

# WEBB SWCD NEWS



## Board of Directors

Guillermo "Memo" Benavides Z.-Chairman  
Rocky Bruni-Vice-Chairman  
Carroll E. Summers Jr.-Secretary  
Rick Walker-Member-Andy Ramos Member

## USDA-NRCS Employees

Flavio Garza, Jr., District Conservationist  
Ben Coyle, Rangeland Management Specialist  
Agustin (Gus) Luna Jr., Soil Conservation Technician

## District Employee

Jo Dale Zimmerman, Program Facilitator



**Ben Coyle**  
**Range Management Specialist**

## New Employee Spotlight

I'm Ben Coyle the new Range Management Specialist in the Laredo Field Office. I started my affiliation with NRCS as a volunteer in my hometown of Iowa Park, TX where I volunteered from my high school to my college days for three years. I was then able to work for the agency as an intern for the rest of my college years in various offices starting from my home office of Iowa Park, TX to Austin, TX then went up to Dumas, TX for the summer of 2014. Upon graduating from Angelo State University with a Bachelor's in Animal Science and a minor in Range Management, I was welcomed into NRCS fulltime. The first office I worked in was Sonora, TX for two years and have now been in Laredo since May 2017. For the most part the rest of my time is spent at the gym, teaching confirmation catechism, along with time with friends.



## Chairman's Comments

Although the following letter is lengthy, I felt it Important enough to share with Webb County Cooperators:

Dear Conservation District Directors:

As you know, one of Secretary Perdue's first official acts after taking office was to announce a complete reorganization of USDA. This reorganization will have an impact across the entire department, but specifically we are concerned about any detrimental impacts on the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and their partnership with soil and water conservation districts.

As proposed, the Farm Service Agency (FSA), NRCS and the Risk Management Agency (RMA) will be housed under a new mission area that will be known as the Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC). As you can imagine, the Association has many concerns about the reorganization plans. Our greatest concern to date has been the lack of information or details on reorganization plans.

We have been actively monitoring the situation and proactive in expressing our concerns on the issue. In January we sent a letter to Secretary Perdue expressing our concerns and also to reiterate commitments he made to NACD President Brent Van Dyke that the mission of NRCS will not change and the relationships with local conservation districts will not change as well.

We have sent a letter to every Congressman in Texas with an NRCS office in their congressional district asking for assistance in getting more detailed information on reorganization plans. Specifically, we asked for more information on plans for NRCS to be able to continue to operate as an independent agency (not under the direction of FSA or RMA). Will NRCS be able to continue to partner with conservation districts at the state and local level and are there any plans for office closures? How will moving support services from the agency level to the mission level impact the delivery of conservation programs?

On February 20<sup>th</sup>, Jule Richmond former ATSWCD President, met with Congressman Conaway, Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, to convey our concerns. We will be in Washington, DC March 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, to meet with members of our Congressional Delegation to express our concerns in person and hopefully get answers to the questions above.

We have been in regular communication with our contacts in Washington and will continue to monitor this issue as closely as possible. As more details become available we will take appropriate actions.

We would encourage you, both individually and as districts to also take a proactive approach in contacting your Senators and Congressmen to stress the following concerns:

NRCS remain a "stand alone" agency not controlled by any other agency;

All conservation programs be administered by NRCS;

All conservation programs should be voluntary, incentive based, and locally led through the NRCS in partnership with local Soil and Water Conservation Districts; and

Hiring freezes coupled with current and previous staff cutbacks have severely and detrimentally impacted conservation delivery.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have specific questions.

Sincerely,

Volney Hough

ATSWCD President

## Webb SWCD Events

### April 5, 2018

Board Meeting @ 12:00pm

Where: Webb County  
Agricultural Building

### May 3, 2018

Board Meeting@12:00pm

Where: Webb County  
Agricultural Building

### June 7, 2018

Board Meeting@12:00pm

Where: Webb County  
Agricultural Building





# Livestock Grazing

Range and pasture management methods enhance sustainable livestock production, but they can also improve soil and water resources by preventing erosion, increasing infiltration, facilitating soil building grasses in rotation systems, and sequestering carbon from the atmosphere. In addition they improve plant production, vigor, resilience, and diversity, and enhance wildlife habitat. They are production systems that can be used as tools to conserve and restore our natural resources. NRCS grazing land and range-land management specialists provide planning and technical assistance to livestock producers, and they help identify financial assistance that can be used in implement these plans.

## James Patrick Walker Receives Service Award



Rick Walker, Webb SWCD Member, was presented with a service Award for having served 25 years with the District as Board of Director.



**2017 Scholarship Recipients**  
David & Rudy Rosales, Leslie Dominguez & Alejandra Cabello  
Not shown is Audrey Vasquez



**2017 Earth Team Volunteer**  
Ashley Garcia





## 2017 AWARD RECIPIENTS

**Chilo Gutierrez, Lifetime Achievement**

**Hugo Flores, Conservation Rancher**

**Steve LaMantia, Wildlife Conservationist**

**Los Lazos Ranch, Friends of Conservation**

**Ashley Garcia, Conservation Teacher**



## 2018 Laredo International Fair and Expo Booth

This Year's booth was a great success. We had over 200 people including children approaching our booth.





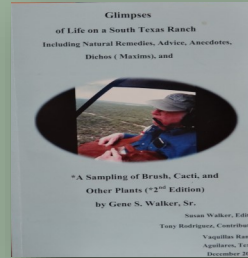
## Donation to the Webb SWCD

The Webb County SWCD operates solely on donations and contributions. Federal programs are not available to finance the operation of SWCDs. We, the directors of Webb County SWCD would like to ask the local farmers, ranchers and businesses for a contribution to help continue to provide the highest level of technical assistance and cost share funding. Upon request, Cooperators that contribute \$150.00 or more will be presented with a 20x24 inch District Cooperator sign (**shown below**) which will include the operators name or ranch. If You are interested in making a donation, please mail the check to the address below:

Webb SWCD #337  
7209 E. Saunders, Ste.7  
Laredo, Texas 78043



Available at the SWCD office,  
for a limited time.



\$10.00

Range Plants  
A Land User's Guide  
To Their Identification,  
Value and Management  
By Ricky J. Linex

Glimpses  
of Life on a South Texas Ranch  
By Gene S. Walker, Sr.



\$25.00

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