



2014 Outstanding Contribution to Range Management recipient Dr. Larry Butler and TSSRM Awards Chairman Jacob Shaffer

Texas Section Society for Rangeland Management
Outstanding Contribution to Rangeland Management
Dr. Larry Butler

Dr. Larry Butler's 34 years in the Natural Resources Conservation Service took him to all corners of the rangelands of the United States. His career started and ended in Texas. But it was only the beginning of his contributions to range management. He has been a member of SRM for 41 years.

Starting as a Soil Conservationist with the Soil Conservation Service in San Angelo, Texas, Larry worked at several more duty stations in Texas before being tapped to serve in the West National Technical Center in Portland, Oregon. He then moved to the Grazing Lands Technology Institute in Fort Worth, Texas. His final position with NRCS was as Senior Executive, Texas State Conservationist. Larry's years in the SCS/NRCS represent tens of thousands of landowners assisted, millions of acres of rangeland affected, hundreds of publications, technical notes, handbooks and articles as well as many millions of dollars of budgets managed. Larry's career achievements are far too voluminous to include them all. Some highlights of Larry's SCS/NRCS career include:

- As District Conservationist in Del Rio, TX, provided leadership in the management of 2.3 million acres of Val Verde County rangeland.
- As Area Range Conservationist in Pecos, TX, assisted in conservation on 23 million acres of rangeland and assisted 11 conservation districts.
- While in graduate school in Utah, Larry also served on the West National Technical Center staff, but served the 13 southern states.
- As Range Conservationist in the West National Technical Center in Portland, OR, Larry provided key leadership in the formation of the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI). The interested groups came together for a meeting led by Larry after two failed attempts to form a working coalition. Larry succeeded in helping them find common ground and forming GLCI and developing a Strategic Plan for Private Grazing Lands. Larry also had key roles in range economics, assisting 14 states with programs, working with universities and focusing on technology transfer.
- At the NRCS Grazing Land Technology Institute in Fort Worth, Texas, Larry provided key leadership in the development of the *National Range and Pasture Handbook*. He worked nationwide encouraging enterprise diversification, especially on rangelands. There was virtually nothing going on that involved range science and the NRCS that Larry was not a key part of.
- His final duty station was as one of 26 members of the Executive Services of NRCS as Texas State Conservationist. Although he was not directly working with landowners anymore, he managed the largest EQIP program in the United States and the largest NRCS state budget in the US. He had the ability to influence programs on the rangelands of Texas (93 million acres) and never failed to consider the landowners and their needs for technical assistance promoting sound rangeland stewardship. The NRCS workforce in Texas was relieved to have someone at the helm who truly understood the needs of both the landowners and the staff providing the technical assistance.

Following his 34 years with NRCS, Larry Butler was not content to retire to the golf course or hunting blind. He began a private consulting business, working with 12 landowners on over 100,000 acres for the first two years of his retirement.

He still was not content. He wanted to do more. An earlier experience at the NRCS's West National Technical Center working with several television projects had sparked Larry's interest in mass media. He felt he could develop programming and find an outlet. Programming about rangelands and agriculture. He worked tirelessly, finally landing on RFD-TV. The show premiered January 1, 2013. He produces and hosts *Out On The Land*, a weekly television showcase of what is going on in land management. To date, 39 episodes have aired over 3 seasons, with 26 of those being primarily about range science. Season four is being filmed currently. Larry has thrown himself into this project, procuring sponsors, shooting hours of footage, seeking out suitable locations with stories to tell. Episodes air several times and are available on his web page as well. RFD-TV is found in more than 41 million households in the USA. Repeats of the show air on FamilyNet, which is found in 22 million households. A recent episode featured ESD's (Ecological Site Descriptions) and SRM. The programming has gotten accolades from scientists as well as land stewards.

Larry's dream of sharing the story of agriculture and the part of agriculture he knows best, sound rangeland stewardship, has reached millions.

Education, Training, Awards:

Ph.D., 1990, Range Science, Utah State University

M. Ag. 1980, Recreation and Resources Development, Texas A&M University

B.S. 1974, Wildlife Management, Texas Tech University

Awards:

2007 - Distinguished Alumnus, College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, Texas Tech University

2007 - Honor Award for Distinguished Service to Communities in Texas, by San Antonio River Authority

2007 - Award of Appreciation for Support of USDA/1890 Partnership at Prairie View A&M University

2006 - USDA Senior Executive Service Performance Award for leadership and management of Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Texas

2006 - Honor Award for outstanding support for the Texas Chapter of the National Organization of Professional Black Natural Resources Conservation Service Employees

2005 - Outstanding Alumnus, Department of Range, Wildlife, and Fisheries, Texas Tech University

2005 - USDA Senior Executive Service Performance Award for leadership and management of Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Texas

2005 - *SRM Outstanding Achievement Award*

2005 - Civil Rights Award presented by the Texas Small Farmers and Ranchers Community-based Organization

2005 - Service Award for outstanding leadership presented by Landowners Association of Texas, Inc.

2004 - USDA Senior Executive Service Performance Award for leadership and management of Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Texas

2004 - Honor Award for providing continuous support to the National Organization of Professional Black Natural Resources Conservation Service Employees

2004 - USDA Secretary of Agriculture Group Honor Award for Excellence

2003 - USDA Senior Executive Service Performance Award for leadership and management of Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Texas

2001 - Outstanding performance as director of Grazing Lands Technology Institute (GLTI)

2000 - Exceptional and outstanding leadership as director of Grazing Lands Technology Institute

1998 - Outstanding leadership as acting director of Grazing Lands Technology Institute

1997 - Outstanding performance as rangeland management specialist on staff of GLTI

1995 - Leadership in production of national satellite broadcast on grazing management

1994 - Leadership provided to Field Office Technical Guide Team for 13 southern states

1994 - Leadership of team to evaluate special projects in 13 southern states

1993 - Leadership in developing relocation report for the West National Technical Center

1993 - Outstanding performance as National Coordinator for Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative

1993 - Leadership in total quality management

1992 - Special achievement as range conservationist at West National Technical Center

1989 - Sustained superior performance

1985 - Commendable performance in directing watershed program activities

Activities in SRM:

- Joined SRM in 1973 as student on Texas Tech Plant Team.
- Certified Professional in Rangeland Management (2000-2012)
- Co-Chair for 2005 International Meeting of Society for Range Management (*Forced to resign 12/02 after being named NRCS TX State Conservationist*)
- Chair, Information & Education Committee
- Served on *Rangelands* Editorial Board
- Member, Accreditation Committee
- Second Vice President of Texas Section SRM, 2001
- First Vice President, Texas Section SRM, 2002
(*Forced to resign before becoming President after being named NRCS TX State Conservationist*)
- Member of Advisory Council, 2001-2002
- Official SRM representative at 2001 and 2002 National Association of Conservation Districts.
- Chair of Coordinated Resource Management Committee of the Texas Section, 1995-1996.
- Program Chair of Texas Section Annual Meeting, 1999.
- Served on several Texas Section-level committees
- Active participant in most SRM Annual Meetings since 1988.
- Sponsor, SRM Newsletter, *Stewardship*

Activities/Membership in Other Organizations:

Texas Wildlife Association

- Life Member
- State Director

Quail Coalition

- Member

Serve as member of Texas Parks & Wildlife Department’s Upland Game Bird Advisory Committee

Completed *Quail Masters*, an intense training offered through Texas Agri-Life Extension.

Publications:

Butler, L.D. 2012 - present. 30+ episodes *Out On The Land*. Topics included:

Water quantity & quality management	Soil quality	Erosion control
Fish pond management	Marsh restoration	Quail habitat
Water distribution	Prairie restoration	Deer habitat
How to use a soil survey	Forage management	Pheasant habitat
Determining stocking rates	Pasture planting	Fencing
Water trough designs	Brush management	Invasive Plants
Horse property management	Right of Way restoration	Sage Grouse
Lesser-prairie chicken habitat mgmt.	Conservation tillage	No-till farming
Irrigation water management	Forest management	Weed control
Resource conservation/stewardship	Conservation planning	Prescribed fire

Butler, L.D. 2002. Economic survival of western ranching: searching for answers. Chapter 14 pages 195-202, In: *Ranching West of the 100th Meridian: Culture, Ecology, and Economics*. Editors: Knight, R.L., Gilgert, W.C., Marston, E. Island Press. Washington, DC.

Butler, L.D. and E. Mahoney. 2000. Ranch and farm revenue diversification. Pages 51-64. In: *Proceedings of First National Conference on Grazing Lands*. Las Vegas, Nevada. December.

Butler, L. D. and P. Shaver. 1997. Ecological sites for rangeland and forestland. Chapter 3 Section 1, in *National Range and Pasture Handbook*. Technical Editor: Butler, L.D., Natural Resources Conservation Service. Washington, D.C.

Butler, L. D. 1997. Grazing lands enterprise diversification. Chapter 9, in *National Range and Pasture Handbook*. Technical Editor: Butler, L.D., Natural Resources Conservation Service. Washington, D.C.

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Butler, L.D. and R.H. Johnson. 1997. Farm and ranch enterprise diversification. In: *Proceedings of Grazing Lands Symposium from Agronomy Society of America Annual Meeting*. Anaheim, California. October, 1997.

Butler, L.D. 1997. Farm and ranch enterprise diversification in the watershed. In: *Proceedings of National Watershed Conference*. Sparks, Nevada. April, 1997.

Butler, L.D. 1997. Blending buffers with business. USDA. Natural Resources Conservation Service. Grazing Lands Technology Institute. Fort Worth, Texas. (published technical note), 4 pp.

Butler, L.D. 1997. A working cowboy adventure in the foothills of Wyoming's Big Horn Mountains. *Rangelands* 19(1):12-14.

Butler, L.D. 1996. Grazing land economics - made simple: understanding internal rate of return and net present value. USDA. Natural Resources Conservation Service. Grazing Lands Technology Institute. 13 pp.

Butler, L.D. and J.P. Workman. 1993. Fee hunting in the Texas Trans Pecos area: a descriptive and economic analysis. *Journal of Range Management* 46(1): 38-42.

Butler, L.D. 1991. White-tailed deer hunting leases: hunter costs and rancher revenues. *Rangelands* 13(1):20-22.

Butler, L.D. and J.P. Workman. 1991. A comparison of fee hunting on private rangelands in central Oregon and the Texas Trans Pecos. p 269-276; In: *Wildlife Production: Conservation and Sustainable Development*. (Renecker, L.A. and R.J. Hudson, eds.) AFES misc. pub. 91-6. University of Alaska Fairbanks, Alaska, 601 pp.

Butler, L.D. and J.P Workman. 1991. Fee-hunting enterprises, stocking rates, and range condition in the Texas Trans Pecos. p 909-911 In: Proceedings of IVth International Rangeland Congress, Montpellier, France.

Butler, L.D., 1990. Fee hunting on private rangelands in the Texas Trans Pecos and central Oregon. Ph.D. Diss. Utah State Univ. Logan.

Butler, L.D., 1990. Nontraditional uses of rangelands for income producing activities, p. 122-127. In: Proc. from the conference on: Income Opportunities for the Private Landowner through Management of Natural Resources and Recreational Access (eds. Grafton, W.N, A. Ferrise, D. Colyer, D.K. Smith, and J.E. Miller), West Virginia University Extension Service, Morgantown, West Virginia.

Butler, L.D., 1990. Nontraditional Uses of rangelands for income producing activities, p. 9-14. In: Alternative Enterprises - For Farm and Forest Wildlife and Range Potentials (eds. Grafton, W.N., A. Ferrise), West Virginia University Extension Service, Morgantown, West Virginia. R.D. No. 754.

Butler, L. 1977. Devil's River area conservation. Texas Hunters Hotline. Winter. Texas Trophy Hunters Association, San Antonio.

Butler, L. 1976. Rewards and awards for superior range management. The Ranch Magazine (56)4:12.

1974 to present: Numerous news articles, special conservation editions to local newspapers, popular articles, and annual reports while on duty in various SCS/NRCS positions

Justification Statement from Nominator:

Larry D. Butler has spent his entire adult life promoting sound rangeland stewardship. And not just in his "day job." Larry has been a tireless spokesman for rangeland stewardship in both traditional and non-traditional ways. He has used everything from a ride in a pick-up with a landowner to a cowboy poetry reading to training new NRCS employees to promote rangeland stewardship. He has a gift to tell a story, to recite a poem and he has used that gift to further our profession of range science and especially rangeland stewardship.

After two failed meetings to form a coalition, a number of groups, SRM included, gathered for a third and final try. Larry led the effort and the groups walked away from the meeting with the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative formed.....something they could all agree upon.

There is no way to quantify the number of land stewards Larry has worked with or the millions of acres he has impacted. In Texas and beyond. Even when he advanced in his first career, he still stayed involved in the "boots on the ground" part of our profession. His current passion, the television show Out On The Land, is the fulfillment of a dream, a calling, to continue to telling the story of agriculture and sound

rangeland stewardship. He could have retired very comfortably from the NRCS, but his retirement was the beginning of something even bigger.

He has likely reached more people with the message of sound rangeland stewardship than anyone else ever in our profession. Even without the TV show and the gift for storytelling and poetry, Larry Butler had a profound impact on rangeland stewards across the United States. That he has used his gifts to fuel his passion and further spread the good news of sound rangeland stewardship has been and continues to be truly transformational for SRM and range science. Larry is the face of Texas and sound rangeland stewardship to millions of people.

Larry Butler is profoundly deserving of the Texas Section SRM's Outstanding Contribution to Range Management Award.