

Hi - Some of you may not have heard from us in some time. This is just a reminder that you're receiving this email because you have expressed an interest in Texas Society for Ecological Restoration. Don't forget to add info@txser.org to your address book so we'll be sure to land in your inbox! We look forward to reconnecting with you.

You may [unsubscribe](#) if you no longer wish to receive our emails.



Texas Society for Ecological Restoration



Restoration Field Notes March, 2013

In This Issue

TXSER News Flash

Freshwater Coastal
Prairie Wetland
Restoration - Case
Study: Sheldon Lake
State Park

Trans-Pecos Pronghorn
Relocation

TAMU SER Student
Guild

Volunteer Field Days &
Announcements

Quick Links

More About TXSER
www.txser.org

TXSER News Flash

We are pleased to announce that we will be co-hosting our Annual Conference with the Texas Riparian Association (TRA). TRA is dedicated to promoting healthy waterways and riparian ecosystems statewide through education, communication, and the exchange of expertise among the people of Texas. Our collaboration will offer enhanced opportunities for conference participants, practitioners, and enthusiasts alike, to share ideas and expertise on riparian and terrestrial restoration experiences. We look forward to working with our colleagues at TRA.

TXSER & TRA Joint Conference
November 1-3, 2013
Junction, Texas

Save the Date!

**Freshwater Coastal Prairie Wetland Restoration -
Case Study: Sheldon Lake State Park**

Marissa Sipocz
Wetland Program Manager
Texas AgriLife Extension Service/Texas Sea Grant

More About SERI

www.ser.org

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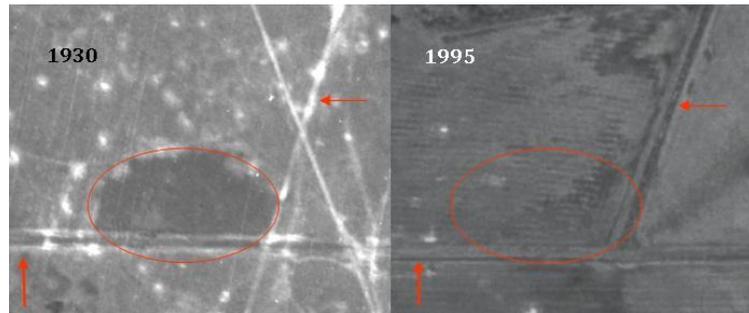
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**TXSER & TRA
Joint Conference**

Freshwater coastal prairie wetlands once covered large expanses of the Houston-Galveston landscape. A complex wetland matrix of mima mounds and low wetland basins known as prairie potholes provided important ecological services including habitat, flood control, and water cleansing. Many of these areas were leveled for agricultural and development purposes, erasing these features from the coastal landscape.

New Methodology, Old Material. The Wetland Restoration Project at Sheldon Lake State Park, initiated in 2003, integrates new planning and development methods with traditional restoration techniques. It shifts the approach from creating new wetland basins within the project site without regard to past wetland locations to an investigation of landscape history. The methodology, conceived by Andrew Sipocz, Texas Parks and Wildlife's Natural Resource Coordinator, utilized a 1920 contour topographic map and 1930 aerial photographs in conjunction with 1994 and 1995 color infrared photographs to identify mima mound signatures, distinguish upland brush from wetland brush, and determine shallow and deep inundation signatures. Historical wetland site locations were verified with soil samples collected during groundtruthing. With verification complete, the precise locations of the basins could be redrawn on georectified maps. The information was then translated into engineering documents that guided the excavation of the pond sites and the subsequent planting of these sites with local, native wetland species.



Comparative pictures to identify common features (e.g. arrows mark the irrigation canal and the original farm road). The 1995 photo demonstrates the difficulty in finding the original wetland boundaries which are clear in the 1930 photo.

Our Native Communities. All of the plant material for this project was collected within a 50-mile radius to maintain the genetic integrity of the plant stock. Plant collection began one year in advance of construction to ensure the selection of species available throughout the year. For example, Southern Blue Flag (*Iris virginica*) is available and actively growing in December and January while Thin-scaled Sedge (*Carex hylinolepis*) is available in late summer. Plants were

November 1-3, 2013 Junction, Texas

Join us along the banks of the South Llano River on the campus of Texas Tech University's Field Station for the 2013 TXSER and TRA Ecological Restoration & Riparian Conference.

Conference information soon to be posted at:

www.txser.org

SAVE THE DATE!

5th World Conference on Ecological Restoration

October 6-11, 2013 Madison, Wisconsin

Early registration is now open.

Registration fees for the SER2013 World Conference include full access to all scientific sessions, conference materials, lunch and coffee breaks on all four days of the scientific program, a Welcome Reception on Sunday evening, poster reception, and evening screening of the film Green Fire: Aldo Leopold and a Land Ethic for Our Time. SER members receive a generously discounted registration to the conference.

To register, go to:

www.SER2013.org

also selected for their ability to recover and self-propagate in a short time period and subsequently installed as densely as feasible. The planting phase of the restoration project was completed by the Wetland Restoration Team, a collaborative effort between the Texas Master Naturalists, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, and Texas Sea Grant. Throughout, the team worked with volunteer groups and students to educate them about the function and importance of coastal prairie wetlands.



Wetland Restoration Team working with Eagle Scout Troop 505 to restore coastal prairie wetlands in Phase I, which is completely vegetated after 5 years.

Six Years Later. Vegetation monitoring conducted quarterly for six years post-construction shows the most varied succession of species within the shallowest zone. Originally planted with 5 major species, the shallower wetlands now sustain a minimum of 10-15 species seasonally. The deeper zones, which are fully vegetated, provide sustainable waterfowl and water bird habitat as well as a barrier to invasive plant species.



Winter 2010, Phase 2 Pond

The landscape history method of analyzing both early and current photographs followed by re-excavating and restoring buried wetlands has proven a success at Sheldon Lake State Park. Phases 2 and 3 of the restoration effort are currently in progress and planning for phase 4 underway.

Trans-Pecos Pronghorn Relocation

Justin K. Hoffman and Louis A. Harveson

Borderlands Research Institute, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, TX

Shawn S. Gray, TPWD, Wildlife Division, Alpine, TX



BRI graduate students carrying a captured pronghorn.

Wildlife restoration has been a key component in improving and sustaining our wildlife populations in North America. Arguably, several of our game species throughout the western United States may have been extirpated if it were not for large-scale restoration efforts and intensive management. Translocations still remain a valid tool in wildlife management and are currently being performed by several state agencies in attempts to supplement declining populations or removing excess animals in fragmented habitats. Recent surveys in the summer 2012 yielded a population estimate of 2,700 pronghorn throughout the Trans-Pecos region. This estimate is currently lower than the population size yielded in 1938; the same year

that Texas Parks and Wildlife Department first initiated pronghorn restoration efforts. In fact, many metapopulations of pronghorn have sustained severe losses in the Trans-Pecos. Therefore in 2011, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in collaboration with the Borderlands Research Institute at Sul Ross State University and several other stakeholders reinitiated pronghorn restoration in the Trans-Pecos region of the state. Potential contributing factors include drought, poor fawn survival and recruitment, parasites, predation, and movement barriers.

As of January 2013, 330 pronghorn have been translocated from surplus populations in the northwestern Panhandle to the Marfa Plateau (2011) and Marathon Basin (2013) regions of the Trans-Pecos in 2 translocation efforts.



Helicopter net-gun capture of pronghorn in the Texas Panhandle.



Helicopter transporting pronghorn to a staging area.

Although thousands of pronghorn have been translocated throughout the United States, most state agencies failed to establish sufficient post-release monitoring. This complicates decision-making and our understanding for future restoration efforts to ensure restoration success and evaluating methods of translocation. As a result, a research project was initiated that involved intensive monitoring. Currently, 139 (VHF = 52, GPS = 87) radio-collars have been deployed on translocated pronghorn to evaluate post-release survival and movements. GPS radio-collars were store-on-board and programmed to record hourly locations for 300 days. This data has proven vital in assessing our translocation success and identifying needed modifications to improve future restoration efforts.

In 2011, survival of the translocated pronghorn was inhibited by historic drought, poor range conditions, unusual freezes, and epic wildfires that the Trans-Pecos region endured post-release. As a result, restoration was marginally successful in supplementing populations in the Marfa Plateau. However, this information has assisted us tremendously on the most recent

restoration effort. Approximately 70 fence modification sites on 65,000 acres were implemented to ensure adequate movement and prevent movement barriers.

In addition, information from the GPS radio-collars has been used to improve capture and transport methods, as well as improving the release site evaluation and preparation process to maximize survival. These preparation measures and learned experiences from the 2011 translocation have already yielded success. As of March 6, 2013, we have not suffered a fatality in nearly a month. In addition, capture-related mortalities were significantly reduced compared to 2011. This improved survival can be mainly contributed to modifications in capturing, handling, and transporting as well as improved range conditions and intensive preparation at the release site using information learned from the previous translocation.



Game camera revealing translocated pronghorn utilizing fence modifications implemented before release

Restoration efforts are necessary to supplement severely declining populations; however, the necessity to learn from each translocation to improve standards and success is absolutely essential in effectively improving pronghorn populations in the Trans-Pecos.

Texas A&M Society for Ecological Restoration Student Guild



TAMU/SER students plant loblolly pine seeds.

The TAMU SER Student Guild is well into a busy spring semester. In January, TAMU SER planted 1,000 loblolly pine seeds and is carefully tending and watering them.

In February, the group joined forces with nearly 800 Texas A&M University students in an effort to plant an estimated 30,000 loblolly pine seedlings in Bastrop State Park as part of the Lost Pines Recovery Campaign. The park was decimated by fire in 2011. The Lost Pines were once part of a unique pine-oak forest ecosystem.

Earlier this month, the group evaluated the overall ecological health of the new Dr. Schob Park in College Station. They have prepared a list of potential restoration projects for the park and look forward to being involved in future park restoration efforts.

Volunteer Field Days & Announcements

- **Wetland Field Day at Sheldon Lake State Park** - The Sheldon Lake Prairie Wetland restoration represents a new, unique approach to restoring critical freshwater wetland systems. Join the Field Day with: (a) NEW presentations by local experts; (b) site visit to individual wetlands; (c) CEU certificates provided; and (d) lunch included.

Date: April 11, 2013

Time: 10am - 3pm

Location: 14200 Garrett Road, Houston, TX 77049

RSVP Required To: Marissa Sipocz, Wetland Program Manager at:

m-sipocz@tamu.edu or by phone at 281-450-9674.

- **Social Media for Natural Resource Education and Communication** -TAMU and TIAER (Texas Institute for Applied Environmental Research) have joined forces to offer a series of workshops on the use of social media for natural resource education and communication. Training programs target watershed coordinators, but are open to all. Workshops are scheduled in various dates:

April 12 - Stephenville

May 15 - San Antonio

May 23 - Houston

For more information, contact: Leah Brown at lrbrown@tiaer.tarleton.edu

- **Prairie, Lakes and Timbers Conference** - April 12-14, 2013, Anna, Texas. Join North Texas Master Naturalists for a weekend of fellowship and training. Sessions will feature local wildlife, ecology, land management, astronomy and more. Guest speakers include John Davis, TPWD's Wildlife Diversity Director. For more information contact Cynthia Powers at: mrspowers@tx.rr.com

The Texas Society for Ecological Restoration promotes ecological restoration as a means of sustaining the diversity of life on Earth and re-establishing an ecologically healthy relationship between nature and culture.

Join the Texas Chapter of the Society for Ecological Restoration for \$15 per year. Benefits of membership include:

- networking with restoration practitioners and enthusiasts;
- discounts to our Annual Conference, an opportunity to share and learn; and
- invitations to attend volunteer workdays around the state.

Membership fees support Chapter administration. The TXSER Board consists of volunteers who share a passion for furthering ecological restoration in Texas.

Visit: www.txser.org to print our a membership application. Mail or fax your application to:

Membership & Communications Manager
Society for Ecological Restoration
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**Save
\$10**

Discount offer on SER International and Texas SER joint memberships for new members!

Now through March 31, 2013, new members can join both SER International and Texas SER and receive a \$10 membership discount.

Visit www.ser.org/membership. You must input the code "ChapPromo2013" on the membership application form to receive your \$10 discount.

Offer Expires: March 31, 2013

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