



2013 TSSRM President Jeff Goodwin and Grass Roots Award Recipient Randy Moore

Texas Section Society for Rangeland Management
Grass Roots Award-NRCS
Randy Moore

Randy Moore has worked for the SCS/NRCS for more than 38 years. For the past 17 years he has served as the District Conservationist in Fannin County administering USDA conservation programs and protecting plant and soil resources. Bonham, TX is the county seat of Fannin County and is known for its soil erosion issues, especially in the North Sulphur River Watershed. It is hard to argue that anyone else in North East Texas is responsible for directly influencing more producers to find native grass alternatives in a region of Texas that is heavily surrounded by introduced pastures.

When working with new producers Randy takes the time to develop a good relationship with the landowner and helps them understand the land. Randy explains the importance of matching animal demand to forage supply, and develops grazing systems to help fit a particular producers production goals and comfort levels. Randy has helped some producers implement intensive grazing systems with 20 or more pastures, but has also developed less intensive systems for new ranchers with limited time to open a gate during the week. For these absentee

landowners Randy will develop a system to fit their resource needs such as, an 8 pasture, one herd system. Randy also finds ways to develop multiple pasture systems in an area of Texas with limited groundwater resources by designing water blocks around existing ponds.

As a conservation planner, Randy thinks outside of the box compared to most managers in North East Texas. Randy's outside thinking helps him to sell sound range management as a new idea. Proper stocking is the basic tenant of range management, but Randy also sells this idea to ranchers in a way to have a drought reserve for livestock, but to also grow fuel to help control Eastern Red Cedar with prescribed fire in the good years. Randy helps land mangers by planning and assisting on about 500 acres of prescribed fire a year. In the future this will grow do the interest in prescribed fire, and recently in 2012 Randy conducted a prescribed fire workshop to help answer some of these growing questions.

Over the past 20 years, the Fannin SWCD has sponsored annual forage tours. After Randy started working with the district they began conducting even more outreach activities together. Today, Randy and the district sponsor at least two events per year dealing with spring and fall forage management with over 100 participants at each event. They also develop other workshops as needed, when certain situations arise. In 2011 Randy organized a drought seminar to provide producers with information on grazing economics and forage management strategies during drought. This past spring he organized a weed control seminar to help inform producers of potential problem species. Time was spent field trials in cooperation with Dow AgroSciences to show local producers a few management strategies that could be implemented to combat the spread of devils bit, a *Scabiosa* spp. that has escaped horticultural cultivation in the 80's. Today this species is threatening hundreds of acres in the western portion of Fannin County.

Randy has also been instrumental in helping Fannin SWCD apply for conservation grants. Three years ago Fannin SWCD was able to secure a grant to purchase a Great Plains No-Till drill and purchased another billion seeder for the district. Today the district plants approximately 1,800-2,000 acres to grass each year, with the majority of the plantings involving native species. This is a considerable impact since many operating units in this part of Texas are only around 100 acres in size. There is no doubt that Randy's attitude is what has influenced this many ranchers to consider alternatives with native species to better meet their land management goals. Randy enjoys teaching through his job, but admits "Each year I work in the field of Natural Resources, I continue to find out just how much I don't know." Randy also gives back by participating in mission work though his local church where he travels to countries in Central America to teach the less fortunate about agriculture.

In all, Randy has worked in six locations in Texas with the SCS to include Cleburne, Port Lavaca, Sinton, Stephenville, Gilmer, and currently in Bonham.