

## SOIL AND PLANT SCIENCE DIVISION

# Technical Soil Services

## South Central Region



### **Kerrville, Texas, Major Land Resource Area (MLRA) Soil Survey Office (SSO)**

### **SPSD Conducts Tierra Linda Ranch Field Site Visit to Promote Soil Health**

#### **Purpose**

The Kerrville MLRA SSO was contacted by a Tierra Linda Ranch homeowner who worked with the SSO staff before to discuss with the Homeowners Association (HOA) board and committee members how land management decisions affect soil properties and soil health.

#### **Background**

The Tierra Linda Ranch, a 3000-acre working ranch, is a unique subdivision nestled in the Texas Hill Country. The ranch is owned by homeowners who each have about 5 to 15 acres and are able to build on and graze cattle on 20 percent of their property. The other 80 percent of their property is open to grazing by the cattle owned by the HOA. The HOA consists of a board and committees that focus on cattle grazing and wildlife management.

Travis Waiser, MLRA SSO Leader, met with eleven HOA board and grazing and wildlife committee members to discuss current soil properties and how they can be improved. He talked about how the Tierra Linda Ranch area received less than 25 percent of its yearly rainfall in 2022 and how the drought is continuing into 2023.

The soil information and climate changes Waiser presented made homeowners realize the degradation of plants from the drought conditions and over population of cattle and wildlife, which consists of native white-tail deer and turkey along with exotics of Axis, Blackbuck antelope, and Mouflon sheep. It also made homeowners concerned about the quality of rangeland and wanting to learn more about the ecosystem and how their decisions affect the soils, plants, and animals.



## Key Outcomes

The HOA board and committee members learned how management decisions can change soil properties and affect soil health. Waiser provided information about soil texture and structure and showed those in attendance how the soils were currently functioning by using a simple infiltration test. He concluded by discussing with the homeowners that with proper management decisions the soils could get back to a better and higher functioning ability thereby improving their soil health.



*The main entrance to Tierra Linda Ranch subdivision (left) and one of the lakes showing cattle and topography of the landscape (right).*



*Cattle grazing near homes with young trees protected from cattle and wildlife (left) and a representation of rangeland with a home and workshop in the background (right).*