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*Providing Leadership for the Stewardship of Rangelands
Based on Sound Ecological Principles*



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President's Notes



Jerry Payne
President, TSSRM

How time flies! Spring has sprung! Hopefully? Most of us have received some much needed rain. Wheat fields, Texas wintergrass, scribner's panicum, and spring annuals have greened-up and are producing bountiful, nutritious forage. The first mesquite buds are emerging in north Texas. That cabin fever brought on by cold, dreary winter days is finally cured as we eagerly get outside to finish those projects left over from last fall. Spring brings an unbelievable new burst of energy and optimism. Everything, including us, is renewed.

Recently, I attended an interesting, informative, and enjoyable field day at Graham. The emphasis was on new, innovative equipment to assist in managing brush. Gyro Trac demonstrated their machines that cut brush and mulch the residue—interesting and thought provoking new alternatives, possibilities and what-ifs! Dozers, excavators, chemicals, and other proven techniques were also demonstrated and explained. Four range management specialists, J. F. Candenhed, Lem Creswell, Troy

Reinke, and Roger Carrol (of Gyro Trac), discussed various range and brush management practices. Approximately 90 to 100 individuals attended. Over half were farmers and ranchers. Organizers asked me to say a word or two about the Texas Section Society for Range Management (TSSRM). I gave a short overview. Then I asked how many agency personnel present were members, and over 90% raised their hands. Good—very good, but not 100%. Next, I asked the 50 or 60 ranchers how many of them were members of the TSSRM, and only ONE, Zach Burkett, whose ranch we were visiting, raised his hand. I encouraged and solicited the others to consider the advantages TSSRM membership would give them, and eight or ten indicated a sincere interest.

I have encouraged and campaigned for more rancher participation. I believe that we (TSSRM) have a real opportunity to increase our membership and to provide a real service to the ranching community. We just need to ask! Again, I challenge you to promote our Section. Please, remember to let our officers and BOD know about any field days or work shops planned in your area. We will try to come or have someone locally to speak for us; if we are only asked. You can have information and membership applications available at these meetings. Request them from the Denver office or simply go to our web site and print them off for immediate use.

Thanks to each of you that actively promote your vocation through the TSSRM. This is another of the tools available to us in helping our profession. Some tools are essential. I believe the TSSRM is equal in importance to a rangeland steward as a claw hammer is to a carpenter building a new house.

REMEMBER! NACOGDOCHES in October! SEE YOU THERE!

Jerry Payne

The Inside Story...

- Texas Section SRM Awards
- Call for Nominations
- Plant Identification in the Cyber Age
- Catclaw Classification
- TSSRM Photo Contest
- What Is So Good About Youth Range Workshop

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 Address inquiries to Jeff Goodwin, Editor

TSSRM New Members

Let us welcome our new members to the Section.
 Thank you for your continued support for rangeland stewardship.

Ted Paup Fort Worth, TX

Texas Section SRM Awards

The Awards Committee for the Texas Section of SRM is now accepting nominations for Outstanding Contribution to Rangeland Management, Fellow, Outstanding Achievement, Outstanding Young Range Professional, and Special Recognition Awards. Award categories, criteria, format, etc. can be found in the Texas Section Handbook at the following website: <http://www.tssrm.org>

The deadline to have nominations into the Awards Committee is: July 1, 2008 for the Fellow and Special Recognition Awards.

August 1, 2008 for the Outstanding Contribution to Rangeland Management, Outstanding Achievement, and Outstanding Young Range Professional.

Send completed nominations to George Peacock, Chair of the TSSRM Awards Committee at:

Email: pea01@msn.com
 Mail: 605 Crestwood Court
 Burleson, Texas 76028

If you have any questions, contact George Peacock.

Call for Nominations

Outstanding Rangeland Stewardship Award

The purpose of this award is to recognize one Texas ranch each year that has demonstrated outstanding skill and knowledge in practicing sound management and care of their rangeland resources. If you know of a ranch that is deserving of this award please, please take the time to nominate them. If a ranch has received the award in the past, they can not receive the award a second time. The deadline for receipt of the nominations is June 1st. Do not wait until the last minute. Contact Allan McGinty (ORM Committee Chair) for a copy of the nomination form and for a list of past recipients to insure your ranch is eligible. Allan can be contacted by e-mail (a-mcginty@tamu.edu) or phone (325-653-4576).

Upcoming Events

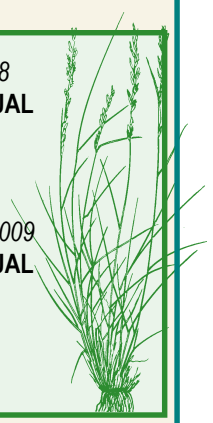
Howard County Range Education Workshop
 May 1
 Registration 8:30 AM - (432) 267-1871 ext. 3
 There will be CEU's offered for CPRM's

Grazing Management Workshop
 Blooming Grove, TX
 May 16, 2008

Red Buffalo Prescribed Burn School
 Junction, TX
 July 2008

Oct. 8-10, 2008
TSSRM ANNUAL MEETING
 Nacogdoches

October 7-9, 2009
TSSRM ANNUAL MEETING
 Beaumont



Plant Identification in the Cyber Age

By Ricky Linex, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Weatherford, Texas

As a deer hunter or wildlife manager you have complete familiarity with these words: Boone and Crocket, drop tine, and buck:doe ratio; but how familiar are you with words such as Skunkbush sumac, Bumelia and Engelmann daisy? The biggest influence during the life of any deer is the quality of the native habitat in which that deer lives and secures nourishment. It is accepted that in order to grow large healthy deer they need three things: nutrition, age and genetics. The next frontier for deer aficionados is learning how to recognize and identify plants that deer consume for nutrition.

Short of enrolling in a botany class or joining the local garden club what can be done to learn plant identification (ID)? Carrying a stack of plant ID books on the pickup seat or handing the unknown to a local plant expert used to be the common methods for identification. While these methods still produce positive results, you can take advantage of modern methods such as the digital camera, flat bed scanner, and use of e-mail and internet resources to self learn plant identification. Many times I've been asked to identify a plant that was picked "just a few days ago" and "put on my dash till I could bring it to you." These plants had morphed into dry, brittle, leafless shells of the former plant and made ID very difficult. Today, with a digital camera that fits in your shirt pocket you can take a high quality photo of the plant, download it to your computer and e-mail it to your plant expert and they will see the plant exactly as you did. As a bonus, most digital cameras come with a macro setting which can take extreme close-up photos for capturing small details in flowers or leaves. You also have an image of the plant that can easily be reproduced months or years later to share with others.



Digital scan of skunkbush sumac

The use of scanners to produce a life like plant image has been in use for just a few years. Trim large plants or fold the longer stems to fit on the scanner, set the resolution to 300 dpi, close the lid to reduce stray light, and scan. You will be amazed at the three dimensional effect of the plant picture. To get the best print quality use medium price matte or glossy photo paper. These scanned images can be saved as a jpg and e-mailed the same as a digital photo. With a scan or high resolution digital photo you can zoom in on the image on your monitor with little loss of detail or image quality.

On line plant identification resources were unknown just over ten years ago. Today there are numerous web sites that show photos of identified grasses, forbs and woodies with several photos of each species. They highlight the entire plant, which includes close up of the leaves, flowers, stems, fruit and even the bark of trees. The following web sites are highly recommended for plant identification: <http://plants.usda.gov/>, <http://www.bio.utexas.edu/courses/bio406d/>, <http://uvalde.tamu.edu/herbarium/index.htm>, <http://www.noble.org/WebApps/PlantImageGallery/Index.aspx>, and <http://texnat.tamu.edu/plant.htm>.

There are even a couple of books on important native plants used as deer food that are available online or free by mail: *White-tailed Deer their foods and management in the cross timbers* by Ken Gee and Mike

Porter of the Noble Foundation, <http://www.noble.org/Ag/Research/Wildlife.htm> and *White-tailed deer food habits and preferences in the cross timbers and prairie region of Texas* by Jim Dillard et al of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/publications/pwdpubs/media/pwd_rp_w7000_1017.pdf, both of which are valuable references. Ask your local NRCS, Extension or TPWD personnel for a list of their favorite plant ID web sites. Another new technique if you know the name of a plant is to go into either search engines Google or Yahoo, click on the Images button, then type in the common or scientific name and you will see a variety of images of that plant. Good plant identification books are still the bread and butter ID resources for most experienced plant folks, but digital and cyber methods are her to stay. Knowledge of plants and their value as food must be learned by all land managers.

Catclaw Clarification

By Steve Nelle

Reprinted with permission from
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A publication of the Texas Wildlife Association

Across many parts of Texas, there are one or more plant species commonly referred to as "catclaw." These familiar shrubs bear short, stout, curved thorns that closely resemble a cat's claw.

The four most common species of catclaw will be described so that we can better learn to appreciate and recognize the differences. Many ranches will have only one or two of these catclaws, but some ranches in central Texas have all four species. These four species of catclaw can look similar but a careful observer can see the differences, especially by looking at the flowers. Two of these common catclaws are in the genus *Acacia*, while the other two are in the genus *Mimosa*.

Catclaw acacia, *Acacia greggii*, may be the most common of the four. It generally grows in deeper soils and can occur from the Gulf Coast, all the way to the Trans-Pecos. It usually grows as a scrubby bush, but can also grow into an attractive small tree with a gnarly trunk and a nicely shaped canopy. The flowers are elongated and cream colored. The bean pods are large and twisted with a few large seed.

Roemer acacia, *Acacia roemeriana*, can be found growing in shallow rocky soils in South Texas, the Edwards Plateau and the Trans-Pecos. Roemer acacia is by far the best browse plant of the four catclaws. Roemer acacia is often heavily browsed by goats, white-tailed deer, mule deer and exotics. It can grow into a spindly tree, but more often it is a low-growing shrub. The flowers are round, cream-colored puff balls. The young twigs have a characteristic deep red-maroon coloration. The bean pods are large and often a distinct copper color with large seed.

Catclaw mimosa, *Mimosa biuncifera*, has the nastiest thorns of the four species. The wicked thorns usually occur in pairs. Angora goat raisers dislike catclaw mimosa because young, long-haired goats can easily get tangled and caught in these bushes and either starve to death or be easy prey for a predator. The thorns are strong enough to tear clothing, so folks familiar with this bush are careful where they walk. The flowers are sparse white puff balls. The bean pods, which occur in clusters and which may bear spines, are much smaller than the two *Acacia*'s. This species of catclaw often has characteristic zig-zag twigs. Catclaw mimosa can grow thick enough to be a problem, especially in parts of the Trans-Pecos, although control is seldom justifiable. Extremely cold temperatures and fire tend to keep it suppressed.

Fragrant mimosa, *Mimosa borealis*, grows on a variety of soil types and is most common in the Edwards Plateau. It is a nondescript bush, except when blooming. The pink- to rose-colored, puff ball flowers make it the most attractive of the four species. The bean pods are small and clustered.

All species of catclaw are native shrubs and valuable parts of the ecosystem. The flowers are used by many species of insects. The bean pods contain seeds eaten by birds and mammals. The browse is used by livestock and deer, especially after fire. All catclaws are legumes that fix atmospheric nitrogen into soil nitrogen for added fertility. In addition, like other thorny plants, catclaw provides an excellent protected nursery area for other desirable plants to get started.

The next time you encounter a catclaw bush, take a moment to look closer at it and learn which species it might be. Who knows, maybe the time is coming when ranchers, naturalists and range professionals will begin keeping a life list of the plants they have seen. Learning the catclaws would be a great start.



Fragrant mimosa



Catclaw mimosa



Catclaw acacia



Roemer acacia

TSSRM Photo Contest

Photo Contest Categories:

- Plants (Black & White) and Plants (Color)
- Landscapes (B&W) and Landscapes (Color)
- Wildlife (B&W) and Wildlife (Color)
- Ranching (B&W) and Ranching (Color)
- Livestock (B&W) or Livestock (Color)
- People (B&W) or People (Color)

Photos can be submitted **anytime** during the year – deadline for final submission is September 1, 2008. THERE IS NO ENTRY FEE.

CONTEST RULES:

- All photos submitted may be considered for use on the TSSRM website, **Grass Roots** newsletter and/or in other official TSSRM publications without compensation, but with photographer credit. Photos may also be used by the Society for Range Management (SRM) under the same rules.
- Submission via email officially authorizes TSSRM (and/or SRM) to use the photos in these venues without further notification.
- All photographers submitting entries may be considered for random participation prize(s).
- The Photo Contest committee will select at least one photo from each photographer to be placed into a PowerPoint Presentation to be used at the start of each session and/or between speakers.
- PHOTOS WILL BE JUDGED BY SOMEONE OUTSIDE OF TSSRM prior to the meeting. In the event of a large number of entries, the photo contest committee reserves the right to screen the entries prior to submission to the outside judge.
- Winners in each category will receive a print: 1st – 8X10; 2nd – 5X7; and 3rd – 4X6. Best in Show and Reserve Best in Show awards will receive a larger print, which will be displayed at registration.
- **Limit of twenty (20) entries per member per year.**
- **All photos submitted must be JPG format** (no BMP, TIF, GIF, etc. accepted).
- **Maximum photo file size of 4 megabytes (Mb).**
- Photographer must pick category for photo to be judged in – failure to do so will have your entry considered incomplete, and thus, not considered.
- **Please include a description of where the photo was taken in the body of the email.**

Photo submission:

EMAIL MESSAGE SUBJECT: Photo Contest Entry

PHOTO ATTACHMENT NAMING: B&W or Color_Category_Photographer_description.jpg

BODY OF EMAIL: Description of photo and where taken

(please include your contact information).

Example (2007 Best In Show winner):

SUBJECT: Photo Contest Entry

ATTACHMENT: Color_Plants_Ron_Hilliard_Wildflowers.jpg

BODY OF EMAIL: *Wildflower photo taken on Hwy 82 between Gainesville and Nocona.*

Ron Hilliard

Stillwater OK

Email:

Phone:

Email Digital Photos to: PhotoContest@tssrm.org

To contact us:

Bruce S. Healy, TSSRM Secretary
(9229 CR 530)

PO Box 67, Tynan TX 78391

Phone: 361-547-5148

E-mail: tssrm_secretary@yahoo.com

What Is So Great About Youth Range Workshop?

By Derek Scasta, Youth Activities Committee Chairman

When asked this question I stumbled for a second as I thought to myself, “Why would anyone even have to ask such a question?”. As I pondered my answer I realized that what makes it so great in my mind may not be so readily known or seen by others. So let me provide you with a little insight as to why I think Youth Range Workshop (YRW) is so great.

1. **Youth realize their potential** – The week long workshop (note it is a “work”shop not a camp) is a very intense and demanding training course that requires the best these 40 young people have to offer. The schedule of activities is overwhelming to all of them and the days and nights begin to run together as they work on notebooks, plant collections, recreation group activities, range management plans; things they have never done. But by the end of the week they look back at all they have accomplished and realize that they are only limited by something if they allow it.
2. **Youth acquire a brand new perspective** – A lot of the concepts presented during the week are new to the youth and challenge their ways of thinking. Concepts such as plant ID, prescribed burning, plant succession, poisonous plants, etc allow them a fresh angle on natural resources. As they are exposed to successful range management examples (and not so successful ones) their perspective changes. Dr. Jake Landers says, “If you can’t name it, you can’t see it. If you can’t see it, you can’t manage it”. By the end of the week they can name it, see it and know how to manage it.
3. **We are training tomorrow’s rangeland managers today** – The youth that attend YRW are some of the best and brightest kids across the state. They come from a variety of backgrounds and experiences but share one important thing, they are our future. Through the week they are made aware of the need for people that have a sound understanding of the ecological processes on rangelands and how those dictate our management practices. This in turn makes them aware of the critical need for future rangeland managers and ignites such a desire.
4. **It is an entire week of thinking, sleeping, eating and digesting rangeland management** – I like to describe YRW as a 12 hour college range management semester crammed into one week. As the week rolls along, youth are constantly challenged to learn how to identify key range plants, calculate stocking rates, determine range condition, etc. The days fade into nights and lamps burn long into the night as plant presses are worked on and youth and directors discuss the days activities. YRW immerses youth for a solid week into range management in the beautiful Edwards Plateau, now that is hard to beat!

2008 will mark the 54th annual YRW. I challenge each TSSRM member to think about the youth that you know and interact with and nominate one to the YRW. The 2008 brochure is in this newsletter and located on the TSSRM webpage at <http://www.tssrm.org/> à Youth Education Link, it is entitled “YRW Pamphlet 2008”. By nominating an exceptional youth from your area you will give them the opportunity to travel to the Texas Tech University Center in Junction and participate in this premier event. In doing so, you will help another student learn what is so great about Youth Range Workshop!



Forage inventories at the Youth Range Workshop



Paul Loeffler teaching plant identification

It is understood that if this application is accepted, a check for \$260 must be submitted by **May 19, 2008** to cover the applicant's meals and lodging expenses, made payable to TSSRM Youth Activities. Transportation cost to the workshop site and return home will be the responsibility of the local sponsoring group, nominator or participant.

Sponsor (Group/Organization)

C/o Name of Responsible Person

Address

City State Zip

Email

Phone

County Extension Agent/Ag Science Teacher
(Please print or type)

County Extension Agent/Ag Science Teacher
(Signature)

Address

City State Zip

Email

Phone

Extending the knowledge learned and gained to others is one of the highest goals of this program.

Participants are exposed to actual land management practices and decisions through field trips to ranches, and a wildlife management area.

These field trips bring out facts on goals of landownership and the responses of vegetation to practices conducted for livestock, wildlife, recreation and range restoration. *All examples will be real-life applications.*

It is not all work! Fun activities are also planned.



June 15-20, 2008 marks the 54th Consecutive Annual Youth Range Workshop.

54th Annual Youth Range Workshop



Training tomorrow's leaders today in range and natural resource management, and the stewardship of natural resources

June 15-20, 2008

held at:
**Texas Tech University
Junction Campus**

Sponsored by:



**Texas Section
Society for
Range Management**

Rangeland - it covers **59%** of the state of Texas.



Management needs of rangelands are as diverse as the state - and require innovative approaches for good management. Each part of the state is unique and no two management approaches will achieve the same results, even on adjacent properties.



Users of rangelands are also varied. Most people think only of beef cattle, but wildlife, and humans are also users. *Remember, rangelands are a type of land - not a land use.*

This Workshop is structured to provide critical knowledge in the areas of:

- Stewardship
- Rangeland Ecology
- Plant Species and Growth
- Plant-Soil-Water Relationships
- Primary and Secondary Succession
- Watershed Management
- Range livestock and wildlife needs
- Tools of range and natural resources management and restoration
- Landowner Goals & Objectives



- Impacts of Management Decisions
- New Technology
- Rangeland Monitoring (including photopoint establishment and monitoring using yearly and seasonal photographs, and fecal sampling).



This workshop has **many hands on activities**: plant id and collecting, plant species composition, total ranch planning, stocking rate evaluation, etc. Special sessions are held on water and total resource management.

The dynamic curriculum is constantly changed as increasing importance is placed on the landowner's



ability to make sound environmental, social and economic decisions.

Sponsors are often sought out by the students attending. Consult with your 4-H club/FFA Chapter leader for ideas. One can also contact your local Soil and Water Conservation District for potential leads.

Youth should be at least 14 years of age and have finished eighth grade but not have finished high school.

Applications are accepted by mail and can be completed by tearing off the form at right and completing both sides or Printed from the following web site:

Applications/information, see the web at:
<http://www.tssrm.org/youthrange.htm>

Application for
 Youth Range Workshop
 June 15-20, 2008

Full Name _____

Preferred Name _____

Male ___ Female ___ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Email Address _____

has been nominated to attend the 2008 Youth Range Workshop representing

_____ **4-H Club/FFA Chapter**

in _____ County.

Applicant's T-shirt size (circle one):

S M L XL XXL

Mail Completed Application form to:

TSSRM Youth Range Workshop
 %Mr. Hoyt Seidensticker
 1822 FM 473
 Boerne, Texas 78006

Applications are accepted year-round and 40 participants will be selected for each workshop.