



2014 Grass Roots Award Recipient Dandy Kothmann, Grass Roots Award Chairman Stephen Diess, Grass Roots Award Recipient Alfredo Muñoz and TSSRM President John Walker

Texas Section Society for Rangeland Management

Grass Roots Award-NRCS

Dandy Kothmann and Alfredo Muñoz

From Upper Llanos SWCD #225:

The Junction Field Office currently administers 141 active contracts totaling about \$8,774,855 on 245,561 acres. They are still processing 2014 funding.

A majority of contracts incorporate brush control including removal of cedar, mesquite and prickly pear; however, most contracts are multi-year, containing multiple practices. Due to excellent conservation planning by Kothmann and Muñoz, our contracts cover a wide range of practices, including prescribed burning, re-seeding of rangeland, water wells and livestock watering distribution systems and other practices.

The number of applications, funded contracts and diversity of practices are directly attributed to the outstanding work of this NRCS team. The landowners have the utmost respect and confidence in their technical expertise. Their contracts now include Beginning Farmers and Ranchers, Limited Resource and Socially Disadvantaged landowners.

In addition to servicing all the contracts, Kothmann and Muñoz meet with other landowners, writing conservation plans and offering advice about resource concerns, to help owners meet their individual goals and objectives.

Kothmann and Muñoz exemplify a unique team approach in our field office. Each of them has distinctive skills in native plant identification, evaluation of rangeland for livestock carrying capacity, rotational grazing and other related practices. Together, their knowledge provides our landowners with the highest level of technical expertise.

The North, South and Main Llano rivers and many tributaries traverse Kimble County, so an abundance of clean water and the enhancement of wildlife habitat are primary concerns in our area. Kothmann and Muñoz successfully address the preservation and restoration of upland wildlife habitat, while ensuring that watershed and riparian areas are managed with care.

Such a diverse base of resource management concerns makes it imperative that the Junction FO personnel be knowledgeable in a wide variety of practices. Kothmann and Muñoz consistently display unique abilities to meet the goals of their landowners. Ultimately, their efforts combine to provide Kimble County with an outstanding level of technical experience, implementing practices and producing conservation plans which will be followed for years, ensuring the protection of our rangeland and securing our future in agriculture.

Kothmann is a Director of TSSRM, and is actively involved with its Youth Range Workshop and other programs. She is a member of the Upper Llanos Watershed Protection Plan committee, addressing concerns and writing policy to be implemented. Muñoz has worked with students at the Texas Wildlife Association's field days and other youth activities. Both of them participate in the District's annual educational outreach programs. In 2013, Muñoz was appointed to the NRCS State Civil Rights Advisory Committee. Both of them are dedicated employees who continue to challenge themselves personally and professionally, upgrading their skills and keeping abreast of developments in their field which will benefit the producers they serve.

From Steve Nelle:

It is my privilege to support the nomination of Dandy Kothmann and Alfredo Muñoz for the Texas Section SRM Grass Roots Award for NRCS employees.

I have known Dandy for many years and Alfredo for several years and am well acquainted with their abilities and skill in natural resource management. Both of these individuals are distinctively qualified and deserving of special recognition. In addition to their individual qualifications, they work together to create a very effective teamwork for range conservation in Kimble County. Their teamwork creates a sort of synergism effect that produces a greater positive influence for the ranchers of the county.

Their technical skills in plant ecology, grazing management, conservation planning, habitat management and watershed management are far above most of their peers. On top of their technical range management skills, they each have a high degree of professionalism and

good people skills - they know how to work effectively with ranchers and landowners. This combination of technical expertise and effective people skill makes Dandy and Alfredo a valuable asset for Kimble County landowners and range managers. They are both well liked and well respected by landowners and fellow range management professionals in the region. Both of them have first-hand ranching and range management experience and background which gives an added practical benefit to their services. They have common sense, good intuitions, sound judgment and are able to effectively communicate their knowledge to landowners.

Their joint skills include range plant identification, rangeland inventory and evaluation, determination of range carrying capacity, rotational grazing systems, prescribed burning, brush management, water development, riparian management, wildlife habitat management, livestock/wildlife interactions, and the ability to integrate these into individual rancher goals and objectives.

In my 35 year career with SCS and NRCS I have worked with over a hundred different NRCS field office staffs and several hundred individual conservationists. During these years I worked with a few very exceptional NRCS employees - Alfredo and Dandy are among these most exceptional people. They are dedicated public servants and skilled range management professionals.

I have been a member of the Society for Range Management for 40 years and well acquainted with the various awards given by the Texas Chapter. There have been no more deserving individuals for this recognition than Alfredo Muñoz and Dandy Kothmann. I enthusiastically support their nomination for the Grass Roots Award.

Sincerely,
Steve Nelle