

# Tips On Using Livestock As A Tool For Wildlife Management

By Texas Parks and Wildlife

Many people mistakenly believe that when managing for wildlife that livestock production cannot coexist.

Reality is that this entire part of Texas was developed under grazing pressure and was grazed prior to European settlers.

Prior to European settlers, most grazing was by herds of buffalo that roamed through the area.

The reason for this misconception is that in a lot of instances landowners will overstock their property with livestock and begin to create competition for food among the wildlife and livestock.

When this occurs, range conditions deteriorate and wildlife populations decline.

There is a fine line between using livestock as a tool and the livestock becoming a detriment to wildlife.

Livestock can be one of the best tools at your disposal.

To ensure that you are using the livestock as a tool you can take a few simple steps.

The first thing you need to determine is what species of wildlife

you want to manage for.

If you are managing for deer you don't want to bring in livestock that is going to eat the same forbs and browse that a deer is going to eat.

This would be direct competition for the same resource.

In this instance, sheep and goats would not be a good livestock choice.

Cattle would be the preferred choice.

Cattle are primarily grazers and as long as there is sufficient grass there will not be measurable competition for forbs and browse.

The next thing is to ensure that your stocking rate of the livestock is satisfactory.

All livestock species will begin to overgraze when their numbers get to high or the amount of food diminishes.

This can cause multiple problems.

If quail are the species you are managing for, too much decline in native grass will remove nesting cover, which will have a negative impact.

Also, when cattle do not have enough grass they will turn to

forbs and browsing.

This affects all wildlife by making their food less available.

On the flip side, not having enough grazing pressure could have a negative outcome.

In this part of the state where rainfall is adequate most years, areas become rank with vegetation and in some situations may become too thick for certain species.

Third you want to rotate your livestock on a periodic basis.

Referring back to the buffalo,

when a buffalo herd moved into an area, it would graze very heavily on all of the plants, then the herd would move on to another area and not return for a long time.

This grazing would stimulate new plant growth, it removed excess grass from the ground that restricted the growth of forbs, and their hoof action would loosen the soil to allow for better water absorption.

If the buffalo herd would have stayed in one place too long, they would have had a negative impact on the ecology.

Today most ranches have a modern "Buffalo Herd" on their property.

We call them cattle.

The cattle often times are kept in one pasture year around and allowed to negatively impact the range.

When rotational grazing is implemented on your property you simulate the conditions that the plant community was developed under.

You graze the area for a short period, which is followed by a long period of rest.

Livestock can be an indispensable tool to your management program.

Managers need to understand the wildlife species needs, then make sure that your livestock choice does not conflict.

The bottom line of using livestock to manage for wildlife is that outstanding results are achievable as long as you take wildlife needs into account.

If you would like to contact your local biologist, see our website at: <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/wildlifebiologist>.

## Minimum Wage To Increase On July 24

On July 24, the minimum wage will increase 70 cents to \$7.25 per hour.

While that may not seem like a lot of money to some... it will provide a much needed boost for many low-income older workers who are having trouble making ends meet.

We will be happy to help you develop a local story about the increase in the minimum wage and how it will improve the lives of older workers in Texas.

The number of older workers needing additional income continues to rise, in part because of the growing economic crisis.

• 64 percent of older workers cite financial need as the reason they continue working. They need income to support their families, pay for health care and maintain health insurance.

• The number of low income, older people at risk for homelessness has increased by 140 percent since January 2008.

• Over the past year alone, unemployment among people 55 and older has increased 115 percent. Among job seekers 75 and older,

unemployment has increased by 100 percent since June 2008.

In Texas, many older workers are turning to Experience Works

for assistance.

Through the Senior Community Service Employment Program, Experience Works helps low income, older

workers enter the workforce, secure more challenging positions, move into career areas or supplement their incomes.

## Comptroller To Review Appraisal Districts

The Texas Legislature, in House Bill 8, gave Texas Comptroller Susan Combs the responsibility of reviewing the performance of each county appraisal district at least once every other year.

In the off years, the comptroller's office will conduct a property value study to determine the taxable value in each school district.

The new law goes into effect Jan. 1, 2010.

"We look forward to working with appraisal districts in our reviews and value studies to ensure fair and accurate appraisals," Combs said.

"Texas taxpayers expect and deserve efficient service and uniform appraisals so property taxes are shared equally among taxpayers."

The reviews will cover each appraisal district's governance,

taxpayer assistance, operating and appraisal standards, procedures and methods.

If an appraisal district fails to comply with the comptroller's recommendations within one year, the Board of Tax Professional Examiners or a successor agency must take action necessary to ensure compliance.

HB 8 also changed the comptroller's school district property value study from an annual study to a study that must be conducted once every two years, except when the study finds invalid values for a school district, at which time a study will be conducted annually until the values are valid.

The requirement for a biennial — rather than an annual — study will free up comptroller resources

to do a more intensive property value study in approximately half the school districts each year.

The bill created a nine-member comptroller's property value study advisory committee to consult with the comptroller prior to the adoption of study rules.

The Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives will appoint one member from the House; the Lieutenant Governor will appoint one member from the Senate; and the Comptroller will appoint two members representing appraisal districts, two members representing school districts and three members who are Texas taxpayers or have expertise in school district taxation or ratio studies.

## NEWSBRIEFS

Continued from front page

Bank, Columbus Butane, Weimar Manufacturing and Main Package Store. For more information call Trey Barfield, 979-732-2074, DeWayne Kotrla, 732-3615 or Ellen Labay, 979-733-6045.

### Senior citizen's dance is Aug. 7

A senior citizen's dance will be held Friday, Aug. 7 at the Eagle Lake Community Center from 8 to 11 p.m. The Lazy Farmers will provide the musical entertainment. For more information call 979-234-2903.

### FPC to celebrate 100th birthday

The First Presbyterian Church (FPC) in Eagle Lake invites everyone to come and celebrate the 100th birthday celebration. The program starts at 10:30, Aug. 9. Rev. John Howard Reed, former member and Pastor of the Central Presbyterian Church in Houston will be guest speaker. A program will follow with a BBQ lunch and signing of Sidney Struss's 4th historical book publication, The First Presbyterian Church of Eagle Lake - 100 Years. Only those books bought at the church will have a discounted pre-release price. Spread the word and make this a grand homecoming for the church! If you have any questions, please contact Mike Cooper at 979-234-2937.

### Mt. Olive Back to School Aug. 14-15

Back to School Explosion "Armed for Battle" hosted by Greater Mt. Olive Baptist Church (GMOBC) and Pastor D. Curry will be held August 14-15. Youth and young adults come on out and join us! Friday, August 14 session 3-6 p.m. Saturday, August 15 session 10 a.m. - noon, fun and fellowship noon - 4 p.m., praise and worship rally, 6 p.m. We are currently in need of sponsors to donate school supplies. If you or someone you know is interested in being a sponsor or for more information please call Paula Richardson at 979-234-7062.

### Free youth camp at White Cloud

Free youth summer camp hosted by SOAH ministries. Join us at White Cloud Baptist Church (WCBC) in Eagle Lake thru August 21, Monday-Friday 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. Ages up to 18 years old. Meals will be served. Program activities include youth forums, life skills, arts and crafts, reading and math enrichment, dance/music, table games, and physical fitness. For more information call 832-677-6320 or 832-483-2521.

## Columbus Wildfire

Continued from front page caused as a result of fireworks igniting the grass and brush.

Four people who were on an outing at the property were setting off fireworks earlier in the afternoon and went fishing in a nearby pond.

Approximately 45 minutes had passed when they smelled smoke and saw the flames in the area they had set off the fireworks earlier.

Before they could call 911 and summon the Columbus Fire Department the fire had spread into the brush and adjoining properties.

The Fire Department arrived on location to find the fire burning out of control and quickly upgraded to an eight-alarm fire.

Each of the individuals was

issued a citation on charges of reckless damage or destruction.

Those cited are as follows: Abigail Pendergraft, 26, John Pendergraft, 27, James Pendergraft, 24, and Paul Pendergraft, 57, all of Houston.

They are to appear before Justice of the Peace, Precinct 3, Judge Francis Truchard.

EAGLE LAKE WEATHER REPORT		
Information Courtesy of Texas A&M University System Agricultural Research and Experiment Station, Eagle Lake		
Date	Temp (H/L)	Rainfall(in.)
Mon. 07-13-09	100/75	0.00
Tue. 07-14-09	100/74	0.00
Wed. 07-15-09	100/75	0.00
Thu. 07-16-09	101/76	0.00
Fri. 07-17-09	100/77	0.32
Sat. 07-18-09	98/70	0.87
Sun. 07-19-09	97/76	0.00

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