

Parks Department Discusses Benefits Of The 40-Acre, Multipurpose Farm

By Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Hopefully over the last 10 weeks, you have acquired a better understanding of the land management practices that were mentioned; the axe, cow, plow, fire, and gun. Hopefully, you have all ready started thinking how to use each of the tools on your property.

As most are aware, land frag-

mentation (large properties being split into numerous small properties) has many conservationists on edge since land fragmentation has been cited as a possible reason many wildlife populations have decreased.

Well, it appears we might as well get used to the issue and start managing around it.

As the saying goes, "when life throws you lemons, make lemonade".

On the positive side of land fragmentation, just because a property used to be 1000 acres does not mean it was good habitat.

Many past (and present) land uses had negative impacts on habitat.

The biggest problems that come to mind are conversion of native prairie to 'improved' pastures and continuous grazing.

After numerous land sells, the old 1000 acre ranch may now be several tracts averaging 10-50 acres and owned by several individuals.

When looking back, do you realize that some of the best quail habitat was in the early 1900's when many farms were less than 100 acres (many were sharecropped)?

By the way, good quail habitat may support 1 covey per 20-40 acres.

Back in the day, small farms provided ample habitat for ground birds, small game, and deer.

Picture in your mind a 40 acre farm with some acreage used for row-cropping, some used for gardening, some for grazing farm animals (mules, cows, horses, etc), and lots of weeds and grown up hedgerows.

This habitat provided an abundance of cover types (nesting, escape, and loafing just to name a few) as well as foraging areas for many species.

Now, thinking about today's practices.

This same scenario can be replicated using seasonal food plots,

periodic mowing and disking (2-3 year rotations), fenceline brush management, prescribed burning, rotational grazing, restoring native grasses, and limited hunting.

Additionally, the State of Texas has given landowners the opportunity to retain Agriculture valuations for wildlife management.

This flexibility allows the landowner who is not concerned about income from livestock or farming to be able to manage for wildlife and recreation.

In today's rural landscape, these landowners could have great positive impacts on wildlife.

The previously mentioned 1000 acre fragmented and overgrazed ranch now may have the opportunity to be managed to promote wildlife habitat by many different landowners and be better for wildlife than it was previously.

Lastly, this part of the state is blessed to have many Wildlife Management Associations (WMA's) spread out on a county level.

Many landowners of whom



most have some sort of common goal; most often better deer populations form these associations.

These same WMA's may be the key to restoring certain species (quail) and even restoring a burning regime on a landscape basis through Prescribed Burn Associations.

Once again, try to start implementing these practices as you see fit and start making some lemonade.

It is up to you, the private landowner, to make a difference by practicing 'on the ground' habitat management.

After all, 97% of the state is privately owned.

Benton, Williams Receive Lone Star

Trey Benton and Tanner Williams, of the Rice Consolidated FFA chapter, were awarded the Lone Star FFA Degree at the 81st annual Texas FFA Convention held July 7-10 in Dallas.

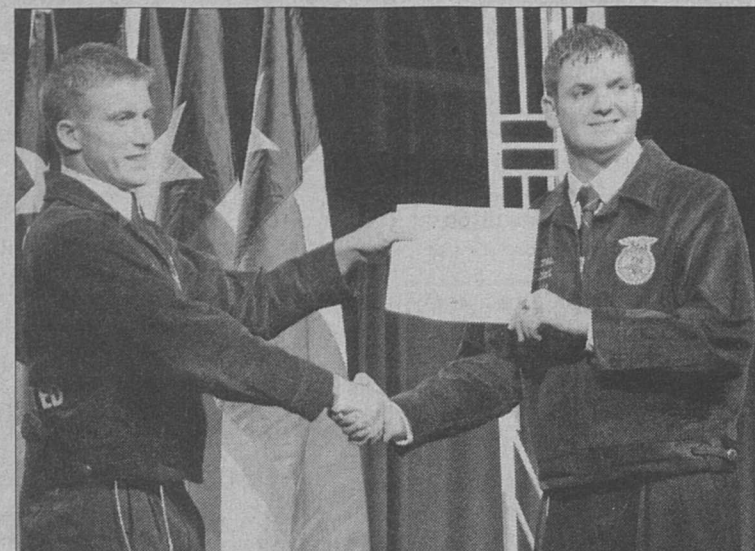
The Lone Star FFA Degree is the highest degree bestowed by the Texas FFA.

The Lone Star FFA Degree recognizes the members' agricultural awareness, leadership, career development and active involvement in the FFA organization.

Benton and Williams were two of more than 1,350 FFA members receiving this esteemed degree.

Dallas has been home to 13 Texas FFA conventions. Five of the first six Future Farmer conventions, 1929-33, were held in Dallas in conjunction with the State Fair of Texas.

This year, the Texas FFA made history in Dallas. Members set an all-time attendance record with 11,760 members and guests, surpassing the record set at the 79th Annual Texas FFA Convention held in Corpus Christi with



Tanner Williams, left, receives the Lone Star FFA Degree at the 81st annual Texas FFA Convention held July 7-10 in Dallas.

10,321 members and guests.

The Texas FFA is one of the nation's largest state FFA associations with a membership of more than 63,000 and 1,000 local FFA chapters.

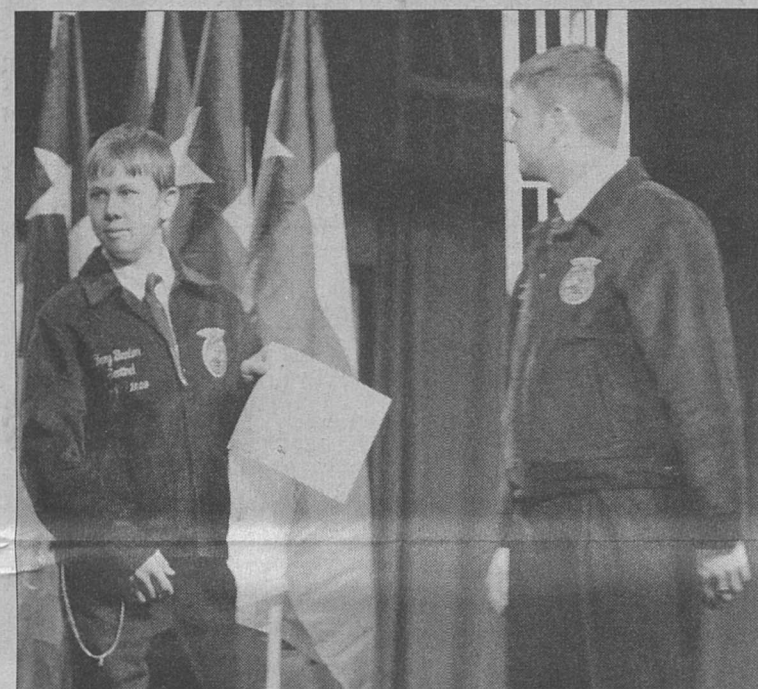
FFA gives students the opportunity to apply practical class-

room knowledge to real world experiences through local, state and national competitions.

For more information about the Texas FFA Association visit www.texasffa.org.

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STEERS #1 #2
150-300 lbs 120-150 102-120
300-400 lbs 107-132 92-107
400-500 lbs 105-120 89-102
500-600 lbs 96-111 89-96
600-700 lbs 90-104 81-91
700-800 lbs 88-98 78-89
HEIFERS #1 #2
150-300 lbs 112-139 103-118
300-400 lbs 94-127 88-104
400-500 lbs 98-116 90-106
500-600 lbs 95-106 82-98
600-700 lbs 88-100 74-89
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Trey Benton, left, receives the Lone Star FFA Degree at the 81st annual Texas FFA Convention held July 7-10 in Dallas.

Benton also tied for first in bull riding and was also very competitive in calf roping at Texas FFA Rodeo Finals at the convention.

At the conclusion of state convention, Trey went on to compete in the National Rodeo Finals as one of the top competitors. Benton will be a senior at Rice Consolidated this year will he will continue to be an asset both in the arena and out.

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50-280 (Rev. 6-06/2)

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS BUDGET AND PROPOSED TAX RATE

The Rice Consolidated Independent School District will hold a public meeting at 6:00 pm on August 24, 2009 in the Board Room of the Administration Bldg., Altair, Texas. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the school district's budget that will determine the tax rate that will be adopted. Public participation in the discussion is invited.

The tax rate that is ultimately adopted at this meeting or at a separate meeting at a later date may not exceed the proposed rate shown below unless the district publishes a revised notice containing the same information and comparisons set out below and holds another public meeting to discuss the revised notice.

Maintenance Tax	\$ 1.04000 / \$100	(Proposed rate for maintenance and operations)
School Debt Service Tax	\$ 0.24542 / \$100	(proposed rate to pay bonded indebtedness)

Comparison of Proposed Budget with Last Year's Budget

The applicable percentage increase or decrease (or difference) in the amount budgeted in the preceding fiscal year and the amount budgeted for the fiscal year that begins during the current tax year is indicated for each of the following expenditure categories:

Maintenance and operations	% increase	or	1.30000 % (decrease)
Debt service	1.10000 % increase	or	% (decrease)
Total expenditures	% increase	or	1.00000 % (decrease)

Total Appraised Value and Total Taxable Value (as calculated under Section 26.04, Tax Code)

	Preceding Tax Year	Current Tax Year
Total appraised value* of all property	\$ 675,632,407.00	\$ 671,529,847.00
Total appraised value* of new property**	\$ 5,624,620.00	\$ 5,679,450.00
Total taxable value*** of all property	\$ 611,569,674.00	\$ 605,719,442.00
Total taxable value*** of new property**	\$ 5,466,583.00	\$ 5,438,960.00

* "Appraised value" is the amount shown on the appraisal roll and defined by Section 1.04(8), Tax Code.
** "New property" is defined by Section 26.012(17), Tax Code.
*** "Taxable value" is defined by Section 1.04(10), Tax Code.

Bonded Indebtedness

Total amount of outstanding and unpaid bonded indebtedness* \$ 16,030,785.00

* Outstanding principal.

Comparison of Proposed Rates with Last Year's Rates

	Maintenance & Operations	Interest & Sinking Fund*	Total	Local Revenue Per Student	State Revenue Per Student
Last Year's Rate	\$ 1.04000	\$ 0.24542 *	\$ 1.28542	\$ 6,596.00	\$ 4,066.00
Rate to Maintain Same Level of Maintenance & Operations Revenue & Pay Debt Service	\$ 1.04126	\$ 0.25559 *	\$ 1.29685	\$ 6,381.00	\$ 4,082.00
Proposed Rate	\$ 1.04000	\$ 0.24542 *	\$ 1.28542	\$ 6,311.00	\$ 4,313.00

* The Interest & Sinking Fund tax revenue is used to pay for bonded indebtedness on construction, equipment, or both. The bonds, and the tax rate necessary to pay those bonds, were approved by the voters of this district.

Comparison of Proposed Levy with Last Year's Levy on Average Residence

	Last Year	This Year
Average Market Value of Residences	\$ 58,913.00	\$ 58,546.00
Average Taxable Value of Residences	\$ 44,090.00	\$ 44,169.00
Last Year's Rate Versus Proposed Rate per \$100 Value	\$ 1.28542	\$ 1.28542
Taxes Due on Average Residence	\$ 566.74	\$ 567.76
Increase (Decrease) in Taxes		\$ 1.02

Under state law, the dollar amount of school taxes imposed on the residence homestead of a person 65 years of age or older or of the surviving spouse of such a person, if the surviving spouse was 55 years of age or older when the person died, may not be increased above the amount paid in the first year after the person turned 65, regardless of changes in tax rate or property value.

Notice of Rollback Rate: The highest tax rate the district can adopt before requiring voter approval at an election is 1.29559. This election will be automatically held if the district adopts a rate in excess of the rollback rate of 1.29559.

Fund Balances

The following estimated balances will remain at the end of the current fiscal year and are not encumbered with or by a corresponding debt obligation, less estimated funds necessary for operating the district before receipt of the first state aid payment:

Maintenance and Operations Fund Balance(s)	\$ 4,800,000.00
Interest & Sinking Fund Balance(s)	\$ 275,000.00

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