis of Hill Country Conservancy, and Melissa Blair, USDA-NRCS.*



### ICA Convention

**Independent Cattlemen's Association of Texas convention and trade show** - held in College Station. June 9-11. NRCS had a booth which featured Web Soil Survey demonstrations at the trade show.



*Independent Cattlemen's Association president Rosalee Coleman presents Don Gohmert, NRCS state conservationist, with a resolution recognizing the agency's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.*

**Pond Management Workshop** - Ellis Co. NRCS personnel assisted the Ellis-Prairie Soil and Water Conservation District in hosting a fish fry for 24 landowners and discussing farm pond management.

**Women on the Land Conference** - NRCS biologist Garry Stephens gave a presentation and provided material on conservation planning and wildlife management for 35 attendees at Texas Wildlife Association's Women of the Land Conference in Carrizo Springs on May 14-16.

**House Agriculture Committee Farm Bill Public Hearing – In Lubbock on May 17 at the** Texas Tech Museum at Texas Tech University to review U.S. agriculture policy in advance of the 2012 Farm Bill. Testimony was presented by regional and state producers representing specific commodity organizations.

**Luling Foundation Annual Field Day** – On May 20, 140 attendees visited the NRCS booth with Web Soil Survey demonstrations.

**Hayland and Improved Pasture Field Day** – the NRCS, Rio Bravo RC&D, Southmost SWCD, AgriLife Extension, and TSSWCB sponsored the workshop attended by 95 people.

**Ag Awareness Day** - Limestone Co. NRCS personnel participated in an AgriLife Ag Awareness Day on May 24<sup>th</sup> for 230 fourth and fifth graders from around the county. A "living soil" demonstration was given by Andrea Moore, NRCS soil conservationist for Limestone Co. for the students.

**Easement Workshop** – co-sponsored by the Washington SWCD in Hempstead. Attended by approximately 50 landowners from Washington and surrounding counties.

**Matagorda County Cattlemen's Association** - Matagorda County hosted a seven county cattleman regional meeting on June 18 in Bay City, Texas. NRCS had a booth and provided information to 350 attendees.

**Field Tour** - Texas State Representative Jim Dunnam (District 57) was guest speaker at the Eastside Crop Tour in Reisel, Texas, on June 28<sup>th</sup> and the Waco field office participated in discussing nutrient management, alternative crops, and herbicide laws and regulations.

## Information & Outreach, cont'd



### People's Garden in Giddings

Grant Teplicek, District Conservationist in Giddings, worked with the Giddings Economic Development Board to plant native grasses around the Train Depot in Giddings. Teplicek will be able to use this People's Garden to help producers identify the native grasses they have on their places as well as show them how each one will benefit wildlife. Alton Weiser, caretaker at the Train Depot, assists Teplicek with the planting.



### Nuffield Group Tour

Australian and New Zealand agriculture scholars visited the U.S. in Texas June 28-July 4 to learn about the various agricultural industries and farming operations in High Plains and South Plains regions. Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) in the area supported the Nuffield Scholars Farming Tour and partnered with the NRCS to help host and sponsor the activities throughout the tour from June 28 – July 3. Directors from the Tierra Blanca, Running Water, Parmer County, Lubbock County, Terry County, Hockley County and Hale County SWCDs were present during tour stops in their respective counties to meet and greet the scholars and share experiences in the farming and ranching industry. State SWCD Board members Aubrey Russell, Bill Gray and State SWCD Association President Scott Buckles attended the opening reception of the tour at the American Quarter Horse Association museum.

### Landowners Workshop—

Private landowners in the state's unique coastal prairie region gathered recently at a multicounty workshop to learn about opportunities available for rural land preservation. More than 60 individuals from surrounding counties such as Lee, Walker, Austin, Harris, Montgomery and Fort Bend, attended the workshop which focused on conservation easements.



Muleshoe, Texas organic farmer Jimmy Wedel visits with Australian farmer and Nuffield Scholar Alan Redfern about organic crop production and irrigation efficiency methods.



The Nuffield Scholars at Harry DeWitt's High Plains Dairy barn that proudly proclaims "Farmers Feed the World."

## Information & Outreach, cont'd

### Meetings & Banquets

**May 4-Area II Awards Banquet** held in Wall, Texas for SWCD honored conservation producers, students and residents.

**May 11, 2010 Soil and Water Conservation District Area 1 Awards Program** – Plainview at Wayland Baptist College McClung Center.

**Lubbock Chamber Ag Committee Meeting** - NRCS was asked to provide input in the development of an extensive agricultural website for the High Plains and South Plains regions.

**NRCS State Technical Advisory Committee Meeting** - NRCS assistant state conservationists met on May 12 in Austin with field representatives from the TSSWCB to discuss management operations.

**Lesser Prairie-Chicken (LPC) Advisory Committee Meeting – In Hereford on May 18.** The meeting was set up to provide updated information on current activities related to the LPC. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service presented information on wind turbine guidelines. Manuel DeLeon



*A variety of agency officials, SWCD directors, Hill Country residents and agriculture producers gathered for the Hill Country SWCD Association meeting in Llano.*

represented NRCS and presented information on available programs used to assist in LPC habitat management.

**May 18-Hill Country Association of SWCD's spring tour and meeting** held in Llano, Texas.

**June 15-17** - Twenty-two employees of the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board and local SWCD's were trained by the NRCS State Resources staff by completing the **Texas Conservation Planning Course**, which resulted in them receiving their Level I Conservation Planning Certification. Eight employees of the Texas Forest Service also successfully completed the class.

**June 15-18-Texas SWCS 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting** held at the MCM Elegante Suites in Abilene, Texas. An NRCS booth was set up and staffed by Zone 2 employees.

**June 17, 2010—GLCI meeting** in Abilene

**June 26 —Far West Texas Association Meeting** held at Kent, Texas at the Cowden Ranch.

*Members of the Texas SWCS get ready to kick off this year's annual meeting held in Abilene, Texas.*



### Teacher and Youth Education, Workshops & Field Days

**Youth Field Day** – hosted by Upper Pecos SWCD for over 300 area students on May 5.

**Johnson City Farm Safety Day** - Hill Country RC&D sponsored the event for Johnson City for 5<sup>th</sup> graders on May 6.

**Outdoor Classroom – May 6 in Stinnett.** The Hutchinson County SWCD organizes and sponsors an outdoor classroom every year with help from NRCS employees and local businesses in the community. The event is planned for 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in the local public schools and surrounding counties.

# Information & Outreach, cont'd

## Teacher and Youth Education, Workshops & Field Days, cont'd

**Ag Day** - Ellis Co. NRCS personnel participated in the Waxahachie Ag day for more than 300 fourth graders delivering a presentation called "Earth's Apple: A Demonstration of Erosion" and giving out information about NRCS programs to landowners and producers. The event was sponsored by the Texas Farm Bureau.

**Annual City of Austin Water Expo** – presentations by NRCS staff in the Austin Field Office at the Water Expo on May 11-12, 2010. There were approx. 1,100 students from area schools that stopped by booth and rainfall simulator to demonstrate soil erosion.

**Hill Country Farm Safety Day** – Held in Mason, and attended by 165+ Mason and Junction 5th grade students on May 12.

**Ranch Field Day** - NRCS provided presentations during the 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Schleicher County ISD field day at the X Bar Ranch on May 20.

**Summer Environmental Teacher's Workshop** hosted by the Lower-Sabine Neches SWCD in Orange.

**AG Day** for 700 4<sup>th</sup> Grade students in Washington County

**Ag in The Classroom** – presentations from the Polk-San Jacinto SWCD and the local NRCS office two Ag in the class room programs.

**Teacher's Workshop** - The Pedernales SWCD held their annual teacher's workshop June 15-17. NRCS is one of the sponsors for the three day

workshop attended by educators state-wide. The workshop included supplemental education in the outdoor learning experience that offers 16 hours of professional CEU's.

### Learning Across New Dimensions in



*Brannon Sledge (left w/green NRCS cap), Agricultural Engineer with the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Temple TX, oversees GPS activity for students at the 5th Annual Agricultural Careers Youth Workshop in Prairie View.*



*Anita Brogden, district assistant with the Polk-San Jacinto Soil & Water Conservation District, teaches fourth grade students about soil types.*

**Science (L.A.N.D.S.)** - NRCS partnered with Texas Wildlife Association (TWA) over the last three months has educated more than 1,000 students at the L.A.N.D.S. field investigation days in various locations across Texas.

NRCS participated in the **5th Annual Agricultural Careers Youth Workshop** hosted by Prairie View A&M University's College of Agriculture and Human Sciences, on Saturday May 22, 2010. The sole purpose of the youth workshop was to re-emphasize to the students, the importance of continuing with their education and to enlighten them on an industry that has provided array of rewarding career opportunities for many.

## Information & Outreach, cont'd

### Career Days & Fairs

**Bronte ISD Career Fair** - NRCS had a booth for 150 Bronte students on May 5.

**Van Horn Career Day** - held on May 7 for high school students in the area. NRCS had a booth and career information for the 300+ students that were in attendance.

**Career Day** - The Odessa and Midland NRCS personnel hosted the 9<sup>th</sup> grade career field day for over 130 students on May 14.

**Career Day** for 300 Brenham 1<sup>st</sup> graders.



*Gary Fuentes, NRCS district conservationist in Van Horn, informs students about the career opportunities available through the agency at the annual Van Horn Career Day.*

## Awards & Recognition

**Mark Moseley**, rangeland management specialist and state GLCI coordinator for the NRCS, received the agency's highest honor in his profession – the National NRCS Rangeland Management Specialist of the Year. He was presented the award at the National Conference on Grazing Lands in Sparks Nevada.

The National Organization of Professional Hispanic NRCS Employees (NOPHNCSE) recognized outstanding members and farmers during their “Ray T Margo Luncheon” at the March meeting of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) 2010 Joint Professional Employee Organizations and Special Emphasis Program Managers Training Conference in Kansas City, Missouri. **Erasmio Montemayor** received national recognition for his work as Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager for Texas. **Bertha Venegas**, coordinator for the Alamo Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Area, was recognized with the Visionary Award. **Ronnie Skala**, Hydraulic Engineer on the Water Resources staff at the Temple NRCS State Office received the Award of Excellence in Natural Resources Conservation. **Humberto Hernandez**, retired NRCS employee from Burleson, received the Amigo Award.

For the second consecutive year, the Young County 4-H Range Evaluation Team won a national title as the 2010 Reserve Champion at the 59th Annual National Range Judging Competition held on May 6th in Oklahoma City. **John Paalik**, NRCS district conservationist in Young County, was the coach for the 4-H range evaluation team.



*Jess Lam, far left, president of the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts, presents the Young County 4-H Range Judging Team with the 2010 Reserve Champion award at the 59th Annual National Range Judging Competition in Oklahoma City on May 6, 2010. The team members from left to right are Erin Reid, Katharyn Camp, Derek Bagley, Jacob Renfro, and John Paalik, coach of the Young County 4-H Range Judging Team.*



## Upcoming Events

**July-Aug, 2010 - Natural Resource Inventory (NRI)** - In July, inventories in zone 1 will be taken in Dallam and Moore counties and in August, they will evaluate Oldham, Sherman, Hartley and Motley counties. The goal is to finish field data collection by the end of August.

**July 19-23, 2010 - NFSAM Wetland ID Training.** Zone 1 Soil Scientist Kelly Attebury will be attending the new NEDS course to learn about the recent changes to the Wetlands Conservation provisions authorized by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008. The goal of the training is to better understand NFSAM policy requirements regarding wetland determinations and delineations.

**July 23 & 24th - Texas Sheep and Goat Raisers Annual Convention** to be held at Inn of Hills Resort in Kerrville, Texas.

**July 24 - Texas Coastal Expo**, Texas State Aquarium in Corpus Christi, De-Go-La RC&D/ NRCS booth.

**August 5 - State Technical Advisory Committee** meeting in Austin, Texas.

**Aug. 10, 2010 - Texas Alliance for Water Conservation (TAWC) Field Day-** Floyd County Unity Center, Muncy, TX. NRCS is a partner in the TAWC, a project that is moving into its second phase. As part of TAWC, the Pioneers in Agriculture series is designed to connect today's producers with the latest research information through a shared experience that draws on the knowledge-building traditions of field days. Todd Staples will be the Keynote Speaker following a field tour of the TAWC site. NRCS will be providing a display at the luncheon.

**August 13-15- Texas Hunting and Outdoor Classic Expo**, Freeman Coliseum Ground, San Antonio, NRCS booth. For more information, visit <http://huntersclassic.com/>

**August 16-18 - National Association of Conservation Districts South Central Regional Meeting**, Lubbock, Texas

**August 17- West Texas Association** meeting in Stanton, Texas.

**September 24 - Hazardous Waste Cleanup**, Wilson County in Poth, TX, Alamo RC&D, [www.alamorc.org](http://www.alamorc.org)

**October 7-9 - Coastal Bend Farm and Ranch Show**, Robstown

**October 14-16, San Antonio International Farm and Ranch Show.** For more information visit [www.farmandranchexpo.com/](http://www.farmandranchexpo.com/)

**October 25-27, Annual Soil and Water Conservation District Directors Meeting**, Lubbock

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