



*2015 Grass Roots Award Recipient Wade Hibler and TSSRM President Cody Scott*

**Texas Section Society for Rangeland Management**  
**Grass Roots Award – Extension Agent**  
**Wade Hibler**

Wade Hibler retired from the AgriLife Extension Service in August 2014; after serving as the Burnet County Agriculture and Natural Resource extension agent for 23 years. Before coming to Burnet County, he worked in Bastrop, Travis and Lee Counties.

Mr. Hibler has kept himself busy over the years working with local ranchers, the 4-H youth and other local civic organizations. He leads the adult Agriculture and Natural Resource Committee, the Master Gardner and Master Naturalist programs. He is very dedicated to adult education in which he has contributed to chemical and mechanical brush management test plot studies. He provides seminars for agricultural producers to keep up their Continued Education Hours for pesticide licenses. He coordinates the central Texas Hay Show and the Central Texas Pecan Show through his agriculture and natural resource committee. During his time as ag agent, Mr. Hibler also advised the appraisal district on proper stocking rates for conditions in Burnet County as well as the water district about ways that landowners can practice water conservation on their land. He is also a member of the central Texas Prescribed Burn Association. Wade is a licensed non-commercial applicator through the Texas Department of Agriculture. He also coordinates the Burnet County Leadership Advisory Board. Mr. Hibler also volunteers and mentors to surrounding counties new extension agents and is a member of the AgriLife district 7 Epsilon Sigma Phi and Texas County Agriculture Agent Association; where he

helped organize meetings. Mr. Hibler received the Highland Lakes Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation Aldo Leopold Award in 2015 for his dedication and continued work for natural resources conservation.

In working with youth Mr. Hibler has sent many area youth to the Texas Brigade Camps and the Texas Section Society for Range Management Youth Range Workshop and has even volunteered a few times, himself. After the camps, he has been dedicated to helping the youth go back as leaders if they so desired by arranging and taking them to speaking engagements. In recent years he has taught and put together the local steer show, outdoor challenge, sportfish project and camp, shooting sports and has had youth enter the Wildlife Habitat Education Program. In fact Burnet County has one of the top shooting sports programs in district 7. Wade also organized the youth Agriculture and Natural Resource committee which has held youth agriculture education days. Mr. Hibler has also presented at the Progressive Ag Safety Days among other youth education programs. Hibler told Daniel Clifton of the *Daily Tribune* in Burnet County that "even though most people think of 4-H just as livestock shows, Burnet County has a high level of participation in other projects that promote the field of agriculture and natural resources".

Outside of AgriLife Extension; Mr. Hibler is a certified Texas A&M Forest Service Wildland Firefighter, he is a Texas Parks and Wildlife Department certified Hunter Education Instructor, a member of the Burnet County Rodeo Association. He also has a radio show on the local radio station KBEY FM in which he gives the "Ag Report of the Day" and answers questions posed to the "Ask Wade" segment about conservation, agriculture and conservation for both urban and rural landowners.

Upon his retirement, Wade Hibler, marked his 33rd year with the Extension Service and 23 years in Burnet County. In that time, Mr. Hibler tells the *Daily Tribune* that he "has seen the land use change from larger land holdings to smaller properties of around 10, 20 to 40 acres; which has led to a change in how he does his job. Instead of advising landowners on stocking rate decisions, identifying plants, determining animal performance and assessing range health; now the typical Burnet County producers are new/absentee landowners who simply ask what is the best use for the land and how they should start off managing it" more for recreation ,aesthetics and hunting rather than for production. Wade says that "when the extension service added the title Ag and Natural Resource he was okay with the change, because it encompassed more of the work that he does." Hibler says that "extension agents are the eyes for the producers; letting them know what to look out for in terms of natural resource management, such as water use, drought concerns and pests". Fellow agents have noted that Wade Hibler truly believes in "making the best better" and the residents of Burnet County all appreciate and respect Wade Hibler for his example and dedication to the field of natural resource management. And although he has retired; he continues to help the field of agriculture and natural resources.

Wade Hibler received a Bachelor and Master of Science degree from Texas A&M University in Agricultural Education and grew up in San Saba County; where he was active in the 4-H program and developed a love of the outdoors; hunting, kayaking and fishing; so extension education was natural fit for him.