



*Texas Section*  
**Society for Range Management**

# April 2021 TSSRM Newsletter

## *President's Address*

Happy spring ya'll!

Mesquite is leafed out, Scissor-tailed Flycatchers and hummingbirds are in full force, and if West Texas ranchers are correct, we may experience one more cold snap. Currently, over 75% of Texas is classified as moderate to exceptional drought, but I have faith that our spring rains are right around the corner. I am pleased that TSSRM has been busy in its first quarter of the year and, excitingly, the future holds much more in store for us!!

The Society for Range Management just concluded the 74th International Annual Meeting (virtually) February 15-18th. The meeting saw an outstanding turnout with over 1,600 rangeland managers and scientists that embraced this year's virtual format. The Texas Section was a big contributor to the success of the 2021 SRM Virtual Annual Meeting. Members of our Section were present in nearly every facet of the meeting, from award recipients, online presentations, and committees. Texas Section members were recognized in three categories of national level awards. Those recognized included Frank Price and Veronica Urbanczyk.

Frank S. Price received the W.R. Chapline Land Stewardship Award. This award is given in special recognition to members of the Society for exceptional accomplishments and contributions in the application of the art and science of range management. Veronica A. Urbanczyk received the Young Professional's Conclave Outstanding Early Career Award at the Society for Range Management's (SRM) 74th Annual Meeting held virtually earlier this February. This award presented to an individual member who has shown outstanding dedication to the SRM within the first five (5) years of their career. It is meant as an encouragement for young professionals that make the difficult transition from student SRM member, to fully engaged professional members of the society. The 75th Society for Range Management meeting is scheduled to take place in Albuquerque, New Mexico in February of 2022 and will be in-person!

While we get settled back into our routine, summer will be busy for TSSRM! Our friends at Texas Sheep and Goat Raisers Association are working with our Awards Committee led by Mandi Ligon to deliver a stellar TSSRM/TSGRA Outstanding Rangeland Stewardship Award at their annual meeting July 15-17 in Kerrville at the YO Hotel. The Texas Section has plans to host a booth at the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Convention in Fort Worth July 23-25. And we will also be at the Texas Wildlife Association in San Antonio this July 15-18. These events are crucial to represent Texas Section because numerous people stop by to inquire about the function of our organization, pick up literature related to the management of rangelands, and show real interest in joining our Section.

One of the goals of TSSRM this year is to enhance membership, mentoring, and transparency. While major events such as TSCRA play a key role in visibility/information dissemination, the real "bang for the buck" takes place at the local and regional levels. That being said, plans are underway for a summer range tour! More details will be coming in the next couple weeks. However, if you are involved in planning and hosting a range field day or similar event in your city, county or region or know of an event where TSSRM could play a role, don't hesitate to let Bill Fox, Doug Tolleson or any member of the Board of Directors (Rob Cook, Megan Clayton, Michael Willson, Caitlyn Cooper, Matthew Coffman and Carrie Seiler) know about it! Maybe TSSRM can help with a speaker, handouts, the booth or some financial support.

One of the premier events of TSSRM, Youth Range Workshop, is just around the corner June 20-25 in Junction (see flyer). As the longest running natural resource

education venue for young people in the nation, YRW exemplifies the mission of our section; Providing Leadership for the Stewardship of Rangelands Based on Sound Ecological Principles. Dan Caudle, Jenny Pluhar, and their committee have created amazing momentum and have worked very hard to elevate YRW into a meaningful and impactful learning event. We appreciate their efforts and are grateful for their hard work! More information about YRW can be found in this issue of Grass Roots.

The revision of our website, [www.texassrm.org](http://www.texassrm.org) is progressing well and it should be up and running in the near future. We are also in the final stages of our logo redesign. I think you will be pleased with the new look, the information provided, and the timeliness of the updates. This is your website, just as Grass Roots is your newsletter, and the TSSRM Board encourages your participation in both venues. Please submit articles, announcements of events to Deann Burson for inclusion in either the newsletter and/or on the webpage.

The Board of Directors will be meeting in Junction celebrating the accomplishments of our YRW participants on the final day of Range Camp on June 25. If you have an issue or an idea that has been rolling around in your mind of something that might be good for TSSRM, please let one of the officers or directors know. Contact information for each member of the BOD is listed in the newsletter. Committee activities and some deadlines are approaching, and the BOD will be requesting status reports from each committee of their activities to date.

Looking forward to seeing ya'll soon at events and programs, but more importantly on our Texas rangelands!

-Morgan Treadwell  
TSSRM President

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## *Plant of the Season* *by Dr. Jake Landers*

### **Texas Wintergrass** (*Nassella leucotricha*)

Texas wintergrass began greening up in January in central Texas this year which is not uncommon if you get the moisture. It is common in pastures and low maintenance lawns in the eastern two-thirds of Texas. Because it is a perennial bunchgrass it has more lasting presence than Rescue grass (*Ceratochloa cathartica*), an annual which comes on vigorously with good moisture in every county, matures quickly, sets seeds, and is gone. Texas wintergrass persists.

With good spring moisture, clumps of Texas wintergrass expand and grow abundant seed heads, which, in some years, resemble a waving field of grain. It can sustain heavy grazing before the warm season grasses appear, then go dormant with hot weather.

In years of good winter and spring moisture my Dad would graze heavily those pastures where it was abundant to reduce the crop of seeds. The seeds with a sharp point were the little spears we used as kids to aggravate each other in battle, but on drying became too twisted to throw, the awns designed to twist

with changes in moisture and bury the seeds into the ground. The seeds would easily penetrate the skin of lambs to cause severe damage. In a very good spring as the seed heads became fully mature it was a good procedure to hold the lambs in another pasture until wind and rain could shatter the seeds to the ground.

In 2011 the heat and lack of rainfall resulted in many acres of bare ground on the ranch. Texas wintergrass was one of the early grasses to reappear, perhaps from hidden seeds in the base of old clumps. It grows best in full sunlight on the deeper soils competing well with Buffalo grass and Common curly mesquite.

Some years ago a cattle rancher in Coleman County sought to increase Texas wintergrass on some pastures to balance his grazing rotations. At the time there was no available commercial source of seed. The problem with harvesting seeds is the awn. On drying it kinks and twists making an unmanageable tangle. Using a new way of processing, seeds are now available at Native American Seeds at Junction.

My suggestion as a last resort was to get a busload of 6<sup>th</sup> graders for a field trip and stop in a pasture with abundant Texas wintergrass seeding out. Have them get out and let them mill around on their own for 15 minutes then call them back to the bus. Each one would have a fist full of "Speargrass" seeds that they were taking back to intimidate classmates. Confiscate the "spears" and scatter them in the pasture where you want more Texas wintergrass before the awns dry out and start to twist.

In an earlier time an experimental project on a ranch where sheep were important, fire was used at different times of the year to reduce Texas wintergrass, but in all treatments it seemed only to increase it. Texas wintergrass survives by its own rules.



Texas Wintergrass, *Nassella leucotricha*, seed head found at Angelo State University's Management, Instruction, and Research Center in October 2020.

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## ***The Society for Range Management's 74th International Annual Meeting was a success!***

Kicked off by TSSRM member and SRM President Dr. Charlie Hart, this year's meeting was attended by over 1,600 rangeland managers and scientists! The virtual platform allowed direct contact and messaging among meeting attendees, Q&A with presenters, and opportunities to meet colleagues working on similar topics and challenges.

This year's headline plenary sessions included speakers from around the world on the hot topics of:

- Inside And Outside The Ranch Gate: How Do We Conserve Ranches And Support Stewardship?
- Adapt (Or Succumb) To Climate Change On Rangelands
- Wicked Problems In Wildland Fire

## **Missed out on the event? WE HAVE YOU COVERED.**

Live streamed events are still available to watch for **FREE** on the [SRM Facebook Page](#) and [SRM YouTube Channel](#).

Topics include:



- Plenary Sessions
- Global Rangeland Tours
- SRM Business Meeting
- SRM Honor Awards
- SRM Student Awards

# Congratulations to the following TSSRM members on their NATIONAL awards!

*The 2021 Society for Range Management Award for*

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**OUTSTANDING YOUNG RANGE PROFESSIONAL**

*goes to....*



**DR.  
= MORGAN =  
TREADWELL**

*TSSRM President Dr. Morgan Treadwell was recognized at the Society for Range Management's (SRM) 74th Annual Meeting as the recipient of the 2021 Outstanding Young Range Professional Award. This award is presented by the Society to an individual member who has demonstrated superior performance and leadership potential in any range-related area. The nominee must be less than 40 years of age on January 1st of the year the award is conferred.*

Morgan Treadwell has a true passion for rangeland management and bringing the science to producers. Her passion is coupled with a strong work ethic, leading to numerous programs and trainings. Morgan's strong background and knowledge in fire has filled a much needed niche for West Central Texas. She has hosted numerous programs on prescribed burning and has been conducting prescribed burning schools each year for anyone interested in implementing the practice on rangelands. Without a doubt, many of Morgan's activities and accomplishments are a result of her position as a Range

Extension Specialist. The characteristic that separates Morgan is that she does not stop when reaching the desired minimum for her position. For example, Morgan is actively involved in numerous research projects at both Texas A&M University and Angelo State University even though her position is 100% Extension. Because of work ethic and passion for rangeland management, she exceeds all expectations resulting in her being an outstanding candidate for the Outstanding Young Professional Award. Lastly, even with a hectic schedule as a Range Extension Specialist she finds the time to remain active with SRM and TSSRM. She has just recently completed a term on the TSSRM Board of Directors, served as Vice President and is currently serving as President of TSSRM. Likewise, she is active in supporting youth activities and other community service activities. Texas Section and SRM are certainly fortunate to have someone with Morgan's work ethic, knowledge, and leadership as a member.

For the tremendous contributions to the science and management of rangeland ecosystems she has made, it is with great honor the Society of Range Management recognized Dr. Morgan Treadwell with an Outstanding Young Range Professional Award.



*Frank S. Price received the W.R. Chapline Land Stewardship Award at the Society for Range Management's (SRM) 74th Annual Meeting held virtually earlier this February.*

*This award gives special recognition to members of the Society for exceptional accomplishments and contributions in the application of the art and science of range management. It is given in recognition of exceptional landowners, land managers, administrators and counselors in the field of range management and supporting*

*disciplines. Only one award is given annually and is one of the most prestigious awards presented by SRM.*

Frank ranches in Sterling County, Texas with his son Sims and their wives Ginger and Krista. Frank is the fifth generation to ranch in the area.

Frank is an exceptional land steward with a deep understanding of rangeland ecosystems. He has taken leased ranches and markedly improved range conditions, thus improving stocking rates and profitability. He is an outspoken advocate for grazing management, whether he is speaking on Capitol Hill, at a Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association meeting, or in his wildly popular facebook/blog posts. He is known for telling the hard truth, reminding many ranchers that they are falling short of sound stewardship of their rangelands and reminding the scientific community that their communication styles often fall far short of being meaningful to land stewards. Frank is a tireless advocate and has the reputation of excellence in rangeland stewardship necessary for his voice to be heard. He is on the cutting edge of range management, including ways to protect west Texas communities from dangerous wildfires with grazing management and range improvement practices.

Frank is active in various commodity groups, including Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers and Texas Sheep and Goat Raisers Associations as well as Texas Section Society for Range Management and the Texas Grazing Land Coalition. He was recently honored with the Texas Section SRM's Outstanding Contribution to Range Management Award.

For the tremendous contributions to the science and management of rangeland ecosystems he has made, it is with great honor the Society of Range Management recognized Frank Price with the W.R. Chapline Land Stewardship Award.

The 2021 Society for Range Management Award for  
**Young Professional's Conclave Outstanding Early Career**  
goes to....



**VERONICA**  
**URBANCZYK**

*Veronica A. Urbanczyk received the Young Professional's Conclave (YPC) Outstanding Early Career Award at the Society for Range Management's 74th Annual Meeting held virtually earlier this February. This award presented to an individual member who has shown outstanding dedication to the SRM within the first five years of their career. It is meant as an encouragement for young professionals that make the difficult transition from student SRM member, to fully engaged professional members of the society.*

Veronica embodies the attitude and spirit of a young professional in SRM- she is a true innovator and seeks to inspire new ways of thinking about rangeland management. As an active SRM member for the past eight years, Veronica's dedication to building community within SRM has continued to grow. Her involvement began as an undergraduate, when she competed in Plant ID, URME, and Extemporaneous Speaking and was elected as Student Conclave President in 2015. Veronica served as president for the Young Professionals Conclave (YPC) in 2019 and currently serves as the YPC Advisory Council Chair and the Texas Section YPC Chair. She is constantly brainstorming new activities, events, or research projects that can bring people together under the common goal of maintaining and enhancing working landscapes. For example, she has pioneered new events focused on connecting diverse stakeholders at both the section and parent society level. This includes organizing a team building weekend for the Texas Section YPC, Co-chairing a panel discussion, greenhorn to Trailboss: Cultivating the Next Generation of Stewards. Veronica is committed to uniting stakeholders through shared priorities of conserving native habitat, prioritizing sustainable land stewardship and fostering producer-professional relationships. Her experience working as a ranch manager has

highlighted the importance of thinking about ranch success and range health holistically as a manager- she values establishing realistic monitoring plans and recommended effective management practices. Veronica is a true innovator and isn't afraid to take risks or try something new to develop community amongst students and professionals involved in natural resources management— her passion for range management, innovative approach to problem solving and dedication to community building are why Veronica is so deserving of this YPC Outstanding Early Career Award.

For the tremendous contributions to the science and management of rangeland ecosystems she has made, it is with great honor the Society of Range Management recognized Veronica A. Urbanczyk with the Young Professional's Conclave Outstanding Early Career Award.

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## Seasoned Veteran Member Highlight

### *Dr. Bill Fox*

**Education:**

B.S. Range Science – Texas A&M University

M.S. Animal & Range Sciences – New Mexico State University

Ph.D. – Rangeland Ecology & Management – Texas A&M University

**Occupation:**

Associate Professor – Texas A&M AgriLife Research, Rangeland, Wildlife &

## Fisheries Management Department

### **Tell us a little about yourself.**

I am a 4<sup>th</sup> generation Texan whose family has been in ranching in Bee County for over 100 years. 4F Farms received its Land Heritage recognition from the Texas Department of Agriculture in 2012 and my kids will be the 5<sup>th</sup> generation to be working the land. My earliest memories from childhood are going to the “place” with my grandfather and it was his passion that instilled my love of the land at an early age. My family enjoys anything outdoors from the work on the land to hunting and fishing. I have a 21 year old daughter that will graduate from Texas A&M in the Spring of 2021 and plans to attend the Bush School for her graduate program. I also have an 18 year old son who will be graduating from A&M Consolidate High School in 2021 and will be attending Tulsa Welding School. Hobbies include hunting, fishing, soccer, golf and a healthy dose of live music across all genres.

**How long have you been a member of TSSRM?** 32 years

### **What are your most humbling SRM/TSSRM moments?**

Being recognized with the SRM Outstanding Young Range Professional Award in 2001, TSSRM Outstanding Achievement Award in 2018, and a TSSRM Fellow Award in 2020. I am truly humbled by this.

### **What do you like most about your job?**

Without a doubt, the most wonderful part of my job is working with the folks in the industry that are seeking every day to be good stewards of our working lands. It is, by far, the most rewarding part of my job...working with people!!!

### **How has TSSRM helped you in your career development?**

Two things that have been critical for my career development have come from TSSRM: 1) The Network! – This is by far the best thing I have gotten out of my time with TSSRM, not only professionally, but personally. My friends and family in TSSRM have been colleagues, motivators, educators, mentors and sometimes critics; and each one has been extremely valuable to my professional development; 2) the learning experience – TSSRM provides such a great culmination of experts and experienced colleagues...from fellow scientists to friends that have been managing the land everyday for decades, TSSRM brings together a tremendous resource of knowledge that is second to none.

### **What advice would you give to students pursuing a career in the range discipline?**

Look beyond the traditional ideas of “range science” and “range management”

to places where the processes and functions are still relevant, but not necessarily directly tied. I would have never imagined I would be spending time in the neuro-science literature trying to understand how the decision-making process takes place in the human brain, but I ended up there when I began working on how to better communicate science to the decision-maker because this was the only way actions were going to be taken. Believe it or not, most all behaviors that lead to decision-making are middle brain functions and do not lend themselves to expression through language...how many times have we heard from action agents and land managers the answer “it seemed like the right thing to do,” or “I had a gut-feeling.” These are responses that are generated from that part of the brain that does not connect with language...but through experience end up being critical to the decision-making process of the land manager. Another piece of advice is to look beyond our profession for opportunities...I have been working with folks in the visualization industry and gaming industry to seek out novel ways to translate our profession into highly effective communication methods. So many people are visual learners, but yet all of our time is spent telling a story or writing a manuscript. With technology, virtual reality, augmented reality and other means of communication are likely to become much more prevalent, so look to the horizon to find opportunities beyond the range discipline.

**What is your favorite part of TSSRM?**

Anything that has to do with being around people...so TSSRM Annual Meeting, field-days, Board Meetings, conferences or just ranch visits. Anything that provides me the opportunity to learn from those I respect in the industry.

**Do you have a teacher/mentor that has played a significant role in your life? If so, who and why?**

The list I could generate would likely take days to finish, but there are a couple who paved the way for me...

1. Dr. Joe Schuster – who was the department head when I transferred into Range Science. From Dr. Schuster, I learned that the passion for the land goes well beyond the surface...it is something that is driven from the heart. Dr. Schuster was a true gentleman pioneer of the range!
2. Dr. Stephen Hatch – who taught me to follow dreams and was that person who provided the opportunity for me to “look past the horizon” on where I might go with my professional career.
3. Dr. Larry White – who taught me to strain the limits of what is considered “traditional” and push beyond the status quo into realms of opportunity. He taught me to question everything...sometimes to the point of causing



a little grief for myself...but his mentorship opened up so much of what I am doing today.

**What is your favorite range plant and why?**

I can't limit this to just one...so I will stop at two, but being trained as a taxonomist...all plants are my favorites.

1. Sideoats gramma – 1<sup>st</sup> off, it is the State Grass of Texas and, 2<sup>nd</sup> it has been the one grass across all my research that has had the most success
2. Locoweed (Astragalus or Oxytropis) – this one is funny, because these two genera were the ones I studied at New Mexico State, but their reason for my list...when I was collecting on the side of the road on the Jicarilla Apache Reservation in NW New Mexico, I was approached by a reservation law officer who asked “what are you doing?” My answer, not thinking about how it might sound, was “collecting locoweed.” Needless to say, that prompted an interesting conversation on the side of the road.



**Young Gun Member Highlight**  
*Matthew Coffman*

**Education:**

B.S. Animal Science, Angelo State University



M.S. Animal Science, Angelo State University

**Occupation:**

USDA-NRCS, Rangeland Management Specialist/Grazinglands Specialist

**Tell us a little about yourself.**

11 years into a career with NRCS and have been Grazinglands Specialist based out of Snyder, TX since 2014. My hobbies include music, hunting and fishing as much as possible, but most spare time is devoted to practicing what I preach on a small family operation outside of Benjamin, TX.

**How long have you been a member of TSSRM?**

12 years

**What would you describe as your greatest accomplishment to date?**

That's hard to say. Working with NRCS you have to count the small victories on all the places we work with whether big or small: The small landowner that just wants their place to be better and more sustainable and after 2 years of hand holding you've got a good looking small operation with a landowner that has a greater understanding of their natural resources as a whole. Or a place you talked into setting up grazing exclosures and monitoring points, and after some pictures and forage clipping data, there's a real grazing plan coming into action. Probably one of my favorites was a 6 year old dragging a drip torch he could barely carry behind his daddy. Lighting a prescribed fire on a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation family operation that hadn't used prescribed fire as a management tool in over 50 years. If you're going to impact range management, you have to impact the culture of the range managers.

**What do you like most about your job?**

The variability of the operations and the producers we work with. No two places are alike. Maybe similar, but the course to achieving their objectives is always unique and so the art and science of applying sound range management on each place is always unique. And getting one of those small victories is always a great reward.

**How has TSSRM helped you in your career development?**

How has it not?! The collective knowledge represented by our membership has been the source of more career successes than I can count. The network of professionals, experience and information within TSSRM I would hold up against

any other group in the world.

**What advice would you give to students pursuing a career in the range discipline?**

Become a member of SRM. Take time to listen and learn from anybody who has good experience in the field whether it's a rancher, agency employee, academic researcher or a private contractor. Check your ego and don't be afraid to admit if you don't know something. Always follow up with people when you say you will. Keep an open mind and remember we're working with a living ecosystem. Things change and you have to be flexible and have contingency plans.

**What is your favorite part of TSSRM?**

Being able to connect with like-minded individuals that are serious about stewarding our states range resources is a huge source of support and a great morale booster when you need it. Again, it all goes back to the network of support in anything regarding range management.

**Do you have a teacher/mentor that has played a significant role in your life? If so, who and why?**

There's been too many to count, but just a few that helped get me off the ground.

My Dad: Farmer, rancher and teacher. Everything was a science experiment and you can learn from every trial and error and improve upon it.

Cody Scott: My professor at ASU that got me truly thinking deeper about range management in general.

Dale Rollins: How to view everything through the eyes of the wildlife communities that live in rangelands and consider as many variables as possible.

Clint Rollins: Responsible for my range management training when I started with NRCS. One of the best sources of practical application of range knowledge there is.

Ryan McClintock: Most anything I do right within the NRCS I still credit to him.

Kevin Wright: My supervisor when I first got to the Snyder Resource Team with NRCS. He had a brilliant mind for range management. He led by example and taught me volumes about how to work with people and not just go through the motions of EQIP or quote a rule book.

### What is your favorite range plant and why?

I'd have to go with Little Bluestem. It may not be the greatest as far as forage quality, but it's one of the few taller grasses that has persisted in this area in any significant amount. It makes good nesting habitat for grassland birds, and is tall enough to provide screening cover for deer fawns and other wildlife. It has a deep root system and looks pretty in the fall when it's tall, headed out and turns red.

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# WE NEED YOUR VOTE!

The Texas Section Society for Range Management is proud to announce Dr. Urs Kreuter's nomination for SRM 2nd Vice President! Please show your support for Dr. Kreuter by voting in the upcoming 2022 SRM Officer election.



### Candidate Statement

I am honored to be selected as a candidate for the SRM 2<sup>nd</sup> VP position in 2022. Based on my broad range of impactful service to the SRM during my 33 years of membership, I believe I have the capacity to be highly effective in this important leadership position. Most notable is my leadership of the Finance Committee during a time when the Society transitioned from a financially existential threat to a position of financial strength. Additionally, if elected, I will be the sole Texas representative in the SRM leadership team in 2022-2023 when all of the Board members, the VP and the President will be from other states. I hope I can count on your vote.

My desire to serve in this leadership position stems from my lifelong passion for

rangelands. Being born and raised in East and Southern Africa, this passion started at an early age. Since graduating with a BS and MS in grassland science and a PhD in range economics, my professional career has focused on improving knowledge about the ecological-economic and human dimensions of rangeland management in Texas.

My SRM service has included seven years on the Finance Committee, where I served as Chair-elect and Chair during the last four years, and membership of the Endowment Fund Development Committee and the Investment Subcommittee. I have also served on International Affairs Committee for many years, including as committee Chair, and I served as Associate Editor for Rangeland Ecology & Management, on the Rangeland Ecology & Management Steering Committee, and on the Journal of Range Management Task Force. Additionally, I actively represented the SRM's interests during my eight-year term on the International Rangeland Congress Continuing Committee and at numerous IRC meetings, and I was a Steering Committee member of the Sustainable Rangeland Roundtable for five years. Importantly, I was also the Chair for the Program Committee for the highly successful 2005 SRM Annual Meeting in Ft. Worth, Texas. Unfortunately, I have not had the opportunity to serve on the SRM Board but was a very close runner up in 2013 (I lost by a single vote). I also have not held office in the TSSRM due to conflicts with other commitments. However, I believe that these limitations have been more than overcome by my recent leadership of the Finance Committee. That experience alone will enable me to help steer the SRM to even greater financial strength. Another key issue of the SRM where I plan to provide strong leadership is in membership diversification and growth. The unexpectedly high registration for the 2021 virtual annual meeting indicates that a mixed-mode platform for future SRM meetings could substantially increase membership. To grow membership, I will actively promote effective strategies for reaching out to diverse groups of younger members, former senior members, and Agency personnel who cannot readily attend the SRM meetings in person. Additionally, I would lead an effort to encourage universities to reinstate or fortify rangeland management programs that have been diminished or absorbed into other programs in recent years. Lastly, if elected, I will represent the SRM as second 2nd VP-elect at the 2021 IRC in Nairobi, Kenya, where I will support the initiative to globally declare 2026 as the International Year of Range and Pastoralists.

The election for SRM 2022 officers will take place later this summer. You MUST be an active member of SRM to vote.

BALLOTS WILL BE SENT ELECTRONICALLY UNLESS YOU HAVE SELECTED THE PAPER BALLOT OPTION. Instructions for updating your ballot preference, as well as your membership renewal delivery preference, can be found on the SRM website (<https://bit.ly/3twGptL>).

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**DON'T MISS** these upcoming lectures in the *RWFM STEWARDSHIP WEBINAR SERIES!*

**May 6**

Noon CST

*Fighting Fire with Fire: Fighting Fire with Fire – Rx Fire Toolbox to Combat Identified Social Barriers*

Dr. Urs Kreuter, Texas A&M University, Department of Ecology and Conservation Biology

Elevated fuel loads together with projected hotter and drier climatic conditions will likely lead to more frequent erratic wildfires in the western USA. Recognition that changing climate and decades of fuel accumulation are increasing the risks of wildfire has led to calls for fire management reform, including the widespread use of prescribed fire to reduce fuel loads. However, this shift in fire management emphasis is failing to be widely adopted due to social and regulatory barriers to using fire. To ensure fire management reform is broadly adopted on private land in the western states, the attitudes of stakeholders towards the use of prescribed fire as a wildfire reduction tool need to be clearly understood.

**June 3, 2021**

Noon CST

## *Top 10 Most Threatening Brush and Weeds in Texas*

Dr. Barron Rector, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, College Station

If you asked rangeland managers what the worst plant is that people work with, you would hear a thousand different answers. But the word “threatening” is key. A threat can take on many different forms such as to the water cycle and promotion of clean air and water, to the livestock industry with illness, mortality, and market fluctuations, opportunistic and potentially monoculture forming, uncontrollable by current knowledge and methodology, unaffected by prescribed burns or wildfires, or on the federal or state invasive and noxious plant lists. But, sometimes, the most threatening weed and brush species are those that you do not know the name of, thus you can’t look them up or prepare a plan of attack because you walk by them not knowing they are a threat. The worst threatening plant could also be the mis-identified plant on iNaturalist and you select the wrong management tool and actually make the situation worse. During this webinar, participants will not only learn how invasive brush and weeds can threaten rangelands, but also tips and tricks to identifying the top weed and brush species in Texas.

Check out <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu> for more information!



## Have you checked out *The Rangelands Gateway?*

**Who are they?**

The Rangelands Partnership bridges the gap between peer-reviewed content and on-the-ground professionals by maintaining a content portal which provides access to a complete reference website. The Partnership is a collaboration between university rangeland specialists and librarians, designed for those who rely on synthesized scientific information to manage rangelands or advise those who do. The Partnership

uses different communication modes to connect individuals to reliable science-based information for application in the real world.

### **What do they do?**

This multi-state collaboration allows Partners to share their experiences, challenges, and needs. Strong collaboration leads to creative and new ideas. Originally, we created a database of quality, peer-reviewed information related to the ecology and management of rangelands. This search allows users to discover thousands of journal articles, websites, images, databases, videos, maps, reports, and decisions making tools. These resources are useful for research, teaching, and practical applications for rangeland management. This database of rangeland information is our backbone. Over the two decades, our understanding about how people learn has expanded and the Partnership has evolved to meet these new demands. Our multi-disciplinary group collaborates and actively pursues grants to create new, cutting-edge, and much needed educational resources for multiple audiences through diverse platforms including videos, phone applications, decision-making tools, and more. We strive to work together, to create exciting new rangelands products, and ultimately make a positive impact on the rangelands we all love.

**To get reliable science related to rangeland ecology and management, click the link below!**

**[www.RangelandsGateway.org](http://www.RangelandsGateway.org)**

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66TH ANNUAL  
*Texas Section Society for Range Management*  
**YOUTH RANGE WORKSHOP**

**JOIN OTHER HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS  
FROM ACROSS TEXAS FOR A FUN,  
EXCITING, EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE!**

Learn about Texas Rangelands and Natural Resource Management from a team of experts including: Ranchers, Rangeland Management Specialists, Soil Scientists, Wildlife Biologists, Educators, and Consultants.

**Educational Experiences,  
Demonstrations & Hands-on Experiences**

- Range Management & Wildlife Habitat Management
- Grazing Management & Forage Preference
- Soil Science & Soil Health
- Plant Identification & Plant Collection
- Rangeland Health Evaluation
- Fire Ecology & Prescribed Burning
- Rainfall Effectiveness & the Water Cycle
- Brush Management
- Carbon Cycle Relationships
- Field Trips to Area Ranches

**When/Where/Who/Cost:**

June 20-25, 2021

Texas Tech University Center  
at Junction, Texas

Students (14 to 18 years old) who have  
completed 8th grade.

Cost is \$500 per student and includes all  
meals, lodging, and educational materials.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION :**

**For Workshop Info:**

Caitlyn Cooper-Norris – (940) 229-1270 or  
Dan Caudle – (817) 597-0788

Sponsorship opportunities may be available  
from Soil and Water Conservation Districts,  
ranches, businesses, or organizations in  
your local area.

**For questions or information on  
financial matters contact:**

Jenny Pluhar – (806) 679-8729

**APPLY AT: [HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/2021YRW](https://tinyurl.com/2021YRW)**

 [facebook.com/TSSRMYouthRangeWorkshop](https://facebook.com/TSSRMYouthRangeWorkshop)



# FIRST CALL FOR ABSTRACTS!

ABSTRACTS ARE NOW BEING ACCEPTED FOR POSTER AND ORAL PRESENTATIONS  
AT THE  
TEXAS SECTION SOCIETY FOR RANGE MANAGEMENT ANNUAL MEETING  
THAT WILL BE HELD ON  
OCTOBER 20-22, 2021 IN VICTORIA, TX

*Abstracts are now being accepted for the  
Don Pendleton Memorial Collegiate Awards*

Click the link below to read the guidelines for submission.

Deadline for submission of abstracts is September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021.

[Abstract Submission Guidelines](#)



*The Texas Section is proud to recognize the contributions of their  
members through a variety of awards.*

# **TSSRM Honor Awards**

## **(Nominations Due August 15th)**

### ***TSSRM Outstanding Contribution to Rangeland Management Award***

The title of Outstanding Contribution to Rangeland Management is presented to a member who is actively engaged in ranching or livestock farming or in the professional fields dealing with range management; a recognized leader in rangeland management, accepted over a large segment of the State, if not statewide; interested in the promotion and advancement of the art and science of range management; and display an unselfish interest and activity towards the advancement and improvement of range management and actively engaged in and giving support to the various programs and organizations dedicated to range management. Finally, the candidate must have made a contribution to the advancement of the art and science of range management that is worthy of special recognition.

### ***Fellow Award***

The title of Fellow is conferred upon members of the Texas Section in recognition of exceptional service to the Section and its programs in advancing the science and art of range-related resource management. This high honor is granted in belief that special recognition should be given for exceptional and dedicated service to the Texas Section.

### ***Outstanding Achievement Award***

The purpose of this award is to recognize members and other qualified individuals and groups for their outstanding achievement in working with rangelands. Among those to be considered are ranchers, technicians and administrators in land management agencies who have conducted superior rangeland management practices; scientists who have developed and conducted research leading to the solution of major problems in range and related resource management; university professors who have been especially effective in training range management students; extension specialists who have motivated ranchers and others on a wide scale to adapt superior resource management practices; and persons who have shown outstanding perception and legislative ability in contributing significantly to resource management at a state, national, or international level.

### ***Outstanding Young Range Professional Award***

The Outstanding Young Range Professional Award is presented by the TSSRM to an individual member who has demonstrated extraordinary potential and promise as a range management professional. This award is presented as an encouragement for outstanding performance by young men and women entering the profession of range management.

### ***The Special Recognition Award***

The purpose of Special Recognition Awards is to provide the Texas Section an opportunity to occasionally recognize certain individuals for the outstanding contributions they have made to the general field of range management. This is not an annual award nor is it limited to a set number of awards in any one year. Any individual is eligible for nomination.

### **Honor Award Nomination Form**

## **Outstanding Rangeland Management Award** (Nominations due June 1st)

The purpose of this award is to recognize those who have demonstrated outstanding skill and knowledge in practicing sound management and care of rangeland resources. This is a competitive award and only one will be given each year. This award is linked to the ranch. Once a ranch has received the award, it is not eligible to receive it again. If more than one ranch is owned and/or operated by the same person, each ranch is eligible.

Nominations shall be made by persons who are well acquainted with the ranching and range management practices of the nominee. Nominations may be made by members of TSSRM or by non-members. All nominations have concurrence by two members of TSSRM who agree that the nominee is truly deserving of this recognition. The nomination form outlines the information required.

Completed nominations may be sent to TSSRM ORM Award Committee Chair:  
Mandi Ligon at [mandi.ligon@usda.gov](mailto:mandi.ligon@usda.gov)

### **ORM Nomination Form**

## **Outstanding Rangeland Stewardship Award TSCRA and TSGRA** (Nominations due June 1st)

The Texas Section Society for Range Management along with the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association (TSCRA) and the Texas Sheep and Goat Raisers Association (TSGRA) present this award to recognize producers who have demonstrated outstanding skill and knowledge in practicing sound management and care of rangeland resources. This is a competitive award and only one will be given each year. This award is linked to the ranch. Once a ranch has received the award, it is not eligible to receive it again. If more than one ranch is owned and/or operated by the same person, each ranch is eligible.

Nominations shall be made by persons who are well acquainted with the ranching and range management practices of the nominee. Nominations may be made by anyone, although all nominations must be concurred by two members of TSSRM who agree the nominee is truly deserving of this recognition.

The ORS Committee will appraise the nominations and select those that meet the standards for outstanding rangeland management. The committee will select the most qualified and coordinate field visits to the ranches.

Completed nominations may be sent to TSSRM ORM Award Committee Chair:  
Mandi Ligon at [mandi.ligon@usda.gov](mailto:mandi.ligon@usda.gov)

## ORS Nomination Form

# Grass Roots Awards

Awards can be presented in the following categories:

- a) Extension Agent
- b) Ag Science Teacher
- c) Natural Resources Conservation Service
- d) Friend of TSSRM (other agencies, ag business, news reporters, etc.)

It is intended that one award will be given in each category annually, however, if no nominations are received in a category or the quality of entrants is unacceptable, no awards will be presented.

### NOTES:

- ◆ The nomination forms may be supplemented by pictures, news articles, or other appropriate material; however, the nomination packet is not to exceed three (3) typewritten (single spaced) pages.
- ◆ Career accomplishments shall be considered.
- ◆ Nominees need not be a member of SRM, however they are limited to working in a maximum of four (4) counties. Nominations can be made by anyone, regardless of

whether they are members of the SRM or not. All nominations must be signed by the nominator and by two members of the Section.

◆ Ensure that all award recipients, to extent possible, remain confidential until awards are presented at Annual Meeting.

Completed nominations may be sent to TSSRM Publication Awards Committee Chairs:

Kaitlin Fry at [Kaitlin.fry@usda.gov](mailto:Kaitlin.fry@usda.gov)

Sawyer Warick at [Sawyer.warick@usda.gov](mailto:Sawyer.warick@usda.gov)

## Grass Roots Nomination Form

# Publication Awards

The Texas Section-SRM annually recognizes literary and scholarly efforts in publicizing range management practices, philosophies, and research activities. The TSSRM Publications Awards Committee is soliciting nominations for awards to be presented at the 2021 TSSRM Annual Meeting. One award will be presented in each of the following categories:

**Technical Writing:** articles submitted in this category should be those directed primarily to scientists that advance the knowledge of range management and science in Texas. Examples: articles in peer-reviewed journals articles or proceedings from technical meetings.

**Popular Article:** articles directed primarily towards range managers, landowners, or the general public. Examples: magazine articles, news articles, fact sheets.

**Special Category:** contributions that do not fit appropriately in either the *Technical Writing* or *Popular Article* category. Examples: book chapters, poetry, editorials.

To be eligible, the article must have been published during 2019 – 2021. TSSRM membership of at least one author is required for both the Technical Writing and Popular Article categories, but not for the Special Category.

Please email or surface mail one copy of each nominated publication (pdf file preferred) along with the required information on nomination form (below) and a brief description (no more than 1 page with 12 pt Times new roman single space) of its importance to rangelands by Friday August 6, 2021 to:

**Humberto L. Perotto, Chair**  
**TSSRM Publication Awards Committee**

**Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute  
Texas A&M University - Kingsville  
700 University Boulevard MSC 218  
Kingsville, TX 78363  
361-593-3977  
humberto.perotto@tamuk.edu**

## **Publication Award Nomination Form**

*For full description of the award categories and detailed information and instructions on the award nomination process, visit our website by clicking the link below.*

**CLICK HERE!**

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**The TSSRM newsletter wishes to recognize outstanding faculty members for the research they are conducting on rangelands. This issue will feature a recent publication of the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute at Texas A&M University-Kingsville by Dr. J. Alfonso Ortega-S., Dillan J. Drabek, and Bradley K. Johnston.**

*Dr. J. Alfonso Ortega-S. is a research scientist at the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute and professor at Texas A&M University-Kingsville; Dillan Drabek and Bradley Johnston are graduate students at the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute/Texas A&M University-Kingsville.*

## **SOME ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS IN ESTIMATING CARRYING CAPACITY ON RANGELANDS**

by J. Alfonso Ortega-S., Dillan J. Drabek, and Bradley K. Johnston

Estimating carrying capacity for livestock and wildlife on rangelands is a difficult task in habitat management. Balancing the forage needs of all the herbivores grazing and browsing on the range seems simple. However, the complexity of estimating carrying capacity or correct stocking rate becomes evident when we

see many overgrazed areas. The difficulty is that carrying capacity is a moving target that changes over both time and space. Thoroughly monitoring the vegetation to evaluate the response by grazers and browsers is the most important activity needed to keep a ranch at the target carrying capacity. This monitoring is used to maintain the integrity of plant communities by avoiding overgrazing and help maintain proper animal performance.

Estimating carrying capacity requires adjusting for topography, presence of rocks or thick brush, and distance to water to determine grazeable area. However, other factors like preference of herbivores for particular range sites may also affect grazeable acreage. In a study conducted over eight years at six locations on the East Foundation properties in South Texas, we compared 300 grazing exclosures with outside paired points to measure utilization. Our goal was to determine effects of grazing on forbs and plant species richness for white-tailed deer. During the dry years of 2012 and 2013 less than 28% of grazing exclosures had higher forage standing crop than the outside paired point. This indicates that animals avoided 72% of sites with low productivity, and grazed 28% of the sites, which were more productive. During the wet years of 2014 to 2019, herbivores did not use 41 to 59% of the sites. In our study, herbivores did not graze sites with less than 410 pounds per acre. This indicates that they prefer sites of high productivity and avoid sites with low productivity. This avoidance pattern is typically not considered when estimating grazeable area. Therefore, this may result in overestimating carrying capacity of the rangeland, which may lead to overgrazing.

The carrying capacity formula allows 25% of forage standing crop to be removed by herbivores. Another 25% is set aside for losses from weathering, insects, fouling, and trampling. The remaining 50% of vegetation is left intact for proper recovery of the rangeland. We are conducting a study on 2,718 acres at the Sweden Ranch using cattle grazing to manipulate habitat for northern bobwhites. The area is dominated by four flower trichloris and buffelgrass. Our goal is to maintain between 1 and 1.5 feet of stubble height to benefit bobwhites. In March 2020, we estimated forage standing crop at 2,725 pounds per acre using a grazeable area of 1,841 acres of open grassland. We stocked it with 228 mature cows, and they grazed the pasture for 109 days. Allowing forage consumption of 26 pounds per animal per day based on their average weight, the cows consumed only 13% of the initial forage standing crop. In October 2020, the herd was removed from the pasture and forage standing crop was estimated at 1,742 pounds per acre. Thus, about 36% of the initial forage standing crop was removed to maintain the stubble height goal. If we estimate that forage consumption per



animal unit was no more than 26 pounds per day, it was 13% of the initial forage standing crop. That means losses to insects, weathering, fouling, and trampling during that time equaled 64% of the total forage removed—much higher than what we typically account for. This does not consider forage growth that occurred during the grazing period. Therefore, loss of forage from factors other than grazing may be much higher than the 25% that we usually consider, and this may vary seasonally. Our findings from these studies indicate that to avoid overgrazing we may need to consider the avoidance by cattle of sites that are low in productivity when estimating grazeable area in addition to taking into account the higher losses of forage from other sources. Monitoring range responses to grazing and the ability to recognize forage availability are crucial. They allow rangeland managers to make timely adjustments in stocking rates to better manage habitats, thereby ensuring the integrity of the plant communities and avoiding overgrazing.



© J. Alfonso Ortega-S

Cattle grazing can be used to open grasslands that may be too dense for bobwhites; however, losses of forage from other factors need to be considered when calculating stocking rate.





# 2021 Calendar & Events

- May 6: RWFM Webinar Lecture: Fighting Fire with Fire
- June 3: RWFM Webinar Lecture: Top 10 Most Threatening Brush and Weeds in Texas
- June 11: Burn School Field Day
- June 20-25: Youth Range Workshop
- June 25: 3rd Quarter Board of Directors Meeting
- July 15-18: TWA Wildlife Convention
- July 20: Burn School Field Day
- September 17: Burn School Field Day
- October 20-22: Annual Meeting in Victoria, Texas

For additional events or more information, check out the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension calendar at <https://calendar.tamu.edu/agrilifeextension/>.

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