

Land Management

Tips

For

*Small Ranches
In Texas*



Texas Section - Society for Range Management

<http://texnat.tamu.edu/profsoc/tssrm>



Make

A Plan For Your Land

Not all land management ventures are successful:
Proper planning is what makes success attainable.

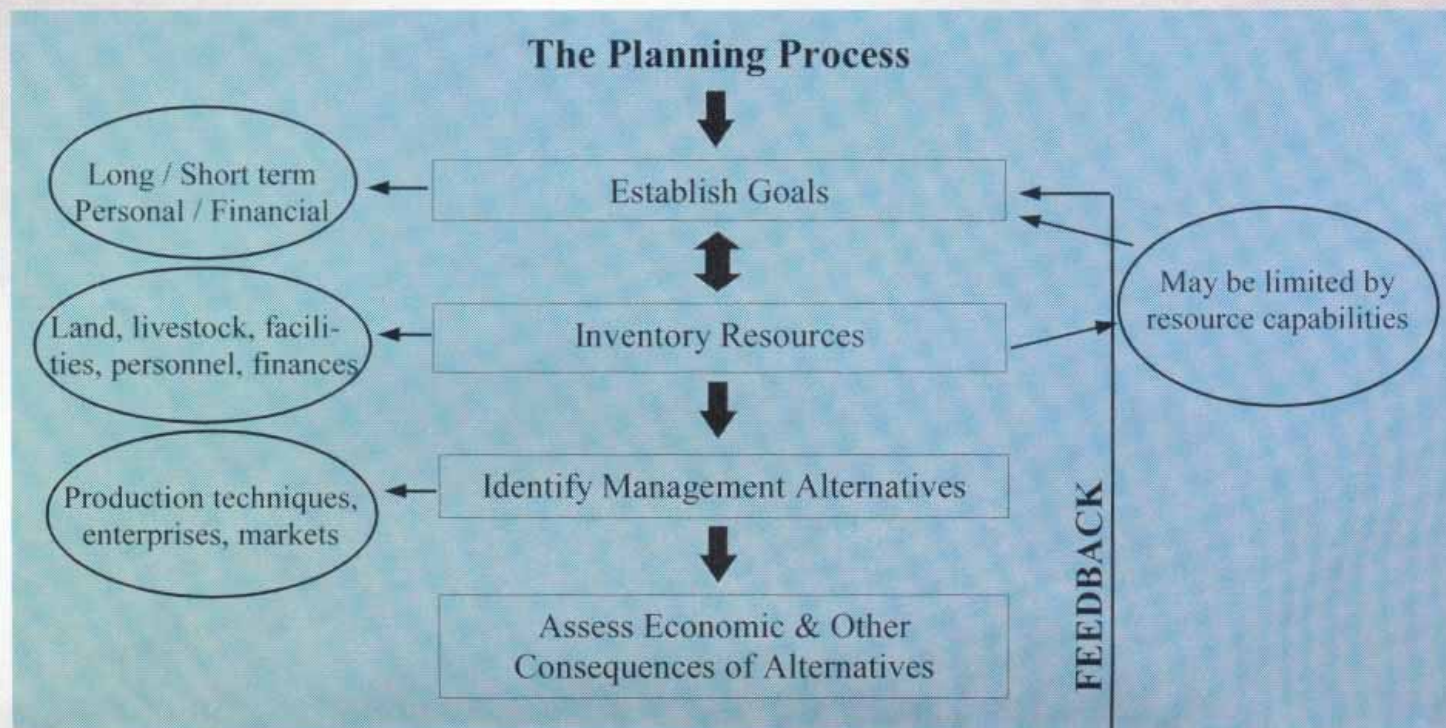
GOALS measure success: You have to know where you are going or you will never know when you have arrived!

Land ownership can be very rewarding, but planning must be the core of any operation. The reasons for owning land include:

- 1) Business
- 2) Occupation
- 3) Lifestyle / Recreation



Regardless of the reason, if you are a landowner, **YOU** are a **MANAGER**





Select Management Alternative

Implement Plan & Monitor Results

The secondary functions of a manager are:

Operating

- Organization
- Directing
communicating
objective setting

- Selecting (staffing)
- Motivating (incentives)
financial
psychological

Monitoring

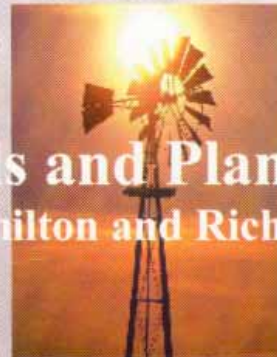
- Acquire and maintain information
- Analyze to measure performance and diagnose problems



Proper planning includes Risk Management Strategies

Strategies for arid and semi-arid environments:

- Maintain diverse plant populations.
- Maintain diverse animal populations-a cow/calf herd nucleus with stockers gives flexibility and goats may complement cattle forage removal.
- Integrate horizontally by having alternate sources of income.
- Integrate vertically by retaining ownership of livestock or market wildlife.
- Practice grazing management, which decreases need for destocking during droughts.
- Develop alternative feedstuff sources such as cotton gin trash, conventional feedstuffs sorghum residues, etc.



Goals and Planning
Wayne Hamilton and Richard Conner

What Are

Conservation Ethics

More than half the population of Texas lives in the urban centers of El Paso, Austin, San Antonio, Houston, Fort Worth, and Dallas. Yet, many Texans yearn to return to a more rural lifestyle. Almost every city and town in Texas is surrounded by a multitude of small tracts of land (5 to 100 acres) owned by individuals who work in the city but use the land as their principal or weekend residence. Col-

lectively, these small acreage landowners own hundreds of thousands of acres of forest land, pastureland and rangeland in Texas. Unfortunately, small acreage tracts can easily be abused if not managed properly. **Aldo Leopold**, a crusader for land ethics, stated "*We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us.*" Leopold points to three fundamental characteristics of nature, **integrity, stability, and beauty**, that must

be respected if the natural environment is to survive. A sense of 'I own it, I'll do what I want on it' may contribute to land abuse. Lack of knowledge of the basic principles of natural resource management is probably the major factor contributing to land abuse on small acreages.



Ethical Land Management

Overgrazing - The most prevalent abuse on small acreages is destruction of desirable, perennial natural vegetation through overgrazing by livestock. Properly grazed acreages

- are more stable and reduce erosion,
- produce diverse forage,
- provide nutritious forage for livestock and wildlife, and
- are more aesthetically pleasing.



Weed and Brush Management - The small acreage landowner may wish to control weeds and/or brush to improve the appearance of the property or to enhance the forage and habitat

available for wildlife or livestock. Herbicides, used safely, are effective for such purposes. Unfortunately, some landowners know little about proper herbicide use. The result is poor control of undesirable plants or damage to the native vegetation.

Endangered Species - More than 150 plant and animal species are listed as endangered or threatened in Texas. Landowners are advised to become aware of possible constraints on plant/animal control or management because of the possible presence of endangered species. Several agencies can provide assistance with this topic.



Ethical Animal Management

Landowners who maintain livestock have responsibility for ethical management of their animals. This involves:

Food and Water - Signs of hunger include animals reaching

animal welfare continues to increase, placing livestock production under close scrutiny. Because most small acreages are near urban areas, these landowners play a critical role in animal welfare.

through fences to graze, high, well-defined browse lines on trees and shrubs, and animals removing bark from trees. If sufficient standing forage is not available, the animals will require supplemental feed. Livestock owners should probably rely on commercially prepared feeds and supplements.

Health and Welfare - Public awareness and concern for

Facilities should be neat, clean, and safe for both livestock and humans. Neatness and cleanliness are imperative for human safety and show a concern for animal well-being. Fences, must be adequate to contain the kind of animal on the property. Proper shelter is also essential for the care of livestock. A source of clean, fresh water should be available to livestock at all times.

Ethical Wildlife Management



Aesthetic and recreational values, e.g., hunting, fishing, and bird watching, are often important motives for purchasing rural property. The opportunity to enjoy wildlife in natural surroundings is a means of relieving stress, as well as teaching children the

importance of nature and being a good steward.

Land owners should know

- the size of a parcel of land can limit wildlife production,
- native wild animals are not bound by private ownership, but are held in public trust and managed by the state, and
- the habitat should include **food, water, cover, and proper spatial arrangements** to attract wildlife.

Artificial feeders are often used to attract animals for viewing or hunting. If not managed properly they can lead to excessive wildlife populations, which become destructive of natural and ornamental plant life.

Domestic dogs and cats that are allowed to roam on small acreages may become serious predators of songbirds and quail. Free-ranging dogs often disturb nesting birds and young animals, such as deer



fawns, and cause problems with a variety of species, especially sheep and goats. Even though you're in the country, it's still best to keep pets confined to the yard.



Concern for the environment increases every year. Both rural and urban Texans care about proper use of our land and water. Since small acreage-landowners collectively control hundreds of thousands of acres in Texas, ethical management of these lands will

- *sustain the use of our natural resources,*
- *strengthen ties between urban and agricultural communities, and*
- *improve environmental quality for future generations.*

Conservation Ethics

C. Wayne Hanselka and Lynn Drawe

Tips

For Small-Acreage Ranches

	Y	N
Do you own 100 acres of land or less and want to obtain or maintain ad valorem tax exemption?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you want to use livestock to maintain your tax exemption?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you answered “yes” to either of these questions you should consider **Livestock Options** suited to small acreages. These enterprises have **readily accessible markets** and require

- Minimal facilities
- Minimal labor
- Minimal animal husbandry expertise

Do You Have Enough Forage For Your Livestock?

Forage is what your animals consume by grazing and is a livestock producer’s primary product. Forage production requires good land stewardship marked by leaving enough plant material ungrazed for

- **Plant survival**
- **Soil protection**
- **Efficient rainfall capture**

No livestock enterprise can be economically viable for long if grazing destroys the forage resource. Livestock and forage type need to match. Typical annual diets are

- **Cattle — 81% grass**
- **Sheep — 61% grass & 17% forbs**
- **Goats — 45% grass & 45% browse**

Livestock Options

Option # 1. Stocker Calves are either 1) weaned calves of suitable age and body condition for a grazing program or 2) heifers with brood cow potential, grazed from weaning to yearling age. Without enough forage to support at least eight to 10 stockers for at least four months, you should not choose this option. Advantages of stocker cattle include flexibility in that you do not have to own the cattle; you do not have to keep livestock year round; you can lease when grass is available; and selling grass is less risky than buying cattle.

Option # 2. Meat Goats are smaller sized and better suited to small-acreage operations than cattle. Potential breeds include 1) Boer, 2) Spanish, 3) dairy, and 4) pygmy.



Suggested Local Stocking Rate

Approximate number of animals per 100 acres (assumes all 100 acres are grazable)



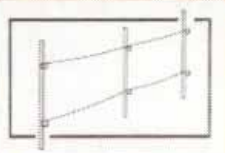
Option # 3. Hair Sheep produce meat, are generally smaller than wool sheep, and are more tolerant of internal parasites. Potential breeds include 1) Barbados, 2) Dorper, 3) St. Croix, and 4) Katahdin.

(acres/animal unit)	Stockers	Goats (85 lb)	Hair sheep
10	16	66	83
20	8	33	42
30	5	22	28

► Types of Fencing

ADVANTAGES

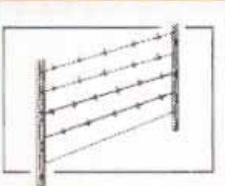
DISADVANTAGES



Electric

Portable. Least expensive and fastest to construct.

Not suitable for perimeter fences. Fence line vegetation management required.



Barbed Wire

Minimum 5 strands. Suitable for cattle. Minimal construction skills required.

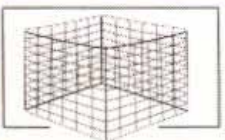
Unsuitable for goats or sheep. May be injurious to animals or people.



Net (woven) Wire

Minimum 39" tall. Suitable for cattle, goats, and sheep.

Can entrap horned goats or sheep.



Livestock Panels

Excellent choice for corrals and pens. Very sturdy. Lowest maintenance requirements.

Very expensive. Welding skills required for construction.

► Health Tips

For Help - Obtain publications from county extension offices on livestock production, management, health, and 4-H programs. **Consult a local veterinarian regarding health concerns endemic to your area.**

General - Healthy animals have smooth, shiny hair coats, bright eyes, alert ears and content attitude. Ribs, hips, and the spine should be covered and not protruding. Mid-day grazing activity, eating bark or soil and grazing through perimeter fences indicate a forage deficiency. Any unusual behavior or self-isolation warrants investigation. Become familiar with potentially toxic plants, both native and ornamental. A source of fresh, clean, cool water should be available in every pasture and pen.

Cattle - Inquire about appropriate vaccination programs, especially against the clostridial diseases (Blackleg). Internal and external parasite control may be warranted.

Goats and Sheep - Investigate potential predator problems (domestic dogs, coyotes, feral hogs, bobcats, raptors). Internal parasite management is essential. Develop prevention strategies for coccidiosis, enterotoxemia, and ketosis.

Livestock Production Systems

Richard V. Machen and Robert K. Lyons

Quiz

Are Your Grazing Animals Properly Managed?

- Do you have so little forage in your pastures that animals cannot get all they need?
- Are your animals eating mostly undesirable forages?
- Are your animals losing weight or are you having to supplement excessively?
- Do your animals have dull, coarse hair coats and are they weaker than they should be?

Y	N
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you answered "yes" to **any** of these questions, you need a grazing program that will balance the number of animals with the amount of forage being produced, provide more forage and healthier animals, and save you money in lower feed costs and vet bills as well as produce more productive animals.

Do You Have Enough Forage For Your Livestock?

Livestock are often grazed yearlong on range pastures. This results in lower pasture production and lower animal production.

Forage is what your animals consume by grazing. Feed is what you supply to them in the form of hay or supplement. Forage production is measured in pounds per acre or in animal unit months (AUMs). One AUM is equivalent to the amount of forage consumed by 1000 pounds of animal in one month. Animals consume about 2.5 to 3.5% of their body weight in air dry forage each day if it is available.

- Q. How much forage do animals need each month and each year?**
A. Average requirements are listed in the chart to the right, but may vary with season, age and size of animal, and stage of pregnancy and lactation.

Animal		Avg. Forage Required (lbs.)	
Class	Units	Monthly	Yearly
1 cow	1.00	800	9600
1 horse	1.25	1000	12,000
1 sheep	0.20	160	1920
1 goat	0.14	120	1440

Proper Grazing Management Produces More Grass

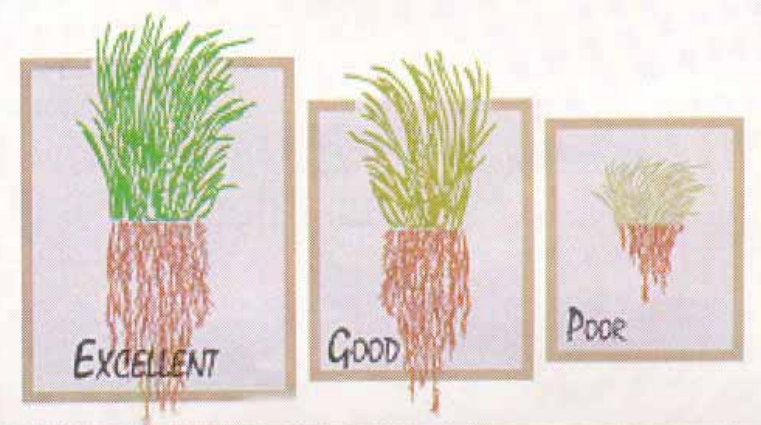


Continuous grazing promotes bare ground, poor quality grasses, weakened root systems of more desirable plants, and invasion of less desirable plants.



Pasture rotation at proper stocking rates is good grazing management and promotes more desirable plants, greater forage production, and less bare ground.

Grazing Affects Root Growth



Tip⁸ For a Successful Grazing Program

- ▶ **Eliminate continuous grazing.**
- ▶ **Grazing too close during the growing season is hard on plant health. Divide pastures into smaller units, put animals in one herd and move them to a new pasture whenever they have grazed 30-40% of the available forage in the pasture they are grazing.**
- ▶ **Let the plants recover before allowing the animals to graze it again.**
- ▶ **Provide a water source for each pasture.**

SAMPLE

Grazing Schedule

For a Three-Pasture,
One-Herd System

MONTHS

Pas- ture	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
1	Graze			Rest						Graze		
2	Rest			Graze			Rest					
3	Rest					Graze			Rest			

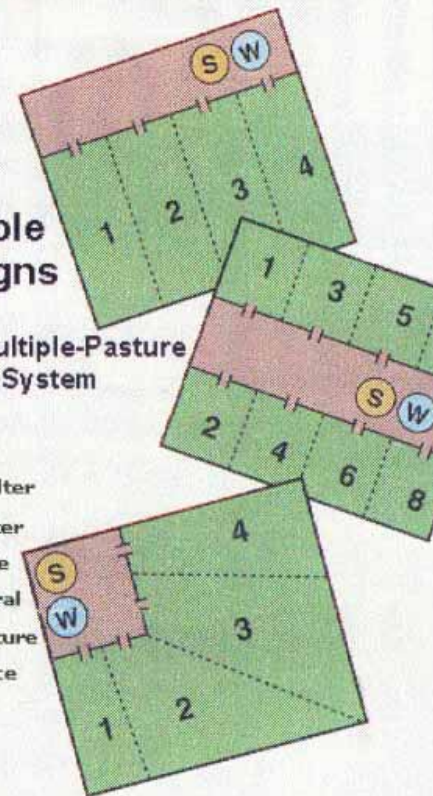
Notice how the root mass of these grasses decreases in rangeland that ranges from excellent to poor condition. Overgrazing occurs when more than 50% of the grass plant is removed all at once. This reduces root development and grass production.

STOCKWATER DEVELOPMENT

Sample Designs

For A Multiple-Pasture
Grazing System

- Shelter
- Water
- Gate
- Corral
- Pasture
- Fence



As you divide your acreage into several pastures, establish separate water sources for each pasture or a single water source that is accessible from several pastures. **Clean, fresh, water is essential for good animal health.**

Grazing Systems

Butch Taylor and Stan Reinke



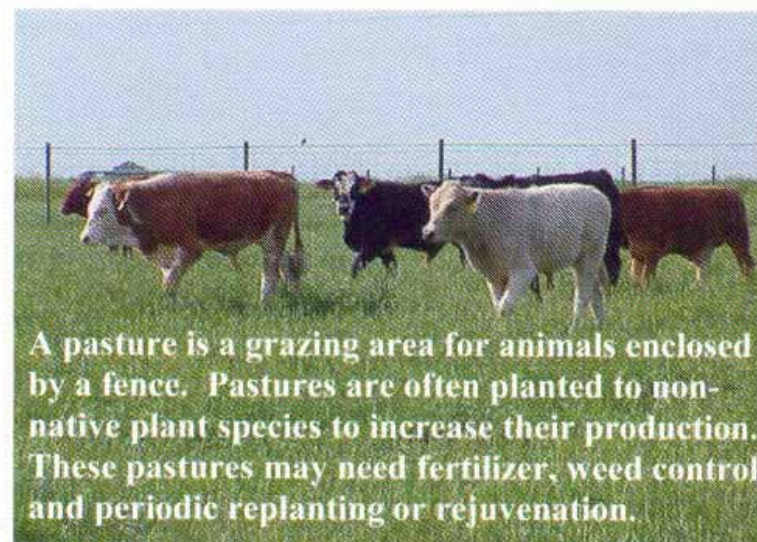
What

About Improved Pasture and Hay Production?



	Fertile Soils		Poor Soils	
	Feed (Hay)	Forage	Feed (Hay)	Forage
	Tons/Acre	AUMs/Acre	Tons/Acre	AUMs/Acre
Intensive management	5 - 7	1-2	3 - 5	0.5 - 1
Non-intensive management	3 - 5	0.5 - 1	< 3	< 0.5

These figures are averages and may vary depending on management. "AUM" stands for "animal unit month," which is one cow and calf for a period of one month.



A pasture is a grazing area for animals enclosed by a fence. Pastures are often planted to non-native plant species to increase their production. These pastures may need fertilizer, weed control, and periodic replanting or rejuvenation.

Tips

To Increase Your Pasture Production

- Fertilize according to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Texas Agricultural Extension Service (TAEX), and soil test recommendations. Believe the soil test! Over fertilizing is not better and can damage water quality. Split fertilizer applications.
- Mow pastures after grazing to stimulate equal growth of all plants.
- Consider planting a perennial or a strong reseeding annual clover or legume.
- Control weeds.
- Reseed. Contact your local NRCS or Extension office to determine the most productive seed mixture for your purpose and location.

Suggested Grasses To Consider For Planting

Perennial Warm-Season Native Grasses

Eastern Gamagrass	Switchgrass
Big Bluestem	Yellow Indiangrass
Little Bluestem	Sideoats Grama

Perennial Grasses for Saline (Salty) Soils

Hybrid Bermudagrass	Alkali Sacaton
Jose Tall Wheatgrass	

Perennial Warm-Season Introduced Grasses

Hybrid Bermudagrass	Bahiagrass
Yellow Bluestem	Lovegrass
Kleingrass	Buffelgrass

Perennial Cool-Season Introduced Grasses

Tall Fescue	Jose Tall Wheatgrass
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A warm-season perennial grass overseeded with an annual cool-season grass improves the availability of forage throughout the year, but it may not always increase

annual forage production because of the low production in the transitional months between the seasons.

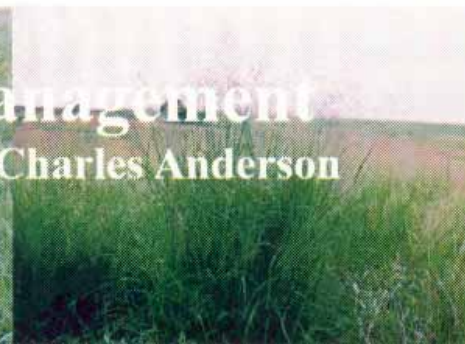
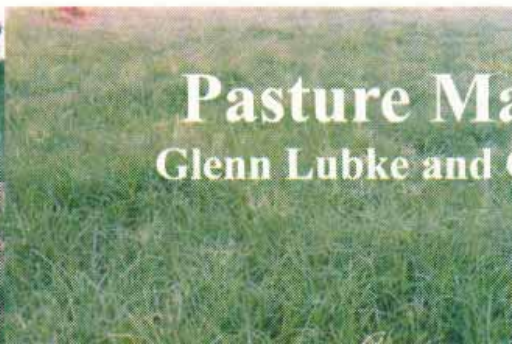
Consider Custom Farming As A Way To Improve Your Pasture

Many landowners find it too expensive to own their own farm equipment for preparing the soil, seeding, harvesting, or baling. Ask your neighbors if they know of any custom farmers or ranchers in the area who will follow your instructions for improving and maintaining annual pasture productivity.



Pasture Management

Glenn Lubke and Charles Anderson



Evaluating Your Property as Wildlife Habitat -

Viewing your property through the eyes of wildlife can be difficult. What makes land attractive to humans does not necessarily hold true for the mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and insects that would find a home or habitat there.



Step One. Texas is so large and diverse, it could easily be considered several states in one. That's why it's important to locate your property on a map like the one on the left. Not your average highway map, but a map of the ecological regions of the state. Knowing the region in which your property is located will help you determine the kinds of plants and animals you are likely to encounter and the potential to enhance their habitat.

Step Two. Does your property contain

- diverse native plants, including fruit or nut-bearing trees or shrubs, grasses, and wildflowers?
- variable heights of plant cover from ground level to tree canopy with shrub layers in between?
- permanent water sources?



Plants are the foundation upon which all wildlife depend. For example, many birds rely on the fresh growth of native plants in the spring to attract insects, which in turn become food for the birds. White-tailed deer are predominantly weed-eaters, but readily browse woody plants and vines.

With more than **2000** species of wildlife in Texas, it's important to know what kinds of wildlife you want to attract. Learning about the habitat requirements of target species will guide you in creating a home for them.

Step Three. Prepare a **plan** to create wildlife habitat on your property using the appropriate practices and references to meet your

Tools of Management

Aldo Leopold, the father of wildlife management stated that *"The central thesis of game management is this: Game can be restored by the **creative use** of the same tools which have heretofore destroyed it — axe, plow, cow, fire, and gun."*

Axe - Areas covered with dense, invasive brush can be cleared selectively, or "sculpted" to leave optimum density, diversity, and interspersed brush plants. Shrubs provide browse for deer, fruits and seeds for mammals and birds, and protection from predators and the elements.



Plow - Leave vegetation in fencerows and along edges of cultivated fields for wildlife food and cover. Consider leaving uncut one or two swath-widths of hay on the perimeter of hayfields to produce seed for doves, quail, and other birds. Food plots can be created by simply disking to encourage the growth of native forbs, or more thoroughly preparing a seedbed, and planting.



Cow - Grazing capacity is the maximum number of animals which can be grazed each year on your land without causing a downward trend in forage production, plant diversity, forage quality, or soil stability. Rotational grazing systems with the proper number(s) of livestock for your property can benefit wildlife more than year-round grazing. Livestock and wildlife co-exist successfully when numbers of each are balanced with the land's productive potential.



Fire - Prescribed burning, which mimics a periodic, naturally occurring rangeland phenomenon can reduce brush density and increase browse and forb availability. Fire stimulates browse and forbs regrowth, which is more palatable and higher in nutritional quality than older woody stems.



Gun - Harvest management is an important tool in maintaining the number of deer at or below your land's carrying capacity. An

goals. Learn to identify grasslands, woodlands, shrublands, wetlands, or a mixture of all four. Each habitat type could occur in nearly every county in Texas, but the plant composition will be very different based on the different climate and the various soils of a particular ecological region.



annual census will help you monitor trends in the population and set harvest goals. Forming a Wildlife Management Association with your neighbors can help you address the needs of wildlife species that require large home ranges, such as deer.



Wildlife Habitat = Food + Water + Shelter + Space

Wildlife habitat is often diminished in value or lost when land is subdivided. Landowners can address this issue by maintaining existing native plants or establishing a diversity of them if they are lacking. Diverse vegetation provides for a diversity of wildlife. Study the needs of wildlife species native to your area and seek to provide those needs on your land.

Food needs vary by wildlife species, from seeds and fruits required by some birds, to forbs (“weeds”) and shrubs preferred by deer.

Water supplied by a pond, creek, or pipeline system with accessible watering points will increase the usefulness of your land to wildlife.

Shelter is needed to provide protection from predators and from temperature extremes. It also provides travel corridors and nesting cover.

Space is needed for wildlife to maintain their preferred distance from members of their own species and other species, and to provide adequately for the growth of required plants and/or prey.

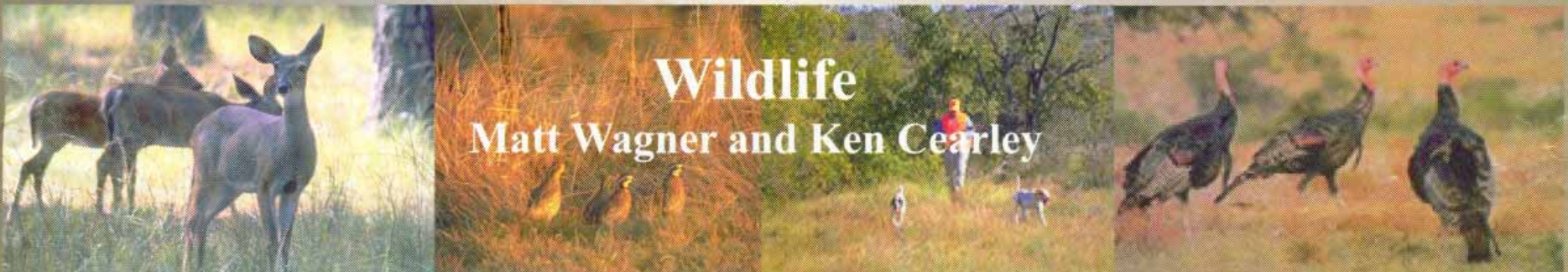
Special Considerations

Rare or Endangered Species - Texas contains nearly 40 federally listed endangered species of wildlife with an additional 90 or so listed as state-threatened.



These unique creatures represent diminishing natural assets of Texas’ great wealth of diversity. Incentive programs for restoring rare species and their habitats are available.

Wildlife Management Associations and Co-ops - The fragmentation of land due to the breakup of large ranches and farms is one of the greatest threats to wildlife in Texas today. Wildlife Management Associations and Co-ops are formed by adjacent and nearby landowners with common goals for the improvement of wildlife habitats and associated wildlife populations.



Wildlife
Matt Wagner and Ken Cearley

Quiz

Give Your Land A Health Exam

How much of these do you have on your property?

Healthy ground cover (forest, shrubs, grass, or cropland)

Weeds or plants that hold the soil poorly (mustardweed, tumbleweed, thistle)

Bare ground

	1	2	3
Healthy ground cover (forest, shrubs, grass, or cropland)	A lot	Some	A little
Weeds or plants that hold the soil poorly (mustardweed, tumbleweed, thistle)	A little	Some	A lot
Bare ground	A little	Some	A lot

If all of your answers are in the first column, your land earns an "A" for health. If most of your answers are in the second column, it is in average condition. If you have any responses in the third column, your land needs immediate help! Read on to learn about conservation practices that will improve your land's health.

► Know Your Plants

- Plants can be good or bad depending on your management goals
- Undesirable plants can choke out desirable plants
- Undesirable plants can spread rapidly



Perennial Broomweed



Mesquite



Cocklebur

Weed and Brush Management. Undesirable weeds and brush can invade and spread rapidly. It is important to regularly look for their presence on your property. Act immediately to treat them by using the weed and brush management practices listed below. Team up with neighbors to improve effectiveness. Remember, weed and brush control by themselves are not enough. It is also necessary to modify the management practices that caused the problem.

Prevention. Weeds and brush are more easily controlled when the plants are young and before they occupy large acreages. Good land management will help keep desirable vegetation healthy and unwanted plants under control. Buy only weed-free hay, plant only weed seed-free certified seed, wash your vehicle after being in a weed infested area, monitor your property, and respond quickly to any new unwanted plant infestations.

Biological. Biological control of plants attempts to find a natural enemy that can weaken or eventually kill an unwanted plant. Sometimes it is insects, sometimes it is fungi, but most commonly it is grazing animals. Sheep, goats, and cattle can be used to manage certain undesirable plant species. They can also cause problems through overgrazing or spreading seed from unwanted plants on their coats or in their feces.

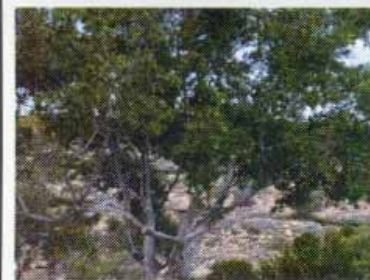
Is Your Soil Covered?

...not by insurance, but by vegetation! Vegetation protects the soil from erosion by rain, runoff, and wind. Vegetation increases water uptake by soils and holds soils in place on slopes and along streams.

Mechanical. Annual weeds can be controlled by shredding before they go to seed. Shredding is not effective for control of perennial weeds or brush. Most brush sprouts from the roots or crown when the top is removed. These plants must be grubbed to effectively control. Hand pulling or grubbing is effective on small populations of unwanted weeds or woody plants.

Fire. Prescribed burning is a low-cost, effective method of suppressing or preventing undesirable weed and woody plant encroachment onto your land. Fire will rarely kill mature woody plants. Special training and knowledge are required to use fire safely and effectively. This training is available from the Texas Agricultural Extension Service and other agencies.

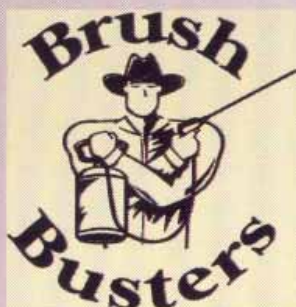
Chemical. Herbicides are effective and safe when applied properly and at the proper plant growth stage. READ the herbicide label instructions carefully and follow all directions. A license is required to buy and use some herbicides. Information concerning this license can be obtained from your local County Extension Agent or from the Texas Department of Agriculture.



Texas Persimmon



Johnsongrass

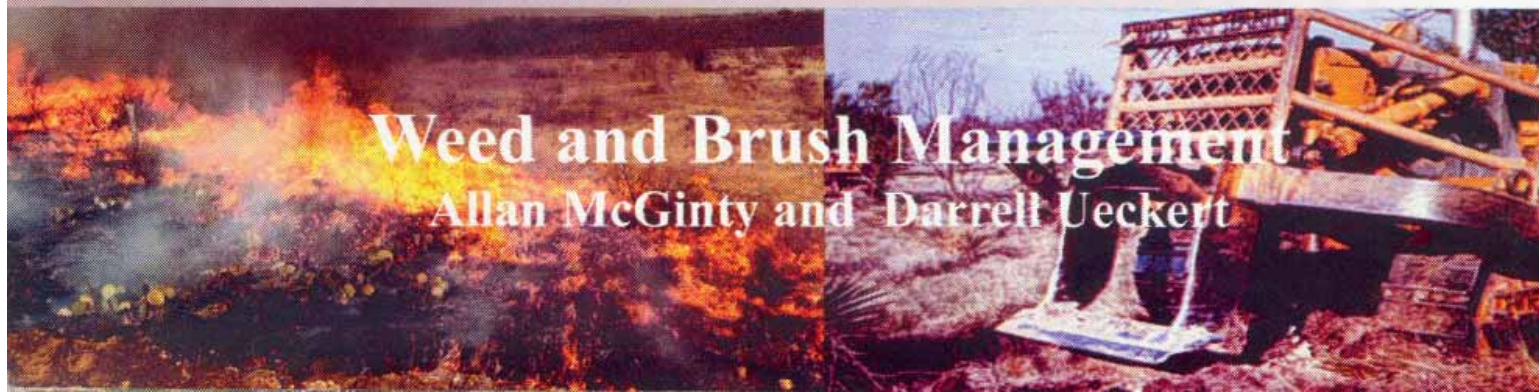


Redberry Juniper

▶ Backpack sprayers are an inexpensive, effective way to apply stem or leaf sprays to unwanted plants. Make sure you are using the proper nozzle for the specific application. All-terrain vehicles can be equipped with spray systems for under \$200. **Brush Busters** is a program that provides “do-it-yourself” information on brush control. Contact your local County Extension Agent to obtain pamphlets, videos, and other materials related to this program.



Threadleaf Groundsel



What

You Might Want to Consider

Conservation Easements

Texas private landowners manage more than 97% of the state's land but the landscape is changing as Texas cities steadily displace



natural habitats and scenic open spaces. One of the most significant factors affecting Texas' landscape is the continued breakup of family-owned property. A **conservation easement** is a deed restriction landowners voluntarily place on their property to protect resources such as productive agricultural land, ground and surface water, wildlife habitat, historic sites, or

scenic views. They are used by landowners (grantors) to authorize a qualified conservation organization or public agency (grantee) to monitor and enforce the restrictions set forth in the agreement.

Conservation easements are flexible documents tailored to each property and the needs of individual landowners. The grantor retains legal title to the property and determines the types of land uses. Landowners are able to protect resources they value for their children and future generations.

Conservation easements may provide substantial income, and estate and property tax benefits to landowners. It is important that landowners consult tax professionals for more specific information.

Agricultural conservation easements are de-

signed to keep land available for farming and ranching. They often permit commercial development related to the ranching operation and the construction of ranch buildings. Most do not restrict ranching practices, although some grantees ask landowners to implement soil and water conservation plans. The land remains on the local tax rolls and landowners continue to be eligible for state and federal agricultural programs.

Conservation easements are recognized for legal and tax purposes by the State of Texas and the Internal Revenue Service. Landowners are urged to contact the **Texas Land Trust Council (512/389-4779)**, if they would like more information on conservation easements and to obtain a directory of land trusts operating in Texas.

Proposition 11

In 1995, Texas voters approved Proposition 11, which added wildlife management as an agricultural use that qualifies the land for agricultural appraisal in the Property Tax Code. This allows Texas landowners the opportunity to improve their land resources and native wildlife habitat through goals traditionally associated with farming and livestock agriculture.

- ▶ Land must have been qualified and appraised as agricultural land during the year before the year the owner changes to wildlife management use (land qualified for timber use is not eligible).
- ▶ The land must be used to propagate a sustaining breeding, migrating, or wintering population of indigenous

- Providing supplemental water
- Providing supplemental food
- Providing shelter
- Conducting census counts



Deer Census

- ▶ Apply to your Appraisal District by **May 1** of the year you intend to switch to wildlife management use.
- ▶ **Have a written plan** for accomplishing your wildlife management goals. Landowners may formulate their own plans but assistance from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas Agricultural Extension Service, Texas Forest Service, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation

wildlife animals for human use (i.e., food, medicine, or recreation).

▶ The owner must perform at least **three** of seven listed wildlife management activities on the land

- Habitat control
- Erosion control
- Predator control



Service, and qualified private wildlife biologists is available. A monitoring system and documentation will be beneficial.

For additional information contact: Comptroller of Public Accounts, Property Tax Division, P.O. Box 13528, Austin, Texas 78711-3528, and request the *Manual for the Appraisal of Agricultural Land and Guidelines for Qualifications of Agricultural Land in Wildlife Management Use*.

Estate Planning - Who Will Continue Your Work?

Texas' ranches are feeling the pressures of growth and development as people move out from the cities to a weekend home. You probably have new neighbors along your fence line who weren't there just a few years ago or a neighboring ranch might have recently been sold for a new residential development.

Among the rights you own to your property is the right to sell your land for any purpose. You also have the right to pass it on to your heirs, or to ensure that the land you've improved remains available for ranching or wildlife habitat.



Estate Planning should lay a framework for a smooth transition of land ownership and management. It can provide needs for all family members, reduce high inheritance taxes, and can address the settlement problems that arise because land is not a liquid asset.

A good estate plan should accomplish these goals:

1. Transfer ownership and management of the ranch operation, land and other assets.
2. Avoid unnecessary income, gift or estate taxes.
3. Ensure financial security and peace of mind for all generations.
4. Develop the next generation's management capacity.

Two important elements of estate planning are to set goals and then to revisit them over time as families, finances, priorities, and laws change. Landowners must take inventory of their assets and be sure they fully understand who owns what and how titles to the property are held.

Successful land transfer and estate planning require a team effort, including family, financial, ranch management, tax, and legal expertise. They must be designed to meet a variety of unique situations. Landowners must be sure to talk to their families and find the professional legal and financial assistance they need to accomplish their goals.



Land Conservation Options

Joseph Petersen and Ellen Godwin

Whom Do I Ask?

► *Federal and State Agencies*

USDA - Farm Services Agency
College Station, Texas (979/680-5150)
(<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/>)

Natural Resources Conservation Service
Temple, Texas (254/ 742-9800)
(<http://www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov/>)

Texas Agricultural Extension Service
College Station, Texas (979/845-7800)
(<http://agextension.tamu.edu/>)

Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board
Temple, Texas (254/ 773-2250)
(<http://www.tssweb.state.tx.us/>)

Texas Forest Service
College Station, Texas (979/ 845-2601)
(<http://txforestservation.tamu.edu/>)

Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission
Austin, Texas (512/239-1000)
(<http://www.tnrcc.state.tx.us/>)

Texas Water Development Board
Austin, Texas (512/463-7847)
(<http://www.twdb.state.tx.us/>)

Texas Parks and Wildlife
Austin, Texas (800/792-1112)
(<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/>)

Wildlife Damage Management Service
San Antonio, Texas (210/472-5451)
(<http://agextension.tamu.edu/twdms/twdmshom.htm>)

► *Responsibilities*

Administers cost-share, commodity, conservation reserve, and farm loan programs.

Technical assistance and consultation for soil, water, and other natural resource conservation and management efforts.

Educational programs, publications, and assistance related to agriculture and natural resources such as range-lands and wildlife management.

Coordinates programs of the local Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Water quality, management, and conservation systems planning.

Provides leadership and technical assistance for forests, trees, and related resources such as prescribed burning, wildfires, pest management, tree improvement, etc.

Environmental regulatory agency. Implements federal and state laws, permits, and assessments relating to air quality, water resources and waste management.

Statewide water planning and administration of water supply, wastewater treatment, flood control, and agricultural water conservation projects.

Administers state fish and wildlife laws. Provides fisheries and wildlife management technical support. Staffs law enforcement, state parks, and wildlife management areas.

Branch of the USDA and Texas A&M University System that provides assistance for managing nuisance wildlife and damage control.

Texas Department of Agriculture
Austin, Texas (512/463-7476)
(<http://www.agr.state.tx.us/>)

Provides agribusiness marketing assistance. Regulates sale, use, and disposal of pesticides. Regulates weighing and measuring devices for agribusiness commercial transactions.

General Land Office
Austin, Texas (512/463-5001)
(<http://www.glo.state.tx.us/>)

Administers archives and records, provides maps and surveys, and issues land titles. Manages natural resources and oil and gas leases on state lands.

Texas Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory
College Station, Texas (979/845-3414)
(<http://www.tvmdl.tamu.edu/>)

Responsible for information concerning animal diseases. Performs diagnostic testing services.

Texas Natural Resources Information System
Austin, Texas (512/463-8337)
(<http://www.tnris.state.tx.us/>)

Distribution center for US Geological Survey maps. Serves as clearinghouse for digital, spatial, and natural resource data.

Texas Agricultural Experiment Station
College Station, Texas (979/845-0601)
(<http://taeswww.tamu.edu/>)

Conducts research, develops new technology, and provides information that supports agriculture and natural resources.

Other Information Sources

Center for Grazingland and Ranch Management
College Station, Texas (979/862-7580)
(<http://cnrit.tamu.edu/cgrm/>)

Information and assistance for making decisions on Texas ranches and grazinglands. Hosts discussion area; provides feedback to specific management questions.

TEXNAT
(<http://texnat.tamu.edu/>)

Information database for natural resource management on Texas rangelands. Includes plant and land management resources as well as a calendar of events.

Texas Wildlife Association
401 Isom Road, Suite 237
San Antonio, Texas (210/826-2904)
(<http://www.texas-wildlife.org/>)

An advocate for the benefit of wildlife and for the rights of wildlife managers, landowners, and hunters in educational, scientific, political, regulatory, legal and legislative arenas.

References

Tamara Trail and Brian Hays



Maintain What's Best About Texas

- *Productive rangelands*
- *Wildlife*
- *Clear streams*
- *Native plants*
- *Aesthetic beauty*

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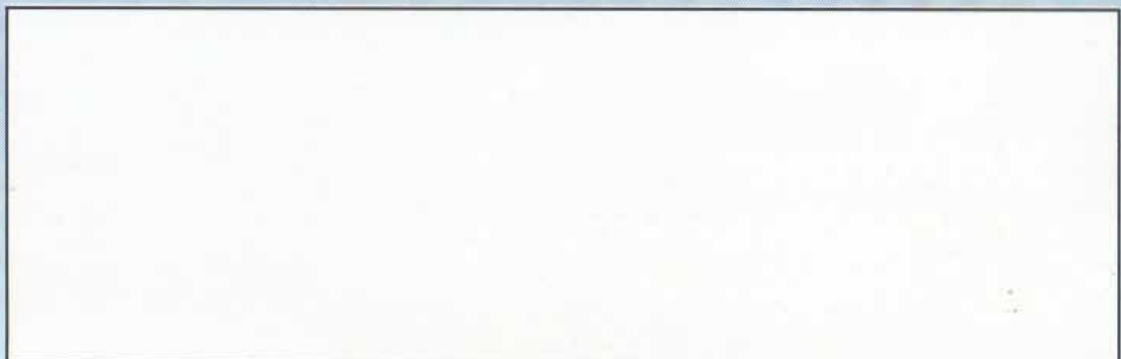
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