



**Kerr County Soil & Water
Conservation District**



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The Kerr Co. SWCD offers camp scholarships to conservation-oriented camps such as the Texas Youth Range Workshop or Texas Brigades Camps for youth!

Teacher scholarships are also available for the "Studies in Natural Resources" Workshop!

Please contact us for more information!

NEW NRCS EMPLOYEES



The Kerrville NRCS Field Office has a new employee! Alice London is now the Program Assistant and will be assisting the Kerrville Team with administrative duties.



The Kerrville NRCS Field Office added another Soil Conservationist in August 2013 as well. Rebecca Svoboda relocated from the Hood/Somerville Co. NRCS office. Rebecca is ready to assist landowners with any of their farm bill programs.

Please visit our Website!
www.kerrcountyswcd.com
It includes: Important updates on upcoming events, review of past events, District information, links to other websites, and more!
Our newsletter (and past newsletters) can be found on our website in PDF form. You can also request to be added to our email list!
Find information on our fish sales, tree sales and annual workshops!

KERR CO. SWCD NEWS

Kerr County Soil & Water Conservation District October 2013 Volume 4, Issue 4

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Kerr County SWCD has some exciting spring events coming up in 2014 that we will be showcasing!

Spring Field Day

Location: Flagler Ranch in western Kerr County

Date: TBD, in late April

Come out to this conservation-minded ranch to see what conservation practices have worked for them and how they implemented them. The field day will include both a trip to the field and classroom time and CEU's will be available. Watch for the next newsletter or check our website for more details coming in March and RSVP info!

Spring Fish Sale

Location: Kerrville NRCS Office Parking Lot

Date: TBD, Taking Orders Anytime!

Restock those ponds with quality fish from our supplier!

OFFICE RELOCATION

The Kerrville NRCS Field Office, the Kerr/Bandera Co. FSA Office, and the Kerr County Soil and Water Conservation District Office have moved locations. We are now located at 2104 Memorial Boulevard in Kerrville. Find us between Schreiner University and MG Building Supply!

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Dates of Interest:

- January 12-18: Kerr County Livestock Show & HCDJLS
- April : Kerr SWCD Field Day
- April or May : Kerr SWCD Fish Sale

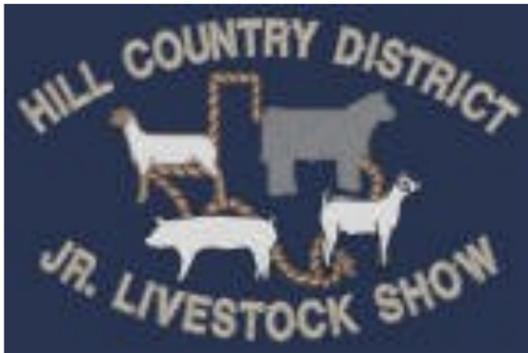
NEW PROGRAM IN KERR COUNTY : Water Quality Management Plan Program (WQMP)

The Water Quality Management Program (WQMP) is a stated-funded program made available through Senate Bill 503. It is a site-specific plan developed through and approved by the local soil and water conservation district for agricultural or silvicultural lands. The main goal of these plans is to abate agricultural and/or silvicultural nonpoint pollutant contributions to impaired or threatened waters as prioritized. A WQMP covers the entire operating unit and includes required practices applicable to the planned land use. The first step in obtaining a WQMP is to contact the Kerr County SWCD. There is no charge for the development of a WQMP, but there may be costs for implementing required practices outlined in the WQMP. Financial assistance is available at this time in the form of a cost-share program for WQMPs in Kerr County. You may read more on this program at TSSWCB's website at: www.tsswcb.texas.gov (click on Programs, then select WQMP). You may also contact the Kerr County Soil and Water Conservation District's office at 830-896-4911 x3 and ask for Deanna (SWCD) or Laura (NRCS) for assistance or to start the application process.

Kerr County & Hill Country District Junior Livestock Show

Website: <http://hcdjls.org/>

January 12 - 18, 2014



The Kerr County Livestock Show and the Hill Country District Junior Livestock Show is coming up! Go out and support our youth that have been working for months on their projects! Cheer them on in the ring, go by their pens and congratulate them, or donate to the auction! Visit the website above for more information about schedules and different projects the kids participate in.

USDA-NRCS Programs Available - Jan. 17th Deadline for EQIP & WHIP Applications

Several programs are available for Kerr County residents to apply for and receive assistance in implementing management practices for agricultural land.

The Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) is designed to assist agricultural producers in enhancing their land with

certain management practices. Practices that address and improve water quantity and domestic animals are given high priority in Kerr County and include such practices as brush management, livestock water systems, fencing, and seeding. The Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) is designed for landowners

who focus more on wildlife management than agriculture and most of the practices involved are the same as EQIP's. The Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) is a program designed to improve grazing management and protect rangeland from development with either rental or easement options.

The NRCS office accepts applications for all of these programs year round and more information can be gained by contacting the Kerrville office at 830-896-4911 x 3 or visit the NRCS Texas homepage at: www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov.

NRCS is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Conservation Tip: Grasses 101

by: Deanna Pfeffer

With Spring just around the corner, our pastures will hopefully be sprouting with all sorts of new growth and grasses. So here, we'll go over some grass basics, including the definition of a grass, common terms, types of grasses, and a few Hill Country species. What is a grass? Grass is a flowering member of the plant family Poaceae or Gramineae and is characterized as arising from fibrous roots, generally thin, erect plants that are either green or bluish-green in color. It usually will have a round, hollow stem with nodes where the leaves are attached. Leaves are usually narrow and long with parallel veins. It's seed head and flowers can greatly vary and are usually the most distinguishable characteristic to use when identifying species.

In Texas, there are approximately 560 grass species in Texas, with about 280 of them found in the Hill Country. Only 215 of these species are native, with some being endemic to this area. The remaining species are ones that have been introduced to the region. When we're talking about native versus introduced, native is defined as species that are indigenous to Texas and introduced is defined as species that have been brought in from foreign area or land for cultivation or other uses. This does not include ornamental species that are used in the landscaping business.

When talking about grasses, or plants in general, there are a few other descriptive terms to be aware of. Annual plants are those that complete their life cycle from seed to death in a single season, whereas perennial plants have a life of more than two growing seasons. Some plants are warm season plants, which grow mainly in spring and summer, while cool season plants grow in fall, winter or early spring. Taking grazing pressure into consideration, there are three terms to consider, decreasers, increasers, and invaders. Decreasers are species that are in the original vegetation stand that are palatable to livestock and will decrease in density when grazing pressure or disturbance is present. Increasers are those species that will increase when decreasers lessen or die out due to the same pressure. Invaders are usually weedy species that can move into an area and become the dominant species. Generally, invaders are not palatable plants and can take over after most palatable plants are gone under high grazing pressure.

It's very important to take the different types of grasses into consideration when judging your rangeland and deciding on best management practices to reach your conservation goals. A good balance of different types of grasses, forbs and woody species is necessary for quality rangeland. All conservation goals should aim to increase native plant species in both quantity and diversity.

Spotlight on the "big four" grasses of the American tallgrass prairies:



Big Bluestem
Andropogon gerardii

Usually in large clumps, it stands 36-60" tall. Native, warm season perennial. Roots up to 12' deep. Large, dark seedheads on 3 branches. Mature plants will have a reddish color after 1st frost.



Yellow Indiangrass
Sorghastrum nutans

Stands 36-96" tall. Native, warm season perennial. Heavy, golden plumelike seedheads. Can occur in bunches or as single stems. Also known as Indianreed.



Little Bluestem
Schizachyrium scoparium var. *scoparium*

Stands 24-36" tall. Native, warm season perennial. Bunch grass with dense roots, up to 8' deep. Leaves variable from purple to blue green with small, fuzzy, silver seedheads.



Switchgrass
Panicum virgatum

Stands 36-72" tall. Native, warm season perennial that is sod-forming bunchgrass that grows in large clumps. Roots to 10' deep. Has a pyramid shaped panicle where seeds are attached in spikelets.