

Kerr County Soil & Water
Conservation District

2104 Memorial Boulevard
Suite 103

Kerrville, Texas 78028

Tel: 830-896-4911 x 3


Fax: 830-896-3336

E-mail: kerrcountyswcd@tx.nacdn.net

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

NRCS Announces 2019 Deadline for Conservation Assistance Funding

The USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Texas has announced the first funding application deadline of March 15, 2019 for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). A second funding application deadline is scheduled for May 10, 2019.

Applications are taken year around for NRCS programs, but deadlines are announced to rank and fund eligible conservation projects. Producers interested in signing up for EQIP should submit applications to their local USDA service center or if already a USDA client, on-line via [Conservation Client Gateway](#) (CCG).

EQIP is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers. Technical assistance is provided without a fee from NRCS specialists to help landowners and land managers plan and implement conservation practices to help them meet their land management goals, address natural resource concerns and improve soil, water, plant, animal, air, and related resources on agricultural land and non-industrial private forestland.

For additional information visit the NRCS Texas website. Applications for EQIP are accepted on a continuous basis. Producers interested in EQIP can contact the Kerrville Field Office or our [NRCS EQIP web page](#).

Kerrville USDA NRCS Field Office

2104 Memorial Blvd. Ste 103

Kerrville, TX 78028

(830)896-4911



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Proudly Presents:

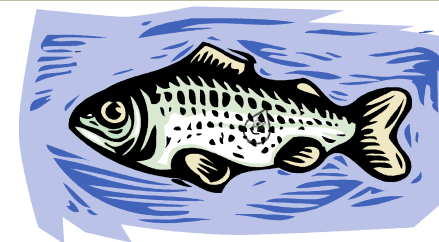
**Cow Pokes & Land Folks
Conference**

Friday, May 3, 2019 8:00am - 4:00pm

\$30.00 Early Bird Special
\$45.00 At the Gate
5 CEU's (Pesticide Lic.)
7 hours A.T (Master Naturalists)

Spring Fish Sale

Pre-Order by Friday, May 10
Pick-Up on Friday, May 17th



Soil Stewardship Week

April 28th-May 5th



"Committee of 100"

On March 21, 2019 Soil and Water Conservation District officials from across Texas gathered at the State Capitol to show their support for legislation impacting conservation programs and conservation districts in Texas.

Jack Thorn with Kerr County SWCD participated in the event. While in Austin, Directors met with Senator Dawn Buckingham's Chief of Staff, Travis Richmond (top picture), Representative Andrew Murr (middle picture) and Legislative Consultant JP Laney.

Specifically, district officials asked members of the Texas legislature to support bills that restores funding for the Water Enhancement Program, and Water Quality Plan Grant, and funding for the Watershed program to address the backlog of maintenance and repairs. District Directors serve as a resource to policy makers year-round on agriculture, water, natural resources and property rights, just to name a few. But it is always an honor to have the opportunity to advocate at the Capitol.

"I was glad to see such a diverse group of dedicated directors make the trip to Austin to support these critical funding issues. The legislative session is far from over but I believe we were able to make a positive impact as members get ready to make critical votes on these issues." Volney Hough, ATSWCD President said.

Austin McCasland, Board member for Texas Conservation Association for Water and Soil (TCAWS) said "This was the best conservation day yet. It was great to have the opportunity to have meaningful conversations about policy with the members and staff of the legislature".

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Dates of Interest:

Sunday, April 21st

Easter

April 28-May 5,

Soil Stewardship Week

Saturday, April 13th

Blooms & Barrels

Friday, May 3rd

Cow Pokes & Land Folks Conference

Sunday, May 12th

Mother's Day

Friday, May 17th

Spring Fish Sale

Friday, June 14

Divide VFD

Steak Dinner Fundraiser

Keeping Your Soils Covered

Travis Waiser

MLRA Leader – Soil Scientist

As you walk in the pasture checking the cows, goats, sheep, or wildlife have you ever thought much about what was below your feet besides rocks? I hear all the time that Kerr County doesn't have much soil just rock. In some cases that is about right and places that are not properly managed or stocked properly, whether it be livestock or wildlife, seem to always grow rock. Hopefully as you are walking across the rangeland you realize there is soil below your feet. Without that soil layer we would not be able to produce the many things that sustain us daily nor grow the vegetation for livestock and wildlife to graze.

Many of you may be familiar with the old saying "take half leave half" when it comes to plants, but this saying benefits the soil as well. We need plants on the surface to protect the soil and hold the soil in place. Those plants are also feeding the soil. The soil is not a dead material but is filled with millions and millions of microorganisms that feed off dead plant and animal material, carbohydrates that leak from plant roots, and any other organic material in the soil. The soil is the resource that is providing the nutrients for the plants we grow to feed our livestock and wildlife and it needs to be protected. The decisions you make will impact how much soil stays on your property or how much gets washed into the drainages and eventually to the Gulf of Mexico. By practicing proper grazing management with the correct stocking rate overtime the organic matter and soil structure will improve. Increasing organic matter in the soil gives the soil a higher water holding capacity giving the plants access to more water. Soil structure is the secondary aggregation of the sand, silt, and clay particles and by improving the structure more water can infiltrate into the soil surface allowing the soil to capture more water. Wouldn't it be nice to never have to fix another water gap? This may be a wish that will never come true as sometimes we just get more rain than our soils can hold but gaps shouldn't wash out every rain-fall event. If they do, it is a sign that the water is not infiltrating into the soil surface and something is out of balance. Is your property in balance and functioning the way it should?



Good grass cover protects the soil from erosion.



Soil with good granular structure with many roots leads to good water infiltration.

NRCS and the SWCD Encouraged 5th Graders into Soils Studies at Tom Daniels Science Expo

Tom Daniels Elementary School in Kerrville, Texas held a Science Expo on March 7, 2019. The purpose of the Science Expo was to discuss the importance of science in our lives and to encourage fifth graders to study science careers.

Geraldine Vega, Soil Scientist at the Soil Survey Office, taught the students the importance of soil science and how it is involved in our lives. She also discussed how science research helps find solutions to everyday problems and makes our world a better place to live. She taught them how the work of a soil scientist impacts the job of a farmer, rancher or a builder and how the use of the soil survey and soil maps help them plan to make better use of the land. The presentation included a demonstration of how a soil scientist uses tools like the soils probe, shovels, auger, GPS, the Munsell color chart and the field book for sampling and describing soils to get the job done.

Richard Atkinson, Soil Conservationist at the Field Office, taught the kids how the job of a soil conservationist is important for farmers and ranchers. His presentation included discussions on how they use the soil survey and soils maps to create conservation plans to help landowners make better decisions when managing their land to preserve the soils for future generations. The presentation included a description of the conservation planning process and tools they used in the field for data collection like a grazing stick, laser level for determining slope, the GPS and the forage inventory clipping equipment.

Missie Dreiss, District Technician from the Kerr County Soil Water and Conservation District, also joined them to talk about how important her job is. She is also a rancher in Kerr County and she used examples from her ranch to explain to the kids why a farmer or rancher should sign up to partner with the SWCD to get help to manage the land and preserve its natural resources while keeping up Agricultural production. She focused on the partnership between the SWCD and NRCS to help protect the land and the natural resources of Texas.

The students enjoyed the three different careers and had questions to ask about these jobs. Also, these presenters had questions for the students as well. They were asked about what they thought the importance of the soil was and what kind of different erosion types could happen. The students that answered the questions correctly earned a NRCS bracelet or pencil. The prizes given really attracted the students to get involved with answering questions. The presenters gave educational background of themselves by explaining their college careers and studies along with why they chose this career.

article by: Geraldine Vega, Soil Scientist

