

Society for Ecological Restoration

Texas Chapter



Restoration Update

October, 2015

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TXSER Newsflash

We are counting down the days to our November Conference in San Antonio and look forward to having you join us!

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**Conference Registration Ends
Friday, October 30th**

To register, click on the Eventbrite button below and you will be directed to our conference page.

[Register Now](#)

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[TXSER Conference Details](#)

Conference Update

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

The November Conference is taking shape!

Presentations: To date we have a super assortment of presentations focusing on a host of restoration topics ranging from "Restoring Carbon Sequestration in Austin's Riparian Zones" to "Population Response of Wintering and Breeding Songbirds to Large-Scale Ongoing Grassland Restoration."

Posters: A variety of posters have been submitted including one on

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Celebrate TXSER's
20th Anniversary

at our

2015 Annual Conference

"Solarization: A Restoration Tool" and another on "Proposing
Citizen-Based Restoration in an Urban East Texas Forest Preserve."

Keynote and Plenary Speakers: Our Keynote Speaker - Steven Whisenant, Texas A&M University, and Plenary Speakers - Mitchell Greer, Fort Hays State University and Glen Gillman, Travis County Parks - are working away on their presentations to share with you the latest in their fields as well as a look at changes in the field of ecological restoration over the past 20 years.

Preliminary Schedule

Exhibitors: Representatives from a number of organizations will join us to provide us with insights on their current efforts including: Earth Day Texas, The Nature Conservancy and HDR Inc.

Field Trips: Four great field trip opportunities are organized for Friday, November 13th. Click here to review the field trip offerings - [Friday Field Trips](#)

TXSER Conference Details

Member Spotlight

Name: Sarah Howard

City: Del Rio, Texas

Affiliation: Biologist,
National Park Service, [Amistad
National Recreation Area](#)

**Briefly describe your
ongoing efforts/interest in
ecological restoration.**

Coming from a landscape scale restoration effort with the NPS and other DOI agencies in the Arizona borderlands, I am really looking forward to developing restoration plans since I arrived at Amistad in May 2014 as their new biologist. Amistad has some amazing resources - our primitive river sections and upland hunt areas especially.

Despite many documented exotic species and soil loss issues, the landscape seems very resilient and could benefit from some manipulation to achieve more desirable plant and animal communities.



Sarah Howard
in her natural environs.
Photo credit: Stephen Howard

Describe your favorite outdoor activity. Anything that involves

**Scheduled for:
November 13-15, 2015**

**On the campus of:
Trinity University
in
San Antonio, Texas**

TXSER Conference Info.

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boats (any kind - I'm not picky) and water (again - any kind) makes me happy.

What is your favorite Texas plant and/or animal? I have loved wild foraging since I was a kid, so right away I fell in love with the Texas persimmon tree (*Diospyros texana*) - nothing better for summer field snacks! And, they are a favorite resting spot at Amistad for migrating Monarch butterflies.



Texas Persimmon, (*Diospyros texana*)
Photo credit: Karen Melody

20 Acres Is Not Enough

By: Roger Q. Jake Landers, Extension Specialist Emeritus, AgriLife Extension Service, Texas A&M University, Menard County, Texas

On the ranch we have a 20-acre trap between the highway and an old field that doesn't have water available for livestock except through the old field. In early days when the field was cultivated, the only time the trap was grazed was after the crop was harvested or in the winter when there was small grain planted for grazing. This resulted in intermittent light grazing of the 20 acres often only during the dormant season.

As a result of this kind of management, almost by default, the trap grows a greater variety of native plants than the rest of the ranch put together. Patches of Big bluestem and Indiangrass are abundant in the main draw through the length of the trap. Little bluestem and Sideoats grama are everywhere except in the main Mesquite flat where Vine mesquite, Texas cupgrass, and Texas wintergrass are common. Wildflowers are abundant when it rains, more commonly seen in ungrazed roadsides rather than in the rest of the ranch. Four kinds of woody plants that are rare elsewhere are common: Elbowbush and Texas mulberry in the understory of Liveoaks, Texas baccharis and Ceanothus in the rocky draw, all very palatable to goats and deer.



**Water is the focus of any ranching enterprise; my headquarters windmill and reservoir.
Photo credit: Jake Landers**

During my growing-up years when I became interested in plants, the Dry Trap, as Dad had named it, was an interesting place to walk through. That's where my campfire escaped, and I had my first "wildfire" creeping down the fenceline for a few dozen feet before we got it out.

Later on when I was home for a visit, it's where I collected or photographed plants for classwork or teaching. I thought of keeping a list of all the plants I identified, but never got past a first or second effort, and a list of everything hasn't materialized. But I remember where I had seen a few specific plants like the White rosinweed that took me over a year to identify while I was a student in California, or the few closely browsed *Ceanothus* bushes which are also distributed all the way to Iowa where I was teaching. I considered the Dry Trap my own outdoor museum of living plants that would always be there. If they could survive the drought of the 1950's they would be there forever, I thought.

In late 1960, however, I noticed the single plant of White rosinweed was gone. It never came back in the next few years. I searched for other individuals and finally found one down the draw where it goes through the field still under cultivation. Then in the 1980's a single plant of Engelmann milkweed disappeared, with no survivors anywhere. I'm afraid the *Ceanothus* bushes are also gone, but there may yet be a survivor in the rocks of the draw. Survival of a species is doubtful when a last individual dies and there is no chance of seeds coming in from outside the area. Twenty acres is not enough to retain all the species of the Hill Country when you don't have similar plants in the surrounding few miles.

Some years ago when Dad was of the age when most ranchers would have been thinking of dividing the ranch among his heirs, I asked him to let me have first claim on the 20 acres as part of my share. His response was hardly more than a cough. I realized later that he was

going to have no part in dividing up the ranch, he wanted it to stay in one piece forever. Now that he's gone, I must decide whether I should push for more area of light intermittent grazing to expand and protect what's left in the 20 acres. And how much is enough?



Jake Landers with his wife Helen.
Photo credit: Landers' Daughter

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Generous Support of our 2014 Conference!!**





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the opportunity to network with restoration practitioners and enthusiasts;
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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:

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