

Three NRCS Texas Employees Receive International Awards

The NRCS in Texas was well honored at the Society for Range Management's (SRM) 64th Annual International Meeting held in Billings, Montana, February 5 - 11, 2011.

Bruce S. Healy, district conservationist in the Alice field office, received the Fellow Award. The Fellow Award recognizes SRM members for their service and contributions to the Society. He has been an active member of three SRM sections, South Dakota, Florida and Texas, playing a vital role in each; as well as the parent society. He is noted for taking on tasks put aside by others and completing them efficiently. He has been very involved in youth activities. He served as the Texas Section newsletter editor, and as a Section officer. He spearheaded an effort to update the Texas Section SRM Handbook. Bruce's biggest contribution to SRM and three sections has been his willingness to volunteer, his commitment to following a task through to fruition, and his dedication to SRM.

J. R. Bell, retired NRCS employee in Amarillo, Texas, received the Outstanding Achievement Award for Stewardship. The Outstanding Achievement Award is presented by the Society for Range Management for outstanding achievement to members and other qualified individuals and groups working with rangelands. Bell was employed by the NRCS from 1971 to 2000. From 1986 to 2000 he served as the Zone 1 Rangeland Management Specialist for 52 counties of the Texas Panhandle. During his career he has worked with numerous land managers in Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Colorado and Wyoming on brush and rangeland weed problems. He is recognized as an expert and a valuable technical resource. Since the beginning of J.R.'s SCS/NRCS career and post retirement he has participated in countless rangeland management workshops throughout the Texas Panhandle. One of Bell's proudest accomplishments was the development of 35 Ecological Site Descriptions (ESDs) in 4 major land resource areas of the Texas Panhandle, Oklahoma and New Mexico. He is recognized as one of the leading experts on rangeland resources in the Texas Panhandle. His continued involvement in the promotion and support of rangeland management following his retirement is testimony to his dedication to the rangeland resource and the range profession.

Jeff Goodwin, State Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI) Coordinator, received the Outstanding Young Range Professional Award. The Outstanding Young Range Professional Award recognizes SRM members who exhibit superior performance and leadership potential in any range-related area. Jeff provides rangeland management training to NRCS field office personnel, technical assistance to landowners, and provided leadership for the state of Texas through the GLCI. Over the past 2 years while serving as the Blackland Prairie Area GLCI Coordinator, grazing land technical assistance has been provided to 312 landowners and/or cooperating partners on their property. The assistance included the development of conservation plans, forage inventories and monitoring strategies for grazing management plans as well as grazing land management decision making tools. Additionally, 68 educational awareness and technical outreach presentations have been provided to 3,839 participants. Jeff is a very active member of the Texas Section SRM and has served on numerous committees.

Additionally, Goodwin and Navarro County Agrilife Extension Agent Derek Scasta developed a poster for Navarro County rancher Gary Price which won the Excellence in Rangeland Management poster competition at the SRM meeting in Billings.