

Kerr County Soil & Water
Conservation District



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www.kerrcountyswcd.com



<https://www.facebook.com/kerrcoswcd>

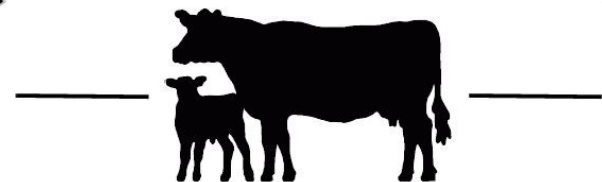


Meet Sid! I've hidden him inside this Newsletter. The first person to find him and post it on the Kerr County SWCD's Facebook page gets a prize!

~Missie Dreiss, Kerr County SWCD District Technician

Save The Date!

COW POKES & LAND FOLKS



Conference

Friday, May 6, 2022 8:00am - 4:00pm

Hill Country Youth Event Center ~ 3785 Hwy. 27 Kerrville, TX 78028

\$30.00 Early Bird Special ~ \$45.00 At The Gate

5 CEU's (Pesticide Lic.)

Please make checks payable to Kerr County SWCD and Mail to: 2104 Memorial Blvd. Ste. 103, Kerrville, TX 78028



KERR CO. SWCD NEWS

Kerr County Soil & Water Conservation District January 2022 Volume 12, Issue 2

WE HAVE AN AREA II WINNER!



Mrs. Callie Hough of the Divide ISD has been awarded 1st Place Conservation Teacher for both the Local & Area II Texas Conservation Awards Program Sponsored by the Soil & Water Conservation Districts of Texas. Lets cheer her on to win State!

If you have never heard of the Divide School, they are the "Little School House on the Prai-

rie" in West Kerr County. The district serves 32 students from Pre-K to 6th grade and is the smallest independent school district in the state. It's situated in the middle of an 11 acre pasture where it is not unknown to see a bottle baby lamb, goat, or some baby chicks. Mrs. Hough is the Kinder, First, and Second grade teacher, as well as principal. She has been at the Divide School for 4 years and she said, "During my time here I've loved the opportunity to interact with local ranchers, the Soil & Water Conservation District, community members and OUR "ranch kids" to help bring agricultural and conservation lessons to life in the classroom."

April 24th-May 1st is Soil Stewardship Week!

Divide students planned, built, and carried out a winter garden. Students created the plan on their own terms and guided the teacher as to the vegetables that would be grown, researched the timeline of growth for each vegetable, composed a materials list, created a watering schedule and created a map of their garden based on the location of the sun throughout the day, growing time, and the watering schedule. With teacher assistance with the power tools, students built the entire garden, brought in soil from the school pasture, mixed with a little bit of potting soil and planted seeds. Each day it was their responsibility to ensure the garden was tended to. During this project, students discussed various types of soil as well as the importance of ensuring that plants received nutrients, sunlight, and the correct amount of water. The garden consisted of green beans, winter tomatoes, zucchini, squash, broccoli, okra and carrots. All of these vegetables were researched by students (some using "Alexa") as plants that could be sustained in colder temperatures. Knowing the garden would need water according to their schedule and following the discussion of rainwater being the best source of water, a rainwater catchment system was built to provide rainwater to our plants. Students understood that for the materials they had, it would be essential to utilize their gutter system and therefore came up with the idea of using a mesh material to ensure they were not catching more than water out of their system. This water was used in the garden as often as they were able to get rain. Prior to the hard freeze, they were able to harvest some of their green beans.



District Directors:

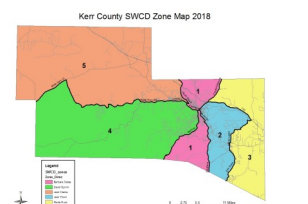
- Zone 1
Barbara Oates
- Zone 2
Jack Thorn, Vice-Chairman
- Zone 3
Paula Russ, Secretary
- Zone 4
David Symm
- Zone 5
Jack Clarke, III, Chairman

District Clerk

Denise Griffin

District Technician

Missie Dreiss



Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Resource Team Leader

Cole Jacoby

Programs Assistant (Farm Bill)

Katy Meador

Soil Conservationists

Nathan Orsac

Preston Stull

Rangeland Specialist

Christian Hopkins

OFFICE HOURS:

NRCS 8:00-4:30 Mon-Fri

SWCD 9:00-3:00 Tues-Thurs

(830) 896-4911x3

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KERR COUNTY LOCAL WORK GROUP MEETING



Your input is needed! Help determine natural resource priorities and criteria for USDA-NRCS conservation and programs planning for the upcoming fiscal year.

You are invited to:

- ✓ Help shape plans and priorities future projects.
- ✓ Identify where the best investments can be made to address natural resource issues
- ✓ Review the work that has already been done in the county, and
- ✓ Share your vision for what the county will look like when these natural resource concerns have been addressed.

WHERE: Hill Country Youth Event Center 3785 Hwy. 27 Kerrville, TX 78028
DATE: April 14, 2022
TIME: 11:30am
For more information contact:
Cole Jacoby (830) 896-4911x3



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Raising livestock is a common sight at the Divide School. Students learned the importance of colostrum, followed by the correct nutrients necessary for their kid goat friend, name "Dos". "Dos" came from being the second bottle baby kid goat that looked exactly like their first one in a previous year, "Sebastian". Dos was a daily responsibility for students, who learned to properly mix a bottle and provide nutrients. They watched Dos grow up and move back to the local ranch he came from after he was weaned. Each and every year, Mrs. Hough's class hatches chicks. They gather fertilized eggs from another teacher's chickens, and place them in the incubator.



Students learn about temperature levels, humidity, when to lay the eggs flat and get to experience the entire hatching process. After hatching, they even have some chicks that join them for a math lesson. Following watching the chicks grow for a couple of weeks, students take a chick or 4 home to raise, many of which are still alive and have special names. Those same chicks provide eggs that students and teachers often bring to school for cooking lessons, or even a simple breakfast.



This year, they embarked on a field trip to a local ranch where students were given a tour and were able to share their knowledge of livestock, soil, water wells, conservation, and exotic life with the ranchers. Students learned about the balance of exotic wildlife and livestock on the same ranch. One of the things touched on was the movement of exotic animals in order to monitor the grass alongside the grazing rotation pattern of cattle, sheep, and goats on this ranch. Students learned about a drop net used to move exotic animals, as well as where the water well leads. Prior to the ranch tour, students were grouped up and given clipboards with a notes page in which they were noticing and noting what creatures they saw in various parts of the ranch, the amount of grass in different pastures, what sources of water were supplied to animals, how this water was supplied, the various terrains found on the ranch, and the different types of soil. As one of my students stated "we all know poop makes the grass grow". The rancher asked if anyone knew how a well worked, and the hands shot up in the air! We learned about which wells fed which water troughs across the ranch. Students had the opportunity to interview the ranchers, in which they asked/noted what livestock was run on the ranch, how the grazing rotation pattern works, the fact that it takes 25 acres to sustain one momma cow and her calf in this part of the world, the many different exotic species which included axis, blackbuck, emu, addax, oryx, fallow, and a few more. Students learned that the grazing pasture rotation depends upon rain levels and the growth of the grass based on the soil in each pasture. Checking water is a daily task, and feeding consists of more than just grass during the winter months. The rancher agreed with students when they stated that without soil, there is no ranching, there is no feed, there is no clothing, food, or structures able to be built. Various types of vegetation were noted and there was discussion on how relevant the vegetation was to sustainable ranching.



Job well done Mrs. Hough! We are honored to recognize you as both our Local Kerr County and Area II 1st Place Winner of the 2022 Conservation Teacher Award for the 44th Annual Texas Conservation Awards Program. If you'd like to meet Mrs. Hough and some of her students, please register for our Cow Pokes & Land Folks Conference on Friday, May 6, 2022!

