

America's Grasslands Conference United for Conservation

The Fourth Biennial Conference on the
Conservation of America's Grasslands

November 14 - 16, 2017
Fort Worth, Texas



Conference Program



Credit: Andy Lawrence.

Thank You!

Organizing Committee

- Jon Hayes**, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Larry Janssen**, South Dakota State University
- Martha Kauffman**, World Wildlife Fund
- Chris McLeland**, Pheasants Forever
- Cody and Deanna Sand**, Sand Ranch
- Casey Stemler**, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Texas Planning Committee

- Jim Cathey**, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
- Maureen Frank**, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
- Jaime González**, Coastal Prairie Partnership
- Cassidy Johnson**, Coastal Prairie Partnership
- Chuck Kowaleski**, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
- Pat Merkord**, Native Prairies Association of Texas
- Sonia Najera**, The Nature Conservancy Texas
- Tom Spencer**, National Wildlife Federation
- Michelle Villafranca**, Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge

Conference Co-Chairs

- Aviva Glaser**, National Wildlife Federation
- Jaime González**, Coastal Prairie Partnership
- Lekha Knuffman**, National Wildlife Federation
- Pat Merkord**, Native Prairies Association of Texas

Co-Hosts



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Conference Agenda



Credit: NRCS.

Tuesday, November 14th

7:00 - 8:00 am **Registration - West Promenade, Fort Worth Hilton**

8:00 am **Field Trips**
Gather in lobby of Hilton Hotel by 8:00 am

- **Taggart Ranch and Smith Ranch** - Hosted by Michelle Villafranca, Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge. Site Contacts: Dan Caudle, Botanical Research Institute of Texas. Ranch Owners: Jon and Ben Taggart (Taggart Ranch), Lowell Smith and Kevin Gist (Smith Ranch)
- **Leo Ranch and Pittman Ranch** - Hosted by the Dixon Water Foundation with volunteer lead Kate Morgan, volunteer at Fort Worth Nature Center Refuge/Cross Timbers Master Naturalist. Site Contacts: Melissa Bookhout and Robert Potts, Dixon Water Foundation
- **Clymer Meadow** - Hosted by The Nature Conservancy Texas with volunteer lead Laura Penn, North Central Texas Native Plant Society of Texas. Site Contact: Brandon Belcher, The Nature Conservancy of Texas
- **Tandy Hills** - Hosted by Don and Debora Young, with volunteer lead Anne Alderfer, Friends of Tandy Hills Natural Area. Site Contacts: Don and Debora Young, Friends of Tandy Hills Natural Area

3:00 - 5:00 pm **Registration - West Promenade (Fort Worth Hilton)**

3:00 - 5:00 pm **Set up for Posters and Exhibitors - Crystal A, East and West Promenade (Fort Worth Hilton)**

5:30 - 8:00 pm **Opening Reception at the Botanical Research Institute of Texas**
Free shuttles will leave from Commerce St. Between 7th and 8th, on the side of the Hilton hotel, starting at 5:00 pm, and leaving approximately every 15 minutes.

Wednesday, November 15th

7:00 - 8:00 am **Breakfast - Ballroom Crystal BC**
Registration - West Promenade

8:00 - 10:00 am **Opening Plenary - Ballroom Crystal D**

8:00 - 8:15 am **Welcome**
Aviva Glaser, National Wildlife Federation and Jaime González, Coastal Prairie Partnership

8:15 - 8:45 am

Keynote - Robert Potts, President & CEO of the Dixon Water Foundation

The Trim Tab Factor: Our role in rescuing the prairie

8:45 - 9:10 am

Steve Apfelbaum, Applied Ecological Services

Putting Grasslands to Work: The role of grasslands in flood risk mitigation and climate change adaptation

9:10 - 9:35 am

Tyler Lark, University of Wisconsin

State of America’s Grasslands: Updates on recent conversion and research frontiers

9:35 -10:00 am

Jerry Doan, Black Leg Ranch

Regenerating soil health to benefit wildlife, the bottom line, and quality of life

10:00 - 10:25 am

Break - East and West Promenade, Ballroom Crystal A

10:25 am - 12:00 pm

First Concurrent Breakout Sessions

	Track 1: Conservation Strategies	Track 2: Decision-making and Human Dimensions	Track 3: Grazing and Management
Room	Texas A	Texas B	Texas CD
Moderator	<i>Maureen Frank, TAMU-AgriLife Extension</i>	<i>Anne Bartuszevige, Playa Lakes Joint Venture</i>	<i>Steve Riley, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department</i>
10:25 - 10:50 am	A working lands perspective – conserving one of the world’s great grassland landscapes <i>Seth Gallagher, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation</i>	Farmers’ motivation for grassland conversion in the Prairie Pothole Region of North and South Dakota <i>David Hennessy, Michigan State University</i>	Upland bare ground and riparian cover under strategic grazing management, continuous stocking, and multi-year rest in New Mexico mid-grass prairie <i>Rick Danvir, Western Landowners Alliance</i>
10:50 - 11:15 am	Recovering the American Serengeti in the Southern Plains <i>Nicole Rosmarino, Southern Plains Land Trust</i>	Farm-level patterns and drivers of grassland loss in the eastern Dakotas <i>Michael C. Wimberly, South Dakota State University</i>	Ducks Unlimited’s Cover Crop & Livestock Integration Project – A working lands approach to conservation <i>Tanner Gue, Ducks Unlimited</i>
11:15 - 11:40 am	Updating priorities for North American grassland conservation <i>Joanna Grand, National Audubon Society</i>	Collaborative adaptive rangeland management: A model for grasslands conservation? <i>Ted Toombs, Environmental Defense Fund</i>	Simulated impacts of grazing management practices on restoration of key ecosystem services <i>Srinivasulu Ale, Texas A&M AgriLife Research</i>
11:40 am - 12:00 pm	Mottled Duck focused habitat restoration through the Texas Prairie Wetlands Project <i>Taylor Abshier, Ducks Unlimited</i>	Engaging landowners in incentive programs for the restoration of grasslands <i>Sergio Fernandez, Simon Fraser University</i>	Cooperative landscape partnerships with your neighbor <i>Brian Alexander, Alexander Ranch</i>

12:00 - 1:00 pm

Lunch - Ballroom Crystal BC

Welcome and Remarks - Collin O’Mara, President & CEO, National Wildlife Federation

Second Concurrent Breakout Sessions

	Track 1: Grass-Based Livelihoods	Track 2: Grassland-dependent birds	Track 3: Innovative Strategies and Tools	Track 4: Grasslands and Pollinators
Room	Texas A	Texas B	Texas CD	Citizens BC
Moderator	<i>Deanna Sand, Sand Ranch</i>	<i>Anne Gage, World Wildlife Fund</i>	<i>Tom Spencer, National Wildlife Federation</i>	<i>Carol Davit, Missouri Prairie Foundation</i>
1:00 - 1:20 pm	Managing grasslands to regenerate ecosystem function and rancher livelihoods <i>Russ Conser, Texas A&M AgriLife Research</i>	Nest microhabitat and survival in ground-nesting shortgrass prairie songbirds <i>Amber Carver, University of Colorado Denver</i>	The Bird-Friendliness Index: a novel metric for quantifying the success of conservation programs <i>Nicole Michel, The National Audubon Society</i>	All hands on deck: Conserving a flagship species <i>Laura Lukens, Kyle Kasten, Monarch Joint Venture</i>
1:20 - 1:40 pm	Birds, herds, and stewards: Sustainable working lands for the future <i>Cheryl Mandich, American Bird Conservancy</i>	A Baird's Life: full annual cycle conservation of Ammodramus sparrows across North America <i>Arvind Panjabi, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies</i>	Leveraging the carbon market for grassland conservation: Success stories <i>Max DuBuisson, Climate Action Reserve</i>	The effects of cattle grazing on prairie pollinators and floral resources: A review <i>Ray Moranz, Xerces Society</i>
1:40 - 2:00 pm	Birds, herds, and stewards: From grazing alternatives to grassland sustainability <i>Jerome Schaar, Schaar Farms</i>	Studying Long-billed Curlews (<i>Numenius americanus</i>) throughout the annual cycle <i>Jay Carlisle, Boise State University</i>	Chihuahua desert grassland conservation investment strategy <i>Aimee Roberson, Rio Grande Joint Venture</i>	Monarch conservation in the Mid-America region <i>Claire Beck, Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies</i>
2:00 - 2:20 pm	Leveraging market forces for grassland conservation: Audubon's conservation ranching program <i>Iliana Pena, Audubon Texas</i>	Home Range and habitat use of Baird's and Grasshopper Sparrows in the Marfa Grasslands <i>Denis Josefina Perez-Ordonez, Sul Ross State University</i>	The Texas Coastal Exchange <i>Jim Blackburn, Rice University</i>	Providing urban planners with tools to position grassland habitats for social and ecological values <i>Kelley Myers and Gwen White, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service</i>
2:20 - 2:40 pm	Lesser Prairie Chicken Initiative: A collaborative partnership implementing voluntary conservation across the five state range <i>Jordan Menge, Pheasants/Quail Forever</i>	Habitat restoration and management for wintering grassland birds through a Sustainable Grazing Network in the Chihuahuan Desert of Mexico <i>Arvind Panjabi, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies</i>	Thirty years of species conservation banking in the U.S.: Comparing policy to practice <i>Ted Toombs, Environmental Defense Fund</i>	Support of native bees by prairie fragments and restored prairies <i>Steven Pennings, University of Houston</i>
2:40 - 3:00 pm	Cattle and conservation practices in northern New Mexico <i>David Sanchez, Sanchez Ranches</i>	Facilitated discussion on the full annual cycle of grassland birds <i>Jay Carlisle, Boise State University</i>	The Southeastern Grasslands Initiative (SGI): Dedicated to preserving and rebuilding America's forgotten southeastern grasslands <i>Dwayne Estes, Botanical Research Institute of Texas</i>	USDA practices that benefit pollinators <i>Ryan Diener, Pheasants/Quail Forever</i>



“Farmers and ranchers are good land stewards.
Without the cooperation of farmers and ranchers,
we won’t accomplish our conservation goals.
It’s that simple.”

H. Dale Hall
CEO, Ducks Unlimited

**Ducks Unlimited is proud
to partner with farmers, ranchers
and landowners to help conserve
our natural resources.**

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3:00 - 3:30 pm

Break - East and West Promenade, Ballroom Crystal A

3:30 - 4:50 pm

Third Concurrent Breakout Sessions

	Track 1: Innovative Strategies and Tools	Track 2: Southern Plains Prairie Restoration	Track 3: The Ethanol Mandate as a Driver of Conversion and Carbon Emissions	Track 4: Grassland-Dependent Wildlife
Room	Texas A	Texas B	Texas CD	Citizens BC
Moderator	<i>Jacy Bernath-Plaisted, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies</i>	<i>Jim Giocomo, Oaks and Prairies Joint Venture</i>	<i>Julie Sibbing, National Wildlife Federation</i>	<i>Cheryl Mandich, American Bird Conservancy</i>
3:30 - 3:50 pm	Grassland Conservation: A wicked problem <i>David Wolfe, Environmental Defense Fund</i>	Invasive grass species distributions at well pad sites in South Texas <i>Forrest Cobb, Texas A&M</i>	Land use and environmental implications of the RFS <i>Tyler Lark, University of Wisconsin</i>	Pronghorn restoration efforts in the Trans-Pecos, Texas: Where are we now? <i>Whitney Gann, Sul Ross State</i>
3:50 - 4:10 pm	Sustainable beef in Mexico: a conservation challenge <i>Hernando Cabral Perdomo, World Wildlife Fund-Mexico</i>	Restoring native grasslands in Texas <i>Michael Machart, Tarleton State University</i>	GHG emissions of biofuel feedstock production <i>Seth Spawn, University of Wisconsin</i>	Bird and mammalian carnivore response to plague in prairie dog colonies <i>Reesa Yale Conrey, Colorado Parks and Wildlife</i>
4:10 - 4:30 pm	A community-based approach to conserving North Dakota's Badlands <i>Martha Kauffman, World Wildlife Fund</i>	The effects of soil amendment use on an urban prairie reconstruction in Texas <i>Heather Bass, Botanical Research Institute of Texas</i>	Carbon balance effects of biofuel expansion <i>John DeCicco, University of Michigan</i>	Evaluating the use of modified fence sites by Pronghorn in the northern sagebrush steppe <i>Paul Jones, Alberta Conservation Association</i>
4:30 - 4:50 pm	Grassland conservation through partnerships on the mid-Gulf Coast Prairies and Marshes <i>Kirk Feuerbacher, The Nature Conservancy Texas</i>	The state of Native Seeds in Texas <i>Forrest Smith, Texas A&M-Kingsville</i>	Connecting the dots between resource impacts and policy options for ethanol mandate reform <i>David DeGennaro, National Wildlife Federation</i>	Use of GPS collared Pronghorn to inform fence modification efforts in Northern Arizona <i>Jeff Gagnon, Arizona Game and Fish Department</i>

5:00 - 9:00 pm

Dinner and Evening Social at Fort Worth Nature Center

Buses will shuttle back and forth from the Hilton: Buses will be on Commerce St. between 7th and 8th on the side of the hotel. Buses will leave every 15 minutes between 5:00 pm and 6:00 pm, and will depart Fort Worth Nature Center between 8:00 pm and 9:00 pm.

Door Prize Giveaway!

Items from Whole Earth Provisions, National Wildlife Federation, and other conference sponsors. Must be present during closing session on Thursday November 16th to receive prizes.

Thursday, November 16th

7:00 - 8:00 am **Breakfast - Ballroom Crystal BC**
Registration - West Promenade

8:00 - 8:45 am **Roundtable Discussions**

- Discussion 1 (Texas A): **Setting a science and policy agenda for grasslands conservation – Tyler Lark**
 Discussion 2 (Texas B): **The evolution of collaboration across large landscapes: Sharing experiences and expertise using the Northern Plains Conservation Network as a case study – Martha Kauffman**
 Discussion 3 (Texas CD): **Managing our National Grasslands for multiple use – Chamois Andersen**
 Discussion 4 (Citizen's BC): **Challenges and opportunities of grass based livelihoods – Ryan Stockwell**

8:50 - 10:10 am **Fourth Concurrent Breakout Sessions**

	Track 1: Threats, Monitoring, and Predicting Grassland Conversion and Implications	Track 2: Cooperative Partnerships for Grasslands Conservation	Track 3: Grasslands and the 2018 Farm Bill
Room	Texas A	Texas B	Texas CD
Moderator	<i>Ryan Diener, Pheasants/Quail Forever</i>	<i>Pat Merkord, Native Prairies Association of Texas</i>	<i>Andrew Schmidt, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies</i>
8:50 - 9:10 am	Global reduction in greenhouse gas emissions diminishes climate change vulnerability of grassland birds in North America <i>Chad Wilsey, National Audubon Society</i>	Restoring South Texas grasslands through the Grassland Restoration Incentive Program <i>Jesús Franco, Rio Grande Joint Venture and Jim Giocomo, Oaks and Prairies Joint Venture, American Bird Conservancy</i>	Setting the stage for the 2018 Farm Bill: Politics, timing, and opportunities for conservation gains <i>Chris Adamo, National Wildlife Federation</i>
9:10 - 9:30 am	Tracking cropland conversion in the Great Plains and quantifying the benefits of conserving grassland <i>Anne Gage, World Wildlife Fund</i>	Implementing conservation partnerships for the Prairie Dog ecosystem to help prevent federal regulation <i>Lindsey Sterling Krank, Prairie Dog Coalition of The Humane Society of the US</i>	Natives First - A native vegetation standard for the conservation title of the Farm Bill <i>Jef Hodges, National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative</i>
9:30 - 9:50 am	Canada's grasslands need our help! Why protection of Canada's native grasslands is declining <i>Carolyn Callaghan, Canadian Wildlife Federation</i>	North Texas Tallgrass Prairie remnant conservation; Urgency and focus <i>Ken Steigman, University of North Texas</i>	Sodsaver, Easements, and CRP: Strengthening farm bill provisions to reduce grassland loss <i>Aviva Glaser, National Wildlife Federation</i>
9:50 - 10:10 am	Understanding and addressing threats on National Grasslands: A review of Forest Service research <i>Deborah Finch, USDA Forest Service</i>	Working lands, conservation and cooperation: Agricultural grasslands and grassland birds in Ontario, Canada <i>Paul Smith, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs</i>	Grassland and grazing land practices in working lands conservation programs. <i>Alyssa Charney, National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition</i>

10:10 - 10:40 am **Break - East and West Promenade, Ballroom Crystal A**

10:40 - 11:15 am **Roundtable Discussions**

Discussion 5 (Texas A): **Grasslands in a changing climate: Adaptation, mitigation, and the role of grasslands** – *Pat Merkord*

Discussion 6 (Texas B): **2018 Farm Bill - strategies and opportunities** – *Chris Adamo*

Discussion 7 (Texas CD): **Continental Conservation - grassland conservation across the borders** – *Carolyn Callaghan*

Discussion 8 (Citizen's BC): **Monitoring outcomes of grassland restoration efforts** – *Jon Hayes*

11:20 - 12:40 pm **Fifth Concurrent Breakout Session**

	Track 1: Large-scale Landscape Level Partnerships	Track 2: Education and Communication	Track 3: Landowner/Producer Perspectives
Room	Texas A	Texas B	Texas CD
Moderator	<i>Emilene Sivagnanam, National Wildlife Federation</i>	<i>Jaime González, Coastal Prairie Partnership</i>	<i>Sonia Najera, TNC-Texas</i>
11:20 - 11:40 am	How large-scale partnerships are supporting conservation in the Great Plains through innovative landscape planning and design <i>Jon Hayes, USFWS</i>	Research and educational efforts to communicate about the biodiversity of wet meadows and prairies along rivers of central Nebraska <i>Mary Harner, University of Nebraska-Kearney</i>	Building shared success for community and conservation in North Central Montana <i>Leo Barthelmess, Rancher Stewardship Alliance & Brian Martin, TNC</i>
11:40 am - 12:00 pm	Landscape design planning for national wildlife refuges: Muleshoe and Rio Mora National Wildlife Refuges <i>Anne Bartuszevige, Playa Lakes Joint Venture</i>	Teaching environmental stewardship through use of outdoor classrooms: A multi-campus restoration initiative <i>Greta Bowling & Ping-Sha Sheffield, Tarrant County College</i>	Bambi and Bevo: Restoring wildlife habitat through custom grazing in South Dakota <i>Tracy Rosenberg, Abbey Grasslands of the Prairie Coteau</i>
12:00 - 12:20 pm	Grassland roles in ecosystem services: Precision Conservation Blueprint v1.5 <i>Gwen White, USFWS</i>	Tandy Hills BioBlitz 2016: Biodiversity and the role of endemic species in conservation biology <i>Bruce Benz, Texas Wesleyan University</i>	Sustainable beef production on native grasslands <i>Karl and Kelli Ebel, Ebel Ranch</i>
12:20 - 12:40 pm	NRCS area-wide planning opportunities to maintain and enhance America's grassland ecosystems <i>Kyle Wright, USDA-NRCS</i>	Creating awareness of grassland ecology through conservation education <i>Janel Ortiz, Texas A&M -Kingsville</i>	Conservation priorities for small producers, diverse farmers, and ranchers in the 2018 Farm Bill <i>Rudy Arredondo, National Latino Farmers and Ranchers Trade Association</i>

12:40 - 1:40 pm

Lunch - Ballroom Crystal BC

1:45 - 3:00 pm

Rancher Plenary Panel: Ballroom Crystal D

Ranchers will present their insights on challenges and opportunities facing their enterprises and the future of America's grasslands, with opportunity for Q&A and discussion. **Moderator:** *Jon Hayes, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

Panelists:

Tracy Rosenberg, Abbey Grasslands of the Prairie Coteau, South Dakota

Cody Sand, Sand Ranch, North Dakota

Brian Alexander, Alexander Ranch, Kansas

Karl Ebel, Ebel Ranch, Texas

David Sanchez, Sanchez Ranches, New Mexico

3:00 - 3:40 pm

Closing Keynote - Ballroom Crystal D - Deborah Clark, Birdwell & Clark Ranch

United for Grassland Conservation: How ranchers, researchers, practitioners, and other conservationists can work together to save America's grasslands

3:40 - 4:00 pm

Door Prize Giveaway

Closing Remarks - Lekha Knuffman, National Wildlife Federation

Explore the Texas wilderness that greeted the pioneers!

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- View wildlife
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- Attend natural history classes
- Engage in environmental education programs
- Join us at special events

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Posters

Ballroom Crystal A

Note that posters will be on display throughout the conference, and attendees are encouraged to peruse the posters during breaks

1. Using Adaptive Management on Lonesome Pines Land and Cattle: A Case Study from the Shortgrass Steppe <i>Jim Sturrock, Lonesome Pines Land and Cattle</i>
2. Comparative Diet Analysis of Barn Owl (<i>Tyto alba</i>) and Long Eared-Owl (<i>Asio otus</i>) in the Blackland Prairie of North-Central Texas <i>Matthew Jones, University of North Texas</i>
3. Harnessing the Power of the Marketplace for Prairie Conservation <i>Sarah Hewitt, Audubon-Dakota</i>
4. Perennial Warm Season Grasses for Winter Stockpiling in West-Central Texas <i>Brandon Carr, USDA/NRCS</i>
5. Seasonal Home Range Characteristics and Habitat Use in Sprague's Pipits <i>Erin Strasser, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies</i>
6. Nesting Ecology of Baird's and Grasshopper Sparrows in the Northern Great Plains <i>Jacy Bernath-Plaisted, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies</i>
7. Identifying and Rectifying Misclassifications Between the National Wetland Inventory and WWF Plowprint Data (2009-2015) <i>Sarah Olimb, World Wildlife Fund</i>
8. Identifying Potential Landscapes for Conservation Across the Grasslands of Central North America: Integrating Keystone Species, Land Use Patterns, and Climate Change <i>Lindsey Sterling Krank, Prairie Dog Coalition of The Humane Society of the U.S.</i>
9. Does grasshopper diversity affect grassland ecosystems? <i>Angela Laws, University of Houston</i>
10. Getting to the Root of Woody Encroachers <i>Seton Bachle, Kansas State University</i>
11. Fire and Browsing: Tools for Restoring Woody Encroached Grasslands <i>Rory O'Connor, Kansas State University</i>
12. Using Goals and Profitability to Determine What to Plant in Pastures <i>Megan Clayton, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension</i>
13. The Rangeland Vegetation Simulator: A Decision Support Tool for Monitoring and Projecting Grassland Conditions <i>Paulette Ford, U.S. Forest Service</i>
14. Birds, Herds, and Stewards: From Grazing Alternatives to Grassland Sustainability <i>Jerome Schaar, Schaar Farms</i>
15. North Texas Tallgrass Prairie Remnant Conservation <i>Ken Steigman, University of North Texas</i>
16. Converting Bermudagrass to Native Grasslands in the Cross Timbers and Blackland Prairie <i>Julia Shipman, Texas A&M AgriLife Research</i>
17. Black-tailed Prairie Dog Mitigation - a Pilot Program <i>Lindsey Sterling Krank, Prairie Dog Coalition of The Humane Society of the U.S.</i>
18. Grasslands: The Great Carbon & Water Catch - Connecting Plants, Microbes, Nutrients and Soil <i>Betsy Ross, Sustainable Growth Texas</i>
19. Developing Decision Support Tools for Optimizing Retention and Placement of USDA Conservation Reserve Program Grasslands in the Northern Great Plains <i>Sean Fields, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service</i>
20. Public-Private Partnership Providing Grassland Conservation Support: GRIP (Grassland Restoration Incentive Program) and the Oaks & Prairies Joint Venture <i>Jim Giocomo, Oaks and Prairies Joint Venture, American Bird Conservancy</i>



Keynote Speakers

Credit: Andy Lawrence.

Robert J. Potts is President and CEO of the Dixon Water Foundation, a private foundation supporting healthy watersheds through good land management – with a particular emphasis on grazing and range management issues. From 2004 to 2007, Potts was the General Manager of the Edwards Aquifer Authority. From 1993 to 2004, Potts worked at The Nature Conservancy where he held several positions including State Director of Texas and Vice President for the South Central Division, managing the conservation work in Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Louisiana. Potts previously practiced law with the firm of Baker & Botts in Houston where he focused on international and corporate issues. He earned a Juris Doctor degree from Columbia University in 1984 and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Baylor University in 1980. Potts grew up in Corsicana, Texas and has B.A. and M.A. degrees in Interdisciplinary Studies.

Spanning 40 years, **Steven Apfelbaum**, a senior ecologist with Applied Ecological Services, Inc (WI) and Ecological Society of America has conducted ecological research, designed award-winning projects, successfully navigated regulatory programs, and contributed his scientific expertise and unique creative approach to over 12,000 projects throughout U.S. and the world. He is focused on providing insight and design solutions at the intersection of ecological systems and working and developed land uses. Apfelbaum's books have won accolades including one of the ten best national environmental books in 2009 (Nature's Second Chance (Beacon press), and first "how-to" ecological restoration books "(Restoring Ecological Health to Your Land", and "Restoring Ecological Health to Your Land Workbook" (Island press). Apfelbaum is a frequent speaker and educator on ecological restoration, ecosystem assessment, alternative storm water management and conservation development, coastal systems and climate change, soil carbon sequestration, and issues related to land development worldwide. Steve resides in southern Wisconsin, on Stone Prairie Farm.

Tyler Lark is a researcher at the University of Wisconsin's Center for Sustainability and the Global Environment, working on issues at the intersection of land use, bioenergy, and food production. His research is focused on mapping and quantifying agricultural land-use change and its impacts across the United States to identify opportunities to reconcile production and conservation.

Jerry Doan operates Black Leg Ranch, which has been homesteaded since 1882, with his wife Renae and their three sons, the 5th generation. They are dedicated to improving soil health and regenerating the natural resources. Enterprises include cow calf, custom grazing, farming, a hunting/outfitting operation, and an Agri-Tourism operation. The ranch has hosted folks from 50 states and 35 foreign countries. Black Leg Ranch won the Leopold Conservation Award and the National Environmental Stewardship Award this year.

Deborah Clark and her husband, Emry Birdwell, live and ranch outside of Henrietta, Texas on what was the heart of the historic Bryant Edwards Ranch. They moved to the ranch in 2004, choosing to focus on an all stocker operation. Emry believed that using stockers was the most efficient and expedient way to restore the tall native grassland prairie. The ranch operates as one cell, under planned grazing with a single herd of 5,000 or more steers. The improvement, in the grasslands has been dramatic resulting in increased quantity, quality, and diversity of forage, and decreased bare ground. The ranch recently was awarded the Outstanding Rangeland Stewardship Award by the TSSRM and TSCRA. Deborah received the Terry Hershey Texas Women in Conservation award from Audubon Texas in 2016. She has served on many boards including Texas Wildlife Association, Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers, and Texas Parks and Wildlife Upland Game Bird Advisory Council. She completed the Holistic Management Certified Educator program in June 2017.



CCC Broadview Overlook at the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge. Credit: Michelle Villafranca.

Background on Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge

The Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge (FWNC&R) is a 3,621 acre natural area owned and managed by the City of Fort Worth Park & Recreation Department. Ten miles from downtown, this Lone Star Land Steward Award winner is one of the nation’s largest municipally-owned nature centers. Over 20 miles of trails traverse a variety of habitats including prairie, upland woods, bottomland hardwood forests, riparian, and wetlands. There are abundant opportunities for wildlife viewing including a glimpse of our bison, which are descended from the original Southern Plains herd! With so much to offer, it’s easy to see why the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge was designated as a National Natural Landmark!

Join us Wednesday evening for a Texas BBQ dinner and local brew overlooking the West Fork of the Trinity River near the historic Broadview Overlook built by the Civilian Conservation Corps. www.fwnaturecenter.org



Let's connect on social media!

Here are some quick tips to get you going! Message us on Twitter for more!

Hashtags

- Conference - #AGC17
- Location - #DFW #TX
- Content - #ProtectOurPrairie #Grasslands

Tags

- NWF - @NWF_ag
- CPP - @saveprairies
- Native Prairies - @NPATexas NativePrairiesAssocTX
- Texas A&M Ag Extension - @agrilife agrilifeextension

Sample tweets:

Excited to be at the #AGC17 in #DFW learning about #grasslands conservation methods! @NWF_ag

Meeting with diverse stakeholders at #AGC17 in #DFW. Conservation of #grasslands is critical for #wildlife & cattle! #ProtectOurPrairie @NWF_ag

Fascinating panels at #AGC17. Conservation of #grasslands in #FarmBill2018 is a must! @NWF_ag



America Grasslands Conference Thanks Our Sponsors!

Plains Bison



Sage Grouse



Pronghorn Antelope



Audubon



Monarch Butterfly

- Texas Wildlife Association
- North Central Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service - Texas



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