



**Texas Partners for Conservation with the Upshur** – Gregg Soil & Water Conservation District #417.

The program goals are to reach out to local producers that fit the category of Historically Underserved Producers. The priorities are for those groups to have access to direct technical assistance and increased conservation planning opportunities and financial assistance. Other, priority consist of conservation mentoring and direct assistance to historically underserved communities.

The goal of the Upshur – Gregg SWCD is to determine the total number of designated producers in the Upshur and Gregg County area and set a goal of actively reaching out to visit and contact these producers. The purpose of contacting these producers is to insure they have knowledge of programs offered by NRCS that will benefit their existing and planned conservation practices.

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**Harvest for the Hungry Texas:**

Harvest for the Hungry Texas (H4H) and partners will provide outreach, education, and technical assistance to historically underserved producers in rural South Texas. H4H and partners including NRCS representatives will provide knowledge and experience to producers on topics that focus on sustainable best practices in addressing local natural resource issues through conservation planning, financial assistance, and implementation. This program also includes farm demonstrations and field days, conservation practice technologies, and increased training for NRCS employees.

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**Texas A&M University:**

Through this project, Texas A&M University and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension will provide a training program to NRCS staff within its 5 regions. This training seeks to improve NRCS staff's understanding of ex-urban beginner land stewards while also offering a practical tool for developing collaboration between the two actors. Additionally, through a community building event, the program will provide an opportunity for these ex-urban beginner land stewards to become acquainted with multiple agencies through their communities that can help them with their land management and conservation needs.

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**The Middle Concho SWCD:**

The Middle Concho SWCD will establish the Conservation Expansion Initiative (CEI) to aid the NRCS office with the creation or updating of conservation plans on 90,000 acres of land owned

by the University of Texas (UT) & leased/operated by independent, historically underserved agriculture (HUA) producers. These same producers will be provided direct, one-on-one, technical assistance on what conservation practices would work best for the most success in their respective operations. The Middle Concho SWCD will host field days that will provide educational opportunities to learn about climate smart agriculture practices, gain information on financial assistance available thru Farm Bill programs, ways to achieve better soil health in our area, and understand issues currently affecting the agriculture industry.

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### **GROW North Texas:**

GROW North Texas will use demonstration sites, field days, videos, and technical assistance to increase awareness and knowledge of NRCS conservation practices and their implementation for North Texas area small and urban farm operators to ensure they know how to leverage these programs. The project also provides educational opportunities for NRCS personnel to learn about small and urban farms, their needs, and opportunities.

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### **STAR:**

South Texas Advancement Resource (STAR) focus is on a six-county service area which includes Webb, Zapata, La Salle, Duval, Jim Hogg, and Jim Wells Counties. STAR's task is to reach the underserved communities in this primarily Hispanic region of South Texas to introduce them to NRCS and the programs that are available as landowners. STAR also attends community functions and host workshops in its service area to provide outreach and seek to educate the local landowners on NRCS and what is available to the producer. The majority of people in the audience are unfamiliar with the programs and services available from NRCS. Some of the services STAR offers is guide the local producers through FSA Farm Number registration. STAR also visits producers on site to discuss their property and applicable conservation practices that would benefit their land. Finally, STAR assist them with the NRCS EQIP application submission for their property.

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### **Audubon Texas:**

The state program of the National Audubon Society will work directly with private landowners and ranchers in Texas to sustainably manage grassland habitats important for the preservation of bird populations. Grassland bird species have experienced the largest population declines of any North American habitat and voluntary, incentive-based programs can help reverse grassland losses. Audubon Texas will directly engage with private landowners through the Audubon Conservation Ranching (ACR) program to create habitat management plans, implement monitoring protocols, and connect landowners to technical assistance, funding tools, and markets to increase conservation benefits for people, wildlife, and grassland ecosystems.