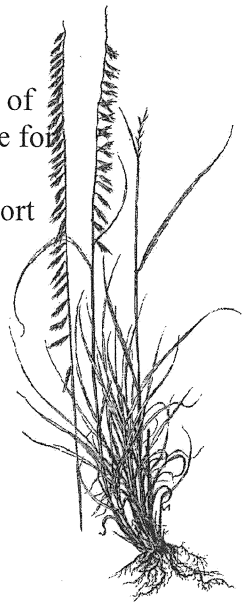
Texas Section
Society for Range Management

Comments on
State Water Supply Enhancement Plan
Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board
June 2014

The Board of Directors and the Public Affairs Committee of the Texas Section Society for Range Management (TSSRM) has reviewed the "Proposed Revision of State Water Supply Enhancement Plan". Based on our review of the revised plan, please accept the comments below.

Brush control, as it relates to potential water yields, continues to be advocated on rangelands throughout Texas. Unfortunately, brush control on most rangelands in Texas has not shown any significant increase in water availability for public use. In addition, the majority for research completed since 2000 suggests that selective brush control will not enhance water availability on most range sites. This is apparently because not all soils, ecological sites, plant communities, and geologic formations will respond to woody vegetation removal and manipulation in the same manner. The removal of woody plant cover from rangelands should be in pursuit of rangeland restoration as it relates to the function of the hydrologic cycle, restoration of the historic or desired plant community, and the benefits derived from such treatment. These include potential increased water yields, increased water quality, and increased plant and animal diversity. These potential benefits will only occur if climate patterns permit and management levels of the rangeland are increased and applied following treatment. Grazing management and follow-up treatment of brush species are paramount for the success of this mission. Implementation of brush management is generally thought of as the first practice implemented in the restoration process for rangelands. This practice alone cannot yield desired results if proper grazing management is not carried out following brush management. The Texas Section Society for Range Management advocates that proper grazing management in combination with brush management efforts can benefit the hydrologic function and ecological sustainability of Texas rangelands. The Water Supply Enhancement Plan for the State of Texas must support a resource management plan that encompasses total resource management on individual ranching units as well as an entire watershed approach to be an effective program. It is the implementation and management of this resource management plan that will keep the rangeland resources of Texas sustainable for future generations. Sound management decisions should be based on the best available knowledge. For this reason, TSSRM recommends that the state of Texas continue to support research focused on understanding the desired economic and environmental outcomes for brush control, restoration of hydrologic function, and rangeland management.



Sincerely,

Cody Scott

Cody Scott
Vice President, TSSRM

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