Society for Ecological Restoration
Texas Chapter

Restoration Update *May, 2015*

In This Issue

TXSER Newsflash
Conference Update
Student Association News
Member Spotlight - Steve Patterson
Monitoring More Using Photos
TXSER Sponsors
Become A Member Today!

Quick Links

1/4ly Newsletter Archive

Monthly Update Archive

Ecological Restoration Briefs Archive

More About TXSER

More About SER

TXSER Board of Directors

President
Charlotte Reemts

Vice President
Kelly Lyons

Secretary
Leslie Dietz

Treasurer
Colin Shackelford

North Texas Rep.
Michelle Villafranca

TXSER Newsflash

It's official!! The Texas Chapter of the Society for Ecological Restoration (TXSER) is now a certified non-profit corporation in the State of Texas and a fully tax-exempt 501(c)3 organization with the IRS. We are thrilled with our new status and look forward to it opening new doors for TXSER.

Conference Update

November 13-15, 2015 - Trinity University, San Antonio

Friday Field Trips - We are developing 3 field trip opportunities for conference participants to choose from, for Friday, March 13th. The first field trip to be locked in place is to the Hixon Ranch in Cotulla, about 1.5 hours from San Antonio. The trip will be led by TXSER Board Member Eric Grahmann of A&M's Caesar Kleburg Wildlife Research Institute and Michael Heyman, Hixon Ranch Manager.

The field trip will focus on the invasion of native plant communities by non-native grasses such as buffelgrass and Old World Bluestems which threaten wildlife populations and overall biodiversity. The Hixon Ranch is a private ranch located 6 miles East of Cotulla where research to manage and replace non-native grasslands has been ongoing since 2008. This trip will tour sites along the ranch aimed at managing the structure of non-native grasses for wildlife through grazing. We will also visit research plots on the Ranch exhibiting the largest and most successful native plant community and wildlife restoration plots in buffelgrassland to date.

Please check our website for more information as conference plans develop. 2015 Conference Information

East Texas Rep.
William Forbes

South Texas Rep.
Eric Grahmann

West Texas Rep.
Katherine Crosthwaite

Central Texas Rep.
Ingrid Karklins

Coastal Texas Rep.
Mary Edwards

Coastal Texas Rep.
Bradley Hoge

Chapter Coordinator
Gwen Thomas

TXSER
info@txser.org
(469) 321-4883

Employment Opportunities & More

For up-to-date announcements of positions open in ecological restoration and environmental science, visit our website at:
Job Postings

We also post a wide range of articles on ecological restoration issues as well as job and volunteer opportunities on our Facebook page at:
TXSER Facebook Page

SAVE THE DATE!!

TXSER 2015 Annual Conference:

TXSER A&M Student Association News

Eat Your Enemy Potluck

The Texas A&M Society for Ecological Restoration ended the semester with our traditional "Eat Your Enemy" potluck. The food was so delicious that we ate most of it before anyone even thought to take photos! Our top dishes this year were: Exotic Earthworms and Dirt, German Cockroach Casserole, and Bastard Cabbage and Tropical Soda Apple Salad. As always, a good time was had by all exploring these gustatory innovations.

TXSER A&M Student Association, Spring 2015

Member Spotlight

Name: Steve Patterson

City: Poteau, OK

Affiliation:
Bio X Design -- my company and home for my consulting practice.

Briefly describe your ongoing efforts/interest in ecological restoration.

Freshwater Mussels
Photo credit: www.fws.gov

In recent years I have been working primarily on lake restoration. I sometimes say I started out in terrestrial and just got wetter and wetter. I went from riparian restoration to wetlands and now to lakes. I have been building floating wetlands as a way to get

wetland functions and habitat into reservoirs, and teaching workshops on how to build them. Before moving back to Oklahoma several years ago, I worked in California for 20 years on a wide range of ecosystems from coastal sage scrub to wetlands at Lake Tahoe. Before going out on my own I worked as the first restoration ecologist at a large landscape architecture firm, and developed an interest in figuring our how to do a better job of collaborative, multidisciplinary ecological design and now I lead workshops and design charrettes with that in mind. I organized, along with Kevin Anderson, SER's first restoration design charrette in 2003 as part of that year's conference in Austin.

Floating Wetland Installation. Fayetteville Workshop.
Photo credit: Volunteer

Describe your favorite outdoor activity.
I like to paddle kayaks on rivers, lakes and oceans.

What is your favorite Texas plant and/or animal?
Too many plants to pick a favorite--but I recently visited natural floating wetlands in southern Louisiana for the first time, and that was very cool. The animal group I am most intrigued with right now is freshwater mussels because I am just starting to learn about them.

Monitoring More Using Photos - (Series)

Part I: Ground Cover Photography

By: Charlotte Reemts, Research and Monitoring Ecologist, The Nature Conservancy

Monitoring is a little like restoration broccoli: we all know we should get more of it, but there always seem to be more important (and fun) things to do. My job with The Nature Conservancy is to help our preserve staff monitor their restoration and management activities. With preserves all

over the state, I have a lot of different projects to work on. Because I can't be everywhere at once (I'm really looking forward to self-driving cars), I have tried to figure out fast and efficient monitoring techniques that still provide us with the data we need. For that reason, I'm increasingly relying on photo-based monitoring techniques. In this series of articles, I'll describe some techniques that I've used successfully, and another that I'm testing out.

Wet Pine Savanna at Big Thicket Bogs and Pineland Preserve, Tyler County. Photo credit: Charlotte Reemts

Ground cover photography: Ground cover (the amount of ground covered by various plants, rocks, bare soil, etc.) is a useful measurement in many different contexts. Ground cover is often measured using quadrats and Daubenmire-style cover categories (variation on <5%, 5-25%, 25-50%, 50-75%, 75-100% cover). The problem with these categories is that they are very broad and that people are very bad at estimating cover (e.g., Andujar et al 2010).

Creek Edge at Davis Mountains Preserve, Jeff Davis County. Photo credit: Charlotte Reemts

One solution is to replace estimation with photos (Cagney et al 2011). We use a 0.5-m^2 quadrat frame (rectangular to match the dimensions of a standard photo) so that we always sample the same size area on the ground. Using a level to make sure that you hold the camera parallel to the ground, take a photo of your frame. The photos are then treated like plots in free software (SamplePoint): a certain number of pixels are "sampled" to measure ground cover. I usually do 100 pixels in a grid (the default for the software), but you can use any number of pixels and distribute them randomly across the photo. I usually take 4 photos for any monitoring plots (distributed 2-5 m away from the plot center point in the four cardinal directions) to capture any variability in the plot.

I really like this technique because it is easy to teach to volunteers and the photos can be re-analyzed using different cover categories. Learning how to take photos is a little tricky and works best with cheaper point-and-shoot cameras. Taking photos on slopes is more challenging, because you need to hold the camera parallel to the ground. Analyzing the photos takes about as long as visually estimating cover in the field does, and it is admittedly a little tedious. Still, field time is precious and the photo analysis can be done at any time that I am in the office.

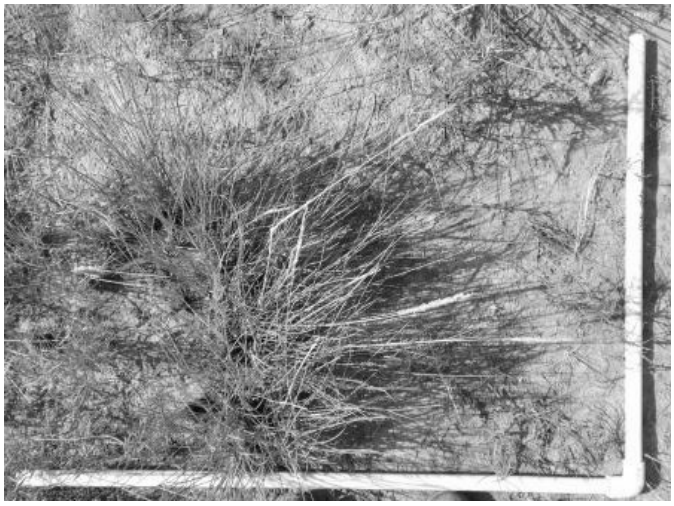
If you have any questions about using this technique, you can contact me at creemts@tnc.org.

References:

Andujar, D., A. Ribeiro, et al. (2010). "An assessment of the accuracy and consistency of human perception of weed cover." Weed

Research, **50**: 638:647.

Cagney, J., S.E. Cox, et al. (2011). "Comparison of point intercept and image analysis for monitoring rangeland transects." Rangeland Ecology & Management **64**(3): 309-315.



Coastal Grassland at Mad Island Marsh Preserve, Matagorda County.
Photo credit: Volunteer

A Heartfelt Thanks to the Following Organizations for their Generous Support of our 2014 Conference!!

HDR

SOUTHWEST FIRE SCIENCE CONSORTIUM

TEXAS CONSERVATION CORPS
AMERICAN YOUTHWORKS

The Nature Conservancy
Protecting nature. Preserving life.™

MHR
ACCOUNTING & TAX CONSULTING

The Dixon Water Foundation

Environmental Survey Consulting
4602 Placid Place . Austin . Texas. 78731
www.envirosurvey.com
•WBE•HUB•TXMAS•GSA
(O) 512.458.8531
(F) 512.458.1929
• design • consulting • restoration • wetlands • trails • native landscaping
• rockwork • education • management • ornamental ponds • habitat analysis

TEXAS A&M FOREST SERVICE

Please Take a Moment to Click on the Above Logos

& Check Out Our Sponsors' Websites.

The Society for Ecological Restoration, Texas Chapter 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.

Become a member today! **Click Here to Join Us!**

Join the Texas Chapter of the Society for Ecological Restoration. Chapter members receive valuable benefits including:

the opportunity to network with restoration practitioners and enthusiasts;
discounts to our Annual Conference, an opportunity to share and learn;
invitations to attend volunteer workdays around the state; and,
monthly updates and quarterly newsletters with articles and notices about regional events that allow you to connect to the local restoration community.

Chapter membership fees of $15 support chapter administration. The TXSER Board of Directors consists of volunteers who share a passion for furthering ecological restoration in Texas.

Joining SER links you with a global restoration network. SER member benefits include:

SERNews quarterly newsletter;
discounts on journal publications;
discounts to SER World Conferences;
discounts on SER Career Center;
access to a searchable, online member directory, and,
promotional opportunities through the SER Calendar of Events and Restoration Project Showcase.

To become a member visit: **www.ser.org/membership**

Be sure to click the Texas Chapter as your Chapter Affiliate. We look forward to having you join us!

Society for Ecological Restoration, Texas Chapter | 5606 Southampton Drive | Richardson | TX | 75082