



## January/February 2025

### A note from Jenny

*Jenny Pluhar, Executive Director*

Happy New Year!

Lots of exciting things taking shape for TXGLC in 2025. We are set to launch our Resilient Ranch Network in collaboration with Texas A&M Center for Grazinglands and Ranch Management and Texas A&M Agrilife Extension & Research. It is industry funded (more details on that later) and currently targeted at the area outlined in the map (please scroll down to read more on the Resilient Ranch Network). Participating ranches will have technical assistance from our own Shiner Webb, TXGLC Technical Assistance Specialist, which includes monitoring basic soil health principles and grazing management principles, a two day Ranching For Profit school and an opportunity to weigh in on "metrics that matter." We will work together to isolate the metrics on a ranch that the ranchers want to focus on with our technical assistance.



This brings me to a larger issue. How and why would we attract industry donors for grazing management on ranches in Texas? Where could this all lead? I believe a strong component of the future of conservation across the landscape is rooted in NGO's. Non-government organizations, like

TXGLC. Many NGO's are offering grant funded technical assistance and even cost share conservation practices. As our agency partners are forced to assume more administrative roles, there is still a need for technical assistance on the ground. Many NGO's throughout the west are delving into this type of work. Some funded by USDA dollars funneled through other NGO's and with industry expressing ever more interest and willingness to put dollars to work on conservation. So, how did TXGLC attract this type of investment?

The key is you, our regional coalitions. Having a grass roots network in place across the state. Although the map does not cover all of Texas *at this time*, our regional coalitions need to be functioning, strong, and ready to answer the door when opportunity knocks. If your area coalition has not met recently and hosted a workshop, pasture walk, or just simply gotten together to talk over coffee, contact the chair listed in this newsletter and let's get going! We are here to help with programming, speakers, and an abundance of ideas.

The future is bright! Saddle up with us, the possibilities are limitless.

---

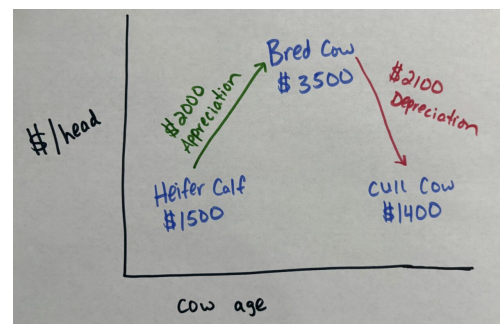
## Advice from one humbled rancher

*Written by Jordan Steele, originally published on ranchingforprofit.com on January 5, 2025*

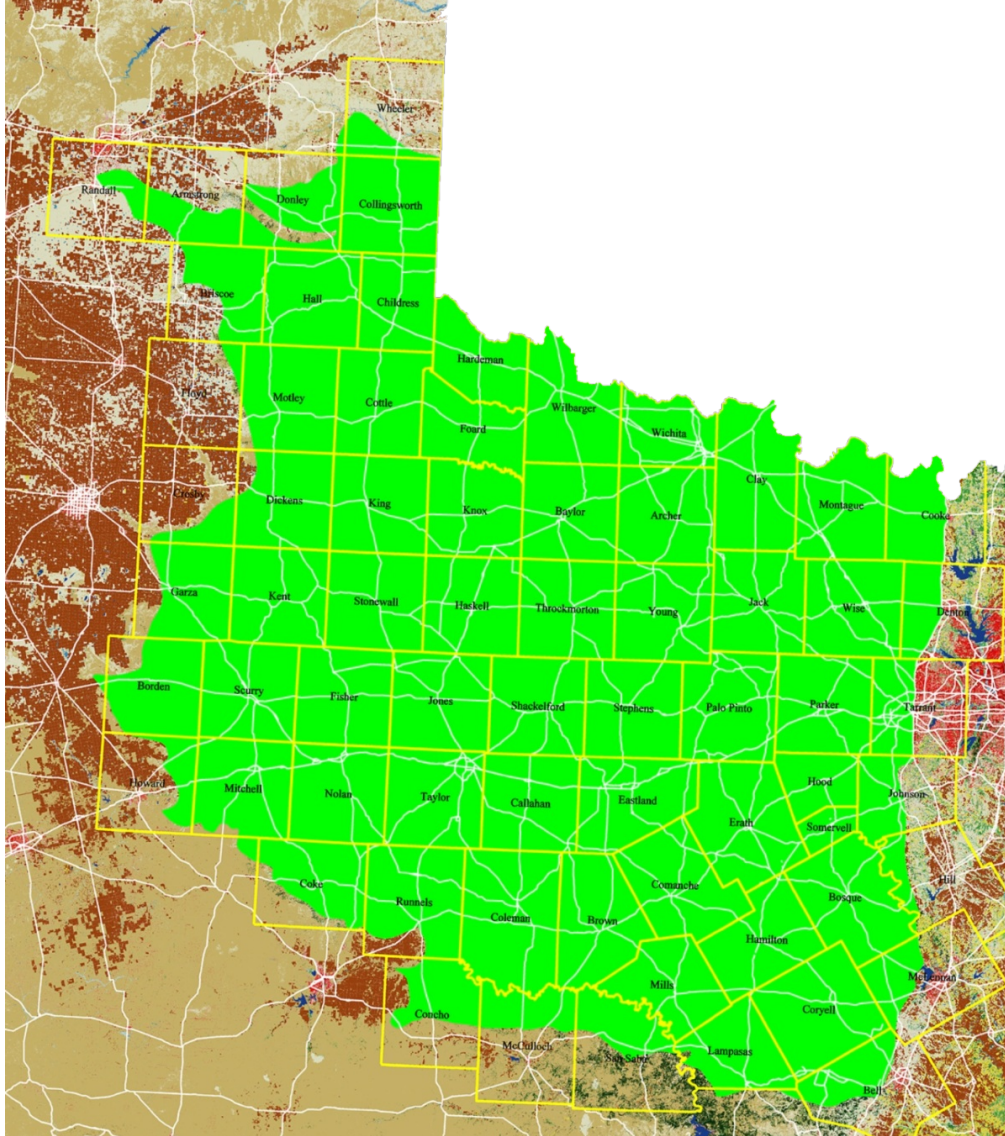
During our last RFP Bookshelf Discussion (our monthly book club for alumni) an old copy of a ProfitTips article written by Wally Olson fell out of my Knowledge Rich Ranching book by Allan Nation...

[Read more here...](#)

---



## Resilient Ranch Network



Is your ranch located in the green shaded area above? If so, we'd love to chat! Texas GLC, Texas A&M Center for Grazinglands & Ranch Management, and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension & Research have launched an exciting new program: The Resilient Ranch Network. This collaborative project will help support ranching operations through assistance with grazing management strategies and monitoring forage quantity and quality, leading to positive financial outcomes and defining metrics that matter to ranchers like you. We have a dedicated technical assistance specialist, Shiner Webb, for this project.

In return for participation, ranchers will receive the following:

- Customized grazing management plans
- Ongoing technical assistance and monitoring
- Ranching for Profit two-day school
- Opportunity to increase ranch resilience and profitability
- Opportunity to influence beef sustainability policy

What we need from ranchers:

- Ranch access for technical assistance and monitoring
- Input on key decision-making metrics

Interested in partnering with us on this project? Let us know! We are hosting an event on February 20, 2025 in Albany, TX. [Click here for meeting information](#) and [click here to sign up](#).

Not able to make the meeting? [Click here for general information](#) and [here to sign up to receive a phone call from Shiner!](#)



---

## The drought killed my grass!

Heard in the coffee shop somewhere in the west early this morning: "The drought killed all my grass!" The drought is indeed powerful. Texas has lost many trees, from live oaks in the Texas Hill Country to stately elms in the city parks of Amarillo in 2011. Oh, 2012 was better and 2013, according to the weatherman, was "above average." In the years since, the same pattern has played out. West Texas and the Texas Hill Country were brutally dry in the last couple of years, with the hill country getting some relief in places.

I have observed that even in an abundant or at least "generous" rainfall year, the timing of rainfall is incredibly important. Even a less than average rainfall year can serve us well out on the rangeland if the rains were timed well. As the years go by and I add more observations to the data base in my head, I am more convinced than ever than winter precipitation timing is more important than most think.

A trip around the country quickly shows that it will take more than an average year and an "above average" year to build subsoil moisture following drought. Often, "gullywashers" fail to provide the drought relief we desperately need. Evidence abounds in the draws that water 4-5 feet deep passed through. Yet the clay loam sites, the very sites cattle prefer, are haunted with large patches of dead grass. Perennial grass, that tough stuff the livestock industry was built on? Dead. Not dormant. No sir. Deader than a door nail!

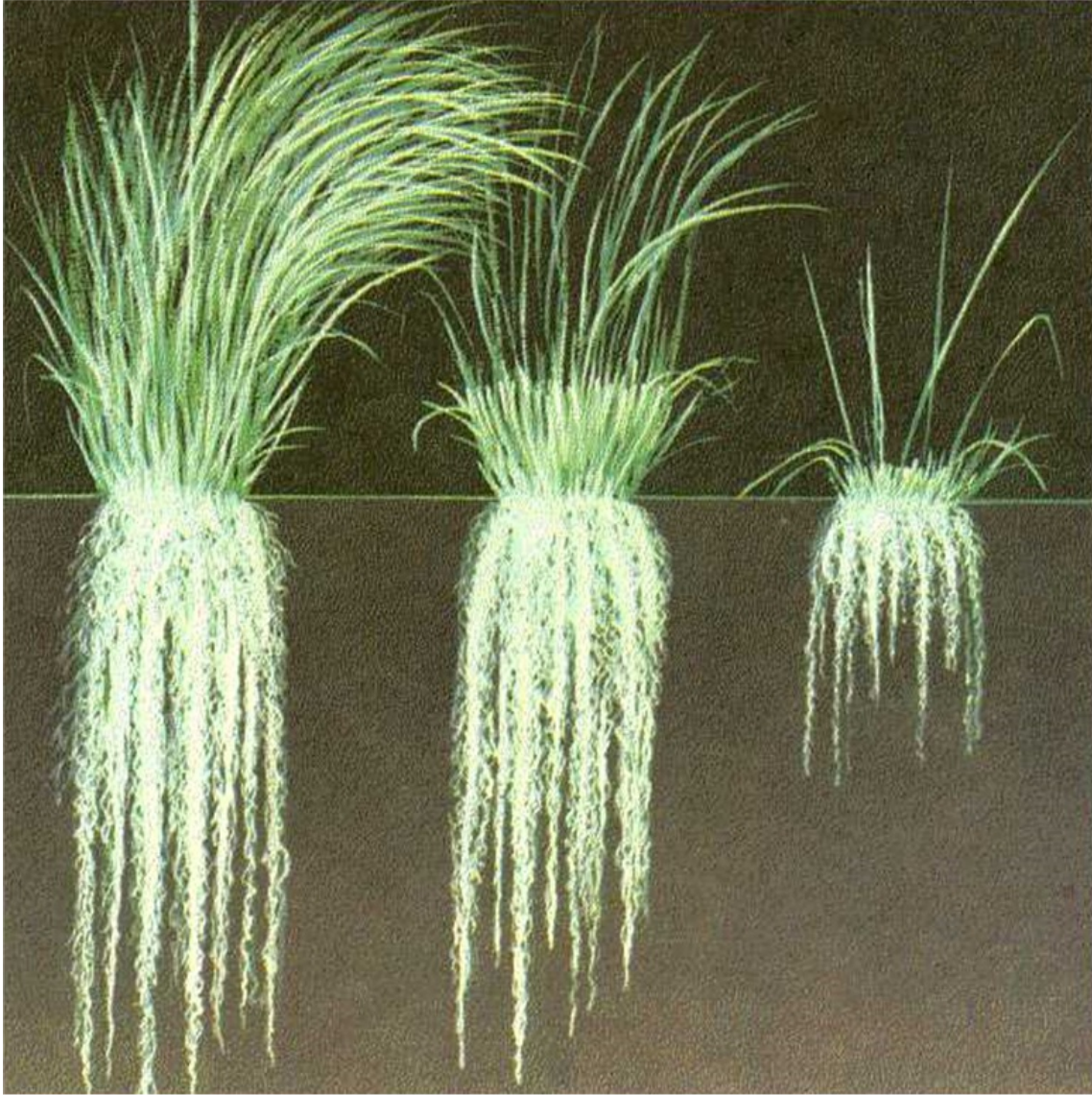
But, wait...is that the reason? The "Evil Drought Monster" laid claim to the

rancher's grass? I have had the sad responsibility to explain to more than one landowner that his stocking practices of many years are more to blame for the dead grass than the drought. Read that again. Grazing practices of the past are more important in causing damage to forage production and soil health than the biggest, meanest drought monster we can imagine.

The perennial grasses, grazed year after year, have put all their energy into maintaining life above the soil. While below the soil, their root mass was shrinking, shrinking, shrinking. When the mother of all droughts came in 2011, following a wonderful year in 2010, at least in the Texas Panhandle, much perennial grass could no longer hang on, and died. It couldn't even go dormant and survive. One of the hardest moments of my life as a range scientist was watching a man, more than seventy years old, pull out a worn bandana and wipe tears from his eyes as I gently explained what had happened to his deceased grass. "I should have known better," he lamented.

Stocking rate is easily the most important decision a land steward makes and must be adjusted frequently. We must do a better job of convincing folks that what is happening beneath the soil surface is far more important than what you see on top! And the weather map, while important, is NOT the defining factor.

As for me, I am carrying a few worn bandanas when I get the calls from landowners to come look at their dead grass. I dabbed at a few tears in my eye as I drove away from that ranch as well.



---

## Coastal Prairie GLC internship program

Coastal Prairie GLC is gearing up for its seventh internship season. Our goal is simple: expose students who are on track to become future ranch managers to the ranching businesses on the Gulf Coast of Texas. Each year, we select 3-4 ranch management students to live and work with a viable, large scale cattle operation with one of our cooperating GLC Ranches. As an intern they are expected to work a full day learning the ins and outs of the ranch, and be especially exposed to the operations and business side of running a ranch. Additionally, each week offer an afternoon seminar to expose our interns to land management related topics in a small group atmosphere. Topics in the past have included range and quail management, herd health, brush management, intensive grazing, ranch business lending, marketing, and mineral resource with surface use considerations. Interns are expected to be engaged and always ask questions to aid in their development.

Over the course of the summer, they also work on a ranch management plan and budget on a mock ranch that is representative of the area. They start with 10,000 acres, 650 cows, and a balance sheet. We then discuss

drought, changing markets, and other natural resource variables that will impact the plan. We then implement one or more of these variables to learn how to plan around challenges. Interns in the past have chosen to cull livestock or enhance forage production through brush management, others improve forage capture through fencing and water development, while others choose adding value through a pre-conditioning program. Each intern displays their own unique plan to improve the profitability of their operation. This is also shared with other interns and the cooperating ranches for everyone's development. This is truly a unique opportunity for our interns to see if ranching on the Gulf Coast is the right fit for them. Additionally, ranches involved in the program have an opportunity to expand their applicant pool for future employment. For more information and to learn how to apply for this exciting opportunity, [please click here](#).

---

## Six months - six soil health principles

Sometimes you may ask, why do we focus so much on soil health? Because it is the foundation for healthy rangelands, that's why! For the next six months, we will feature one soil health principle.

### Keep actively growing roots.



Healthy rangelands have hundreds of plant species, thus some plant is usually growing, even in the cool season. Perennial plants may be dormant above ground, but rest assured, they are very much alive below ground.

Live roots facilitate water infiltration, break up hard-pan layers, and recruit and feed various species of small animals, insects, mycorrhizal fungi, and bacteria, which strengthen soil structure.

Trees, shrubs, and forbs have tap roots, effective in breaking through hard layers of soil. Grass roots are fine, fibrous roots, preventing erosion

and contributing to the formation of organic matter.

A soil profile devoid of living roots all winter, ultimately begin the growing season at a distinct disadvantage.

---

## 2025 Youth Range Workshop

Do you know a high school student between the ages of 14 and 18 who's interested in learning more about range management? Make sure to tell them about the Texas Section Society for Range Management Youth Range Workshop!

TSSRM Youth Range Workshop will be held this summer June 8 - 13, 2025 at the Texas Tech University Center in Junction. It provides the opportunity for Texas high school students from across the state to learn about range ecology and natural resource management. Any high school student who is interested in learning more about natural resources management is eligible to attend.

The purpose of YRW is to prepare students to be knowledgeable leaders in their communities regarding the value of rangelands, the services and products they provide, and the importance of stewardship of our natural resources. Our emphasis is on stewardship, leadership and management of natural resources. These lessons will serve participants well in the future regardless of what career path they choose or where they live.

YRW participants are taught by a diverse group of volunteer instructors including ranchers, educators, scientists, conservationists, university professors, young professionals, consultants, certified prescribed burning professionals, and even a couple of grizzled old veterans of range management. The directors and instructors represent a wide range of age, experience, interests, and areas of specialization, but they are all dedicated to the management of Texas rangelands and working with younger generations to help them understand and appreciate the value of our soil, water, plant, and animal resources.

The students spend six days of intense activity in the field and classroom immersed in activities including:

- plant identification and plant collection
- studying species composition and plant community dynamics
- conducting forage inventories
- learning the grazing and browsing habits of livestock and wildlife
- learning habitat management principles and techniques for various species of wildlife
- conducting field tests to determine the benefits of vegetation on



infiltration and runoff rates as well as soil erosion

- learning about soil health
- assisting with a prescribed burn on a local ranch
- and learning how all of these things are tied together

Hands-on learning is the focus, whether it is collecting plants, assisting with an actual prescribed burn, clipping and weighing vegetation, measuring soil temperature, participating in the operation of a rainfall simulator, or learning to use the latest phone app for range management. To learn more, please visit the [TSSRM YRW website](#) or follow them on [Facebook!](#)





## Are you in need of technical assistance?

Ryan Walser (Albany area) and Kason Haby (Hondo area) are now joined by a new specialist, Shiner Webb (Abilene area, Resilient Ranch Project), and are our Technical Assistance Specialists here at the Texas Grazing Land Coalition. They have had full careers in rangeland and grazing management and we are incredibly fortunate to have them on our team. You will likely see them at some of our outreach events and they are available to assist with conservation planning on your property. Their contact information is listed here and at the bottom of the newsletter. If you need technical assistance and do not live near them, please call us. We can make arrangements to help you make the most out of the land you love!



**Kason Haby**  
Heritage Land Stewards  
[kasonhaby@gmail.com](mailto:kasonhaby@gmail.com)  
830-486-6872



**Ryan Walser**  
Clear Fork Land Solutions  
[clearforklandsolutions@gmail.com](mailto:clearforklandsolutions@gmail.com)  
830-486-6872

**Shiner Webb**  
Resilient Ranches Project  
[shiner@texasglc.org](mailto:shiner@texasglc.org)  
806-334-1300



## The answer is KNOW!

In order to speak the language, one must know the words. Similarly, on rangelands knowing which plants are growing in your pastures and how to manipulate them to meet your forage goals is crucial. Every month we will explore a new plant in our newsletter.



## Bermudagrass

*Cynodon dactylon*

It's January. We are the Texas Grazing Land Coalition. Although I much prefer writing about our native Texas flora, as I said, it's January. And what is much of Texas doing right now? Feeding Bermudagrass hay to their livestock! We deal with not only native rangelands, but GRAZING land as well, which includes pasture land. A majority of which is planted to Bermudagrass in Texas.

Bermudagrass may not be native, possibly not even to Bermuda! It is listed as native to everywhere from Africa to Australia. Like many plants, Bermudagrass has both friends and foes. A listed noxious weed in Utah and Arkansas and an official seed crop in California, Bermudagrass is widely grown in Texas. Hay production, lawns, golf courses, literally everywhere. Bermudagrass has been bred to be dwarf (reducing mowing needs) and at the same time, bred to be a prolific forage producer, and is probably one of the most widely grown "crops" in the USA when you add up all the lawns!

Bermudagrass spreads by seed, rhizomes beneath the soil surface and stolons above the surface. It is determined and can reach up through a raised garden bed with 18 inches of soil. The tiniest piece can seemingly overtake a large area (but only if it is somewhere you don't want Bermudagrass)! The seedheads are closely borne to the rachis and are on a 3-5 stalked "windmill" shaped seedhead. Pastures are often "sprigged" to Bermudagrass rather than seeded. Leaves are strongly two ranked, and as mentioned, may be bred to be short or longer.

Bermudagrass hay fields require close attention to fertility conditions with frequent fertilization necessary for maximum production. I have to editorialize here a bit and admit it has always puzzled me that such pastures and hay fields in Texas are widely referred to as "improved pastures." Improved over what? In many cases, the Bermudagrass inhabits areas that were native tall grass prairies - diverse populations of tall grasses requiring no fertilization. But, alas, man often fails in our attempts to "improve" upon God's creation. I must also admit my thankfulness for Bermudagrass as a daily hay for several of our horses who would be fat as full ticks if fed alfalfa. They thrive on plain old Bermudagrass, or "coastal Bermudagrass" as it is commonly referred to. Again, a misnomer as it is not at all necessarily located on a coast.

In the interest of soil health and using less of expensive fertilizers, it is becoming ever more common for Bermuda grass pastures and hayfields to be overseeded with cover crops that include nitrogen fixing forbs and plants with tap roots designed to break up the "plow pan" beneath the surface of the soil.



To learn more about [this](#) and other plants found on our rangelands, visit the [Plants of Texas Rangelands Virtual Herbarium](#). Images used in this story are theirs.

---

**Being tough  
sometimes  
means asking  
for help.**

**AgriStress**  
**HELPLINE**<sup>SM</sup>  
for Texas

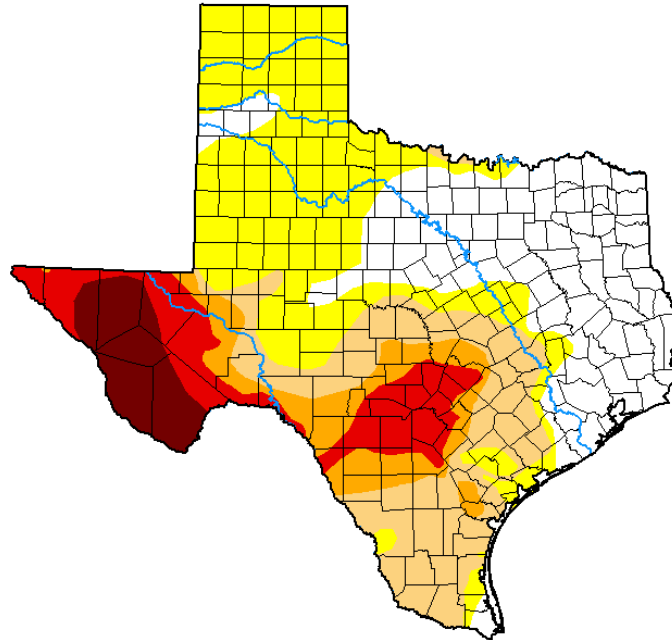
**833-897-2474**









TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

---

**U.S. Drought Monitor**



Intensity:

-  None
-  D0 Abnormally Dry
-  D1 Moderate Drought
-  D2 Severe Drought
-  D3 Extreme Drought
-  D4 Exceptional Drought

*The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>*

Author:

Lindsay Johnson  
National Drought Mitigation Center



[droughtmonitor.unl.edu](https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu)

## Summary - Southern U.S.

Above-normal temperatures and the absence of this week's precipitation led to widespread degradations across the Texas and Oklahoma panhandles, along the Red River and in central Oklahoma. Last week, a band of heavy rainfall fell, leading to improvements in central Texas, along the eastern edge of the Oklahoma-Texas border, along the Red River, and up into central and northern Tennessee. Outside the band of precipitation, Tennessee saw degradations in the West and along the Georgia and North Carolina borders.

[Click here to visit and view the U.S. Drought Monitor site.](#)

---

## Upcoming events and opportunities

**Ebel Grasslands Field Day**  
Sulpher Bluff, TX | February 14, 2025  
[More information here.](#)

**Edwards GLC Spring Meeting**  
Kerrville, TX | February 20, 2025  
Contact Billy Griffin at [billy77@sbcglobal.net](mailto:billy77@sbcglobal.net) for more information.

**Building Resilient Ranches:**  
**Resilient Ranch Network Workshop & Project Rollout**  
Albany, TX | February 20, 2025



[More information here.](#)

**Virtual Ranching 101**  
**What Grazing Management Style is Right for You**  
Virtual | March 18, 2025  
[More information here.](#)

**2025 TSCRA Cattle Raisers Convention & Expo**  
Fort Worth, TX | April 11 - 13, 2025  
[More information here.](#)

**Hemphill County Beef Conference**  
Canadian, TX | April 29, 2025  
[More information here.](#)

**Youth Range Workshop**  
Junction, TX | June 8 - 13, 2025  
[More information here.](#)

**Pacific Pastures: NatGLC Summer Bus Tour**  
Richland, WA | June 10 - 13, 2025  
[More information here.](#)

**America's Grassland Conference**  
Kearney, NE | June 24 - 26, 2025  
[More information here.](#)

**TWA WildLife Convention 2025**  
San Antonio, TX | July 10 - 13, 2025  
[More information here.](#)

**NCBA CattleCon**  
New Orleans, LA | February 3 - 5, 2026  
[More information here.](#)

---

## Love the Land - A Texas GLC Podcast

Did you know Texas GLC has a podcast? It's called [Love the Land](#), and you can find it wherever you get your podcasts.

If you have never listened to or subscribed to a podcast, they're like an on-demand radio show. Here's a "how to" tutorial:

1. Download a podcast app on your phone. If you have an iPhone, there is already one downloaded on your phone.
2. Open app. Use the search tool to find specific podcasts like "Love the Land" or categories like "agriculture."
3. Listen to a single podcast or subscribe and get new episodes added to your library any time they are released.

4. Love the Land podcasts are 30-45 minutes.



## Regional Coalitions



# CONNECT WITH TXGLC



## Texas Grazing Land Coalition

Executive Director

Jenny Pluhar | [jenny.txglc@gmail.com](mailto:jenny.txglc@gmail.com) | 806-679-8729

Design & Communications

Kim Peters | [peters.kimgrace@gmail.com](mailto:peters.kimgrace@gmail.com) | 806-392-3262

Technical Assistance Co-Chairs

Dr. Morgan Treadwell | [morgan.treadwell@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:morgan.treadwell@ag.tamu.edu) | 325-657-7317

Dr. Jeff Goodwin | [jeff.goodwin@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:jeff.goodwin@ag.tamu.edu) | 979-845-5000

Technical Assistance Specialists

Kason Haby | [kasonhaby@gmail.com](mailto:kasonhaby@gmail.com) | 830-486-6872

Ryan Walser | [clearforklandsolutions@gmail.com](mailto:clearforklandsolutions@gmail.com) | 432-230-2053

Shiner Webb | [shiner@texasglc.org](mailto:shiner@texasglc.org) | 806-334-1300

### Officers:

Chair - Stephen Diebel  
Vice Chair -  
Secretary - Lee Burton  
Treasurer - Bob McCan  
Past Chair - Gary Price  
Past Chair - Rooter Brite

### Board Members:

Tracy Tomascik  
Billy Griffin  
Hilary Knight  
Jim Bob Cave  
Frank Price  
Julie Mattox  
Kent Ferguson  
Tim Edwards  
Servando Leal  
Matt Crow  
Jessica Tate  
Rob A. Brown  
Christine Martin

Texas Grazing Land Coalition | 106 S. Main St. | Victoria, TX 77902 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!