

RANCHING AND WILDLIFE EXPO

FEBRUARY 26–28, 2013

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 26

12:30-1:25 p.m.

Texas' Official Bison Herd

Donald Beard, Park Superintendent, Caprock Canyon State Park

Bison are the keystone species of the Great Plains of North America. With numbers estimated historically somewhere between 30 and 60 million animals ranging the continent, these shaggy creatures were deeply engrained in the fabric of our history as a nation and state. Our not too distant ancestors were responsible for driving these amazing creatures to the brink of extinction a short 130 years ago.

A few forward thinking men (and women) had the foresight to see the path of peril that these animals were facing and stepped up to help save this magnificent animal. One of these men was Charles Goodnight. At the urging of his wife Mary Ann, he was able to save a few animals from the canyon country in the Panhandle of Texas.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has taken the challenge of protecting the Goodnight Bison herd and has undertaken a project of massive proportion to restore these animals to a part of their historical range. Caprock Canyon State Park Superintendent Donald Beard is responsible for the management of this great herd. He has a passion for these animals and has been stricken with the "bison fever". His enthusiasm is evident in his delivery of the powerful journey of the Texas State Bison Herd. His presentation discusses the past history of bison in North America and the Goodnight herd, the present state of the animals along with the future plans for the Charles Goodnight Bison Herd, the "Official Bison Herd of the State of Texas".

1:25-2:25 p.m.

Texas Bison Presentation

Tim Frasier, AAS Livestock Technology - Consulting Bison Specialist; Texas Buffalo Exchange & Frasier Bison LLC

Successfully managing bison is similar to cattle, but unique in many ways. Mr. Frasier's consulting business tag-line is "Helping buffalo with people since 1995". There are considerations unique to bison in handling technique, handling facilities, fence construction / containment, and herd-health management that are all about the bison-difference and the Bison-Advantage. Mr. Frasier has over 17 years of experience in managing and marketing bison and will share his knowledge about these amazing creatures and the Texas Bison Industry.

2:25-3:20 p.m.

Wildlife Tax Valuation

Linda Campbell, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Private Lands and Public Hunting Coordinator

To preserve open space lands, Texas law allows agricultural properties to be taxed at a lower rate if they meet the criteria for one of two types of special appraisals. Many agricultural producers use "Assessment of Lands Designated for Agricultural Use" (Section 1-d) appraisal, but landowners interested in wildlife management may want to consider designation of wildlife management as their primary agricultural use as provided for in "Taxation of Certain Open-Space Land" (Section 1-d-1). Linda Campbell will explain the guidelines and offer suggestions to help you qualify your property for the 1-d-1 wildlife tax valuation.

3:20-3:55 p.m.

Texas Youth Hunting Program

Chris Mitchell, Texas Wildlife Association

The Texas Youth Hunting Program was established to increase the number of youths participating in wildlife and hunting activities and to promote the hunting heritage in Texas. The Texas Wildlife Association (TWA) and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) have joined forces to offer youth hunts that are safe, educational and very affordable. Chris Mitchell will explain how the department and association sponsor introductory, instructive youth hunts for deer, turkey, hogs, javelina, exotics, dove, small game, waterfowl, varmints and other species.

3:55-4:45 p.m.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Public Hunting Program

Greg Pleasant, TPWD District 7 Biologist

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) offers a variety of hunting opportunities through two public hunting systems. **Annual Public Hunting Permit**--The Annual Public Hunting Permit provides nearly year-round hunting on nearly one million acres of land. Popular dove hunting areas are offered through this system. **Public Hunt Drawing System**--The Public Hunt Drawing System provides opportunities to apply for a wide variety of supervised, drawn hunts including special drawings for both adults and youth hunters. In addition, TPWD offers special hunt package drawings for exotic wildlife and quality native animals on TPWD managed lands, as well as, specially leased private properties.

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 27

12:30-1:15 p.m.

Protect, Conserve, Pass Down:

How to Preserve Your Ranching Heritage through the Use of a Conservation Easement

Blair Fitzsimons, Executive Director, Texas Agricultural Land Trust

The Texas Agricultural Land Trust (TALT) was created in 2007 by leaders from the Texas Farm Bureau, Texas & Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association, and Texas Wildlife Association. TALT Executive Director, Blair Fitzsimons, will explain how the non-profit land trust has worked with farmers and ranchers around the state to protect agricultural lands and native wildlife habitats through the use of a conservation easement. She will explore the estate and income tax benefits of a conservation easement, and address common misperceptions about land trusts and conservation easements.

1:25-2:15 p.m.

Managing Pastures on Small Acreage

Larry Pierce, County Extension Agent, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Washington County

This presentation will discuss the basic principles of pasture management on small acreage for cattle production. Participants will learn about pasture improvement and renovation, soil management, weed and brush management, and grazing management.

2:15-3:05 p.m.

Cattle Grazing—Stocking Rates on Native vs. Non-native forage

Dr. Megan Clayton, Assistant Professor and Extension Range Specialist, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

Environmental and land management practices have changed the grazeable acreage and stocking rates on our Texas rangelands. How can you determine what the best cattle stocking rate will be on your property? This session will highlight some key differences between native vs. non-native forage grasses and ways to measure the quality and amount of forage on your property.

3:05-3:55 p.m.

Grazing Management- Dealing with Periodic Drought and Balancing User Interests

Dave Delaney, Vice President for Ranching and Wildlife, King Ranch Inc.

Of all the risks and volatility a ranch manager faces on a daily basis, none is more important to the long term health of the natural resources under their care than properly determining the carrying capacity of the ranges they manage and ensuring such an assessment is consistent with the long term goals of ranch ownership. In areas such as South Texas, where the environment is harsh and the yearly and seasonal standard deviation in rainfall is exceedingly high, this can be a very complex challenge. Throw in the need to balance the interests of various users (along with the uncertainties of rainfall forecasting) and this can sometimes seem to be an impossible task. This talk will detail some simple practical principles and goals which might help the ranch manager deal with these complexities while running a successful ranching operation.

3:55-4:45 p.m.

Ask the Experts—Panel Discussion

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28

1:00-1:35 p.m.

Bobwhite Quail Habitat Components—the silver bullet

Robert Perez, Upland Game Bird Program Leader, Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept.

What are the habitat components necessary to support healthy bobwhite quail populations?

1:35-2:10 p.m.

Bobwhite Quail Abundance in Relation to Rainfall—the real silver bullet

Jon Hayes, Conservation Delivery Specialist, Oak Prairies Joint Venture and Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept.

It appears that rainfall has a major impact on the annual fluctuation in quail abundance. What are the implications for landscape level conservation efforts?

2:10-2:45 p.m.

Harvest Management During Drought

Dr. Fidel Hernandez, Alfred C. Glassell, Jr. Chair for Quail Research, Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute Texas A&M University-Kingsville

What is a sustainable harvest for bobwhites in Texas, how can this harvest be applied by landowners, and does harvest reduction during drought have biological benefits?

2:45-3:20 p.m.

Genetic Variation in Bobwhite Quail Populations

Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute Texas A&M University-Kingsville

Data continue to support the emerging pattern that bobwhites in South Texas have a high level of genetic diversity and a low level of population differentiation, which indicates long-distance (1–10 miles) movements of individual birds are more important than previously thought.

3:20-4:30 p.m.

Ask the Experts—Panel Discussion