



“Our Mission is to support wildlife conservation and other public benefits of ranching and private land stewardship. Our mission is achieved through research, education and outreach.”

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February 2018

FROM THE CEO

El Sauz

The East Foundation owns and operates six ranches, each having a unique blend of cultural and natural history. Being the largest of the group, our San Antonio Viejo Ranch gets lots of attention. But let's turn our attention for a while to the El Sauz Ranch.



El Sauz's native rangelands, visibly under the influence of southeasterly winds and shifting sand dunes, represents some of the most unique habitat along the lower Texas Coast.

The East Foundation's El Sauz Ranch covers more than 27,000 acres in Willacy and Kenedy Counties. East's El Sauz is bordered on the North by King Ranch (Norias Division), and on the South by HP

El Sauz. The eastern edge is bounded by Redfish Bay (of the Laguna Madre) and the town of Port Mansfield. Along our western fence-line is HP El Sauz and the Rockefeller's Hacienda Campo Alegre.



El Sauz is home to the largest single group of endangered ocelots in the United States. Our research is directed at ocelot conservation in concert with a working cattle ranch.

Our team is doing some great work on the El Sauz ranch. You might know about our work with prescribed fire – we are looking at the influence of prescribed fire on forage quality, grazing behavior and wildlife habitats. You might know about our work with endangered ocelots – we are investigating the factors leading to conservation of a large part of the US population of 80 ocelots, of which the El Sauz is home to about 30. You might know about our work fighting cattle fever ticks – El Sauz is on the northern boundary of a recent infestation of cattle fever ticks in

South Texas. You might know about our behind-the-gates programs – we annually host over 1500 fifth-graders from IDEA Public Schools for a week on the ranch.

Being at the southeastern extreme of the South Texas Sand Sheet, the shifting sand dunes of El Sauz are a continuing challenge for cattle ranching – but the results of wind and sand create one of the most dramatic landscapes found anywhere.



The towering sand dunes of El Sauz – several of them spreading over 500 acres – are driven by the dominant southeastern winds. Dune migration to the northwest creates a complex topography that is constantly changing.

Some Human History

The East Brothers – *Tom East Jr, Lica East, and Robert C. East* – acquired what is now the East Foundation’s El Sauz ranch through a series of transactions and trades over a 20-year period from 1952 to 1972. The Family interest in those lands, however, reaches back for over 100 years. Starting in the 1890s, the El Sauz pasture was part of the King Ranch holdings. Captain King, and later his wife Henrietta, acquired El Sauz from the heirs of Jose Narciso Cavazos. Cavazos himself had acquired the land as part of the San Juan de Carricitos land grant from the Spanish Crown in 1792. At just over 600,000 acres, the land grant to Cavazos was the single largest ever made to an individual. The King Ranch portion of the original San Juan de Carricitos was approximately 326,790 acres – just over half.

In 1935, the Trustees of the Estate of Henrietta King partitioned and conveyed the El Sauz pasture to four siblings of the Atwood family – heirs of Henrietta Maria King Atwood, being a daughter of Captain Richard and

Henrietta King. This was a branch of the family that had moved to Chicago and had seemingly lost interest in ranching in South Texas. The events of the next 35 years can’t fully be covered here, but they are an interesting human drama.

In 1952, The East Brothers’ partnership acquired 13,616 acres from members of the Atwood family. A Chicago attorney by the name of Thomas Hart Fisher, who represented another member of the Atwood family, acquired portions of the ownership through a highly-contested estate settlement. Upon his death in 1969, Thomas Hart Fisher left his widow – Ruth Page Fisher – as the owner of what was known as the “El Sauz – Tenerias pasture.”

Being an internationally famous ballet dancer, Ruth Page Fisher was as far from a South Texas rancher as you could get. So, in 1971 she sold her holdings to Frank Yturria, a neighboring rancher. Over the succeeding two years, the Easts and Yturria made a series of conveyances and transactions, finally resulting, in 1972, in the East’s current boundaries of the El Sauz ranch. The current ownerships of neighboring HP El Sauz, along with divisions of mineral ownerships were also formed during this period.

The description above is overly summarized, and the full story of El Sauz is more dramatic than any fiction. The final point, however, is that something drove the East Family to work hard to acquire El Sauz. The way we see it, that something probably had to do with both family and a love of a rugged fascinating piece of land and the unique part of wild Texas that it represents.

As you will read later in this issue, we are currently restoring the East’s old house on the El Sauz. Matt Robinson is leading this effort, and there are several East Foundation staff that are proudly getting involved in the work.

The East Foundation’s work on El Sauz is only just beginning – stay tuned.

- Neal Wilkins

PROJECT PROFILE

East Foundation Non-breeding Bird Surveys

Undeveloped tracts of land are critical for the conservation of many bird species. In Texas, most of these lands are privately owned. **The East Foundation is committed to monitoring trends in bird numbers across its native rangelands on private lands...because private lands do matter.**



Non-breeding bird surveys have occurred on Foundation lands over that past several years aimed at determining what species are present and whether populations are increasing, remaining stable, or decreasing.

Survey details follow:

- 24.5 miles of roadways, with a point every 0.5 miles
- Conducted on Santa Rosa, San Antonio Viejo, and El Sauz ranches
- Occurred from early October to early December
- 3 minute counts of all birds present within a 200 yard radius of each point

Key findings:

- From 2015 to 2017 documented 5,070 individual birds
- For Santa Rosa Ranch, bird numbers increased in 2017 compared to 2015 and 2016
- For San Antonio Viejo and El Sauz ranches, bird numbers decreased in 2017 compared to 2015 and 2016

On the Santa Rosa Ranch, a large-scale herbicide brush management effort in 2017 likely created favorable habitat for many non-breeding birds (mainly Mourning Dove, White-winged Dove, Bewick's Wren, and Sandhill Cranes).

On the San Antonio Viejo and El Sauz ranches, below average rainfall in 2017 played a role in the reduced number of birds. Drought conditions reduce food availability, abundance, and productivity of many birds.

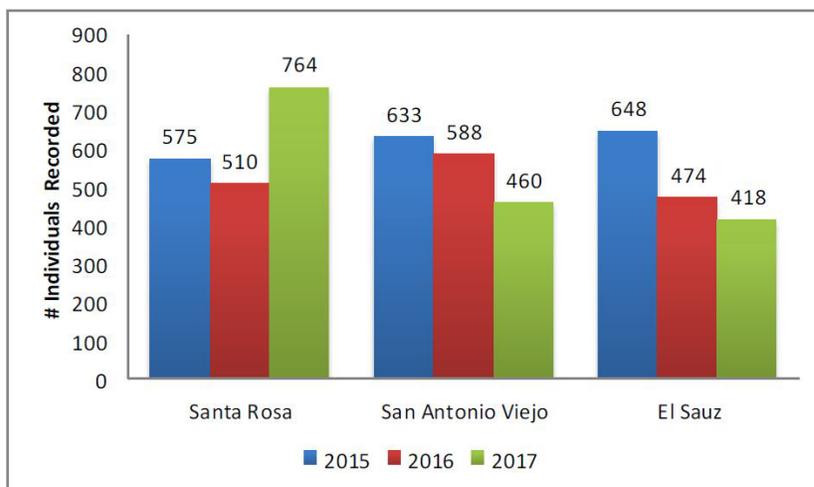


Figure 1. Comparison of total individuals counted for the October-December quarter for 2016, and 2017 on each of the three East Foundation ranches.

The East Foundation is committed to conducting research that makes a difference and we focus on factors that threaten the productivity of native rangelands – threats such as drought, disease, invasive plants, and non-native animals. Future efforts will seek to determine the drivers of rangeland bird abundance and diversity.

- Tyler Campbell

Partner: Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute



Aleyda Galán

Aleyda Galán focused her thesis work on small mammal, tick, and tick-borne pathogen biodiversity across the East Foundation's San Antonio Viejo, El Sauz, and Santa Rosa ranches. She used live-trapping methods to capture and collect small mammals, from rodents to bats, to build a scientific collection housed at the East Foundation and the Biodiversity Research and Teaching Collections at Texas A&M University. She also collected ectoparasites and tissues from these small mammals to determine a baseline biodiversity and prevalence of ticks and tick-borne pathogens, particularly those that cause diseases shared by wildlife and humans, across the ranches. This information was combined with vegetation data to

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RANCHER RESOURCES

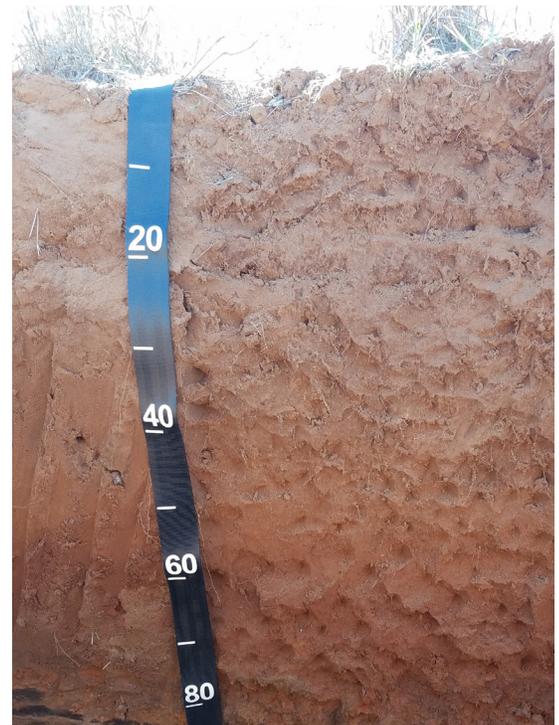
Where Does it All Start? The Soil Under Our Feet

The initial design and layout of the 18,500 acre Coloraditas Grazing Research and Demonstration Area (CGRDA) started with a blank slate—new water systems, revised pasture layout, fences, pens, etc. We took a ground up approach, closely considering various soil and associated range site characteristics when considering grazing systems and pasture layout. Why worry about soils? It is simple. Soils influence every aspect of the landscape from the type of vegetation, the quality of forage it produces, what minerals are available to meet basic nutrition requirements, water availability, to carbon storage and much more. It is one of the most important natural resources we manage.

As planning for the CGRDA progressed we noticed there were several significant features on the landscape that were not accurately reflected in the most recent soil survey of Jim Hogg county. No surprise as it was conducted several decades ago. We reached out to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Robstown MLRA Soil Science Office to see what options were available to improve the soils data in south Texas. The NRCS provided us with a preliminary study based on digital raster layers that identified smaller features on the CGRDA that could not be identified using traditional soil mapping methods. This study improved their ability to update areas and features across south Texas.

These initial efforts morphed into a larger effort that has regional and national implications. The NRCS has since completed an update of the Delmita Loamy Fine Sand, 0 to 3 percent slopes map unit across south Texas with the help of the Foundation. The Delmita Loamy Fine Sand is common

throughout the South Texas Sandsheet. We provided access to several of our ranches for NRCS staff to take additional soil samples across a large area and better map and characterize the Delmita soils. This project is part of the ongoing National Cooperative Soil Survey (NCSS) efforts to update soils maps to current standards. The updated maps will assist ranchers and landowners manage resources.



Soils data is now readily accessible in formats that are easy to interpret and utilize in ranch planning and management. Using these tools not only can you determine what the dominant soil types are on your ranch, you can access information such as forage productivity, soil water holding capacity, and erosion risk.

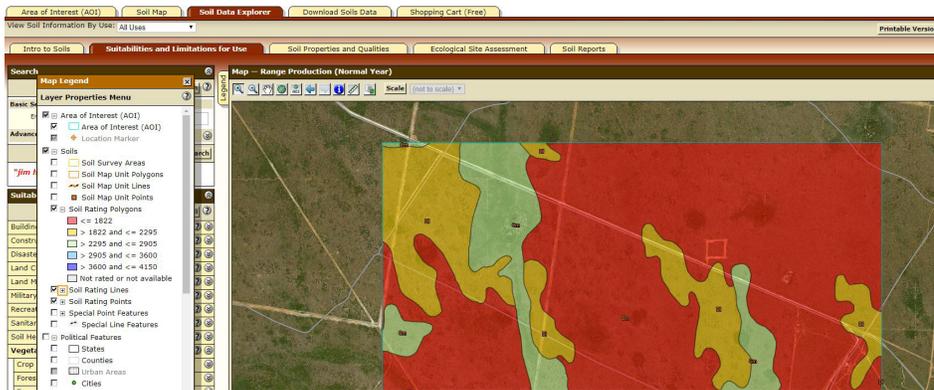
For example, the Web Soil Survey (WSS) provides soil data and information produced by the National Cooperative Soil Survey. It is operated by the USDA NRCS and provides access to the largest natural resource information system in the world.

Soils maps and data for more than 95 percent of the nation's counties; including all of Texas, are available online. The site is updated and maintained online as the single authoritative source of soil survey information.

The WSS web app can be accessed at the following link:

<https://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/WebSoilSurvey.aspx>

Included in the app are tools that allow you to pinpoint the location of your ranch and access soils based information specific to your property.



For desktop GIS users who wish to do more advanced analysis and combine it with other pieces of information, The Soil Data Viewer is a tool built as an extension to ESRI ArcGIS Desktop that allows a user to create soil-based maps. The application can also be run independent of ArcMap, but output is then limited to basic reports.

The soil survey attribute database associated with a soil map is a very complicated database with more than 50 tables. The Soil Data Viewer wades through this complexity and provides users access to summaries of soil interpretations and soil properties without them having to be a database or soils expert. Each soil map unit, typically a set of polygons, may contain multiple soil components that have different use and management. This provides the user with a tool for quick geospatial analysis of soil data for use in resource assessment and management.

- Todd Snelgrove

ALUMNI PROFILE

(Continued)

demonstrate the extent of tick-borne pathogens for the south Texas region.

Prior to her graduate career at Texas A&M University, Aleyda received two bachelor degrees from Texas A&M University in Zoology and Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences and worked as a researcher and keeper at the Houston Zoo's Amphibian Conservation Program. There she worked with endangered Houston toads to optimize ex situ breeding protocols, understand the pharmacokinetics of various topical and oral treatments for ranavirus and chytrid, and to determine the detrimental effects of anuran digit clipping. Currently, Aleyda works as a research assistant at Baylor College of Medicine's Human Genome Sequencing Center.

In her own words:

"The East Foundation provided me with an excellent avenue and network to pursue my budding career as a disease ecologist. I had

support and guidance from the East Foundation's personnel from refining my research objectives to ensuring successful field trips. I gained a lot of knowledge and skills, all of which I employ with my current work at Baylor College of Medicine."

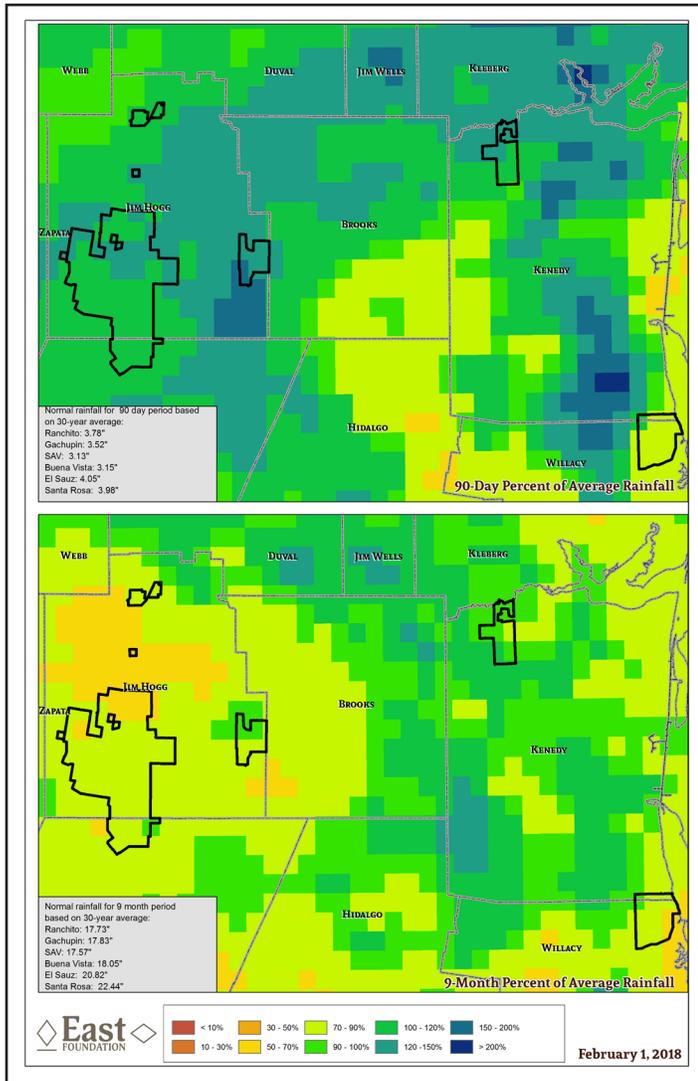
"I cannot stress enough how much I learned from working with the East Foundation during my graduate career. The researchers brought together by the East Foundation have a vast array of backgrounds and interests that allows for interdisciplinary collaborations and brainstorming. The East Foundation's ranch personnel and staff were so wonderful to work with, as well. I am thankful for their expertise and hospitality throughout my thesis work."

RAINFALL REPORT

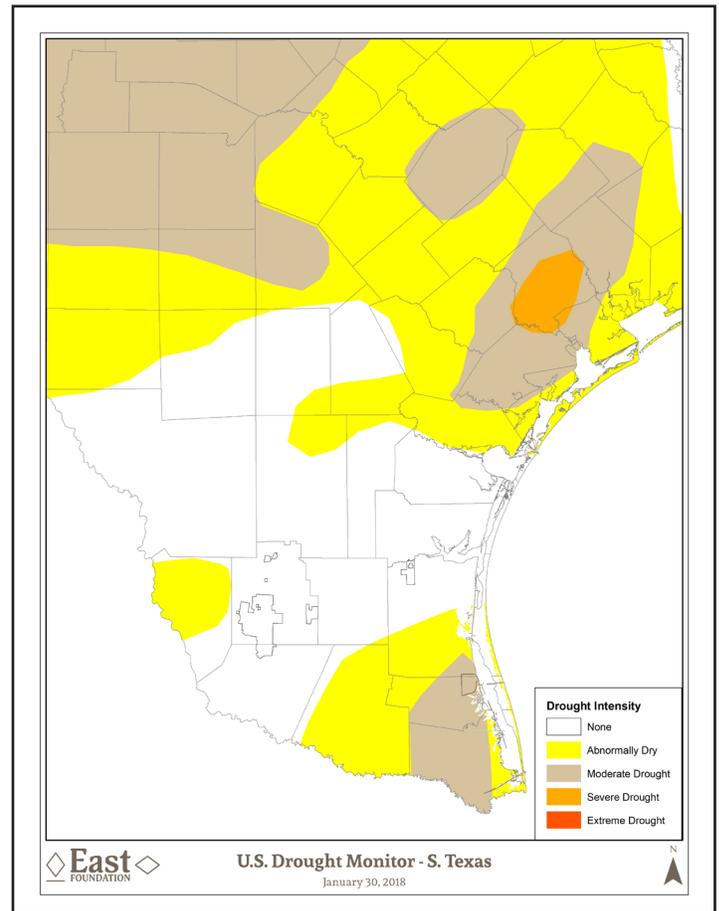
Recognizing the role rain and drought plays on the south Texas landscape we generate a monthly snapshot of short and long term percent of normal rainfall for East Foundation Ranches. Since south Texas can slip

in and out of drought within the span of a year we have started looking at shorter time periods to try and capture seasonal variation that greatly impacts rangeland productivity. We assess both short (3-month) and long

term trends (9-month) to capture seasonal variation related to our spring and fall peak rain months or caused by large, single rain events.



The 90-day percent of normal rainfall is an early indicator of short-term drought conditions. Rainfall for the November-December-January time period was slightly above average for the majority of our land in Jim Hogg, Starr, and Kenedy counties highlighted by good rains in December followed by scattered light showers, freezing rain, and even a major snow event that served to maintain soil moisture. With these events, the National Drought Mitigation Center U.S. Drought Monitor currently has no drought designation for all East Foundation ranches with the exception of the El Sauz Ranch which is classified as “Moderate Drought” reflecting the below normal rainfall received along the coast over the last several months.



The 9-month percent of normal rainfall is an early indicator of persistent drought conditions. Since this fall, we continue the trend of below average rainfall for the majority of East Foundation ranches with the exception of the Santa Rosa Ranch in Kenedy County and the Buena Vista in far eastern Jim Hogg County. The Coloraditas Grazing Research and Demonstration Area in the northern quarter of the San Antonio Viejo Ranch has the dubious distinction of being the farthest behind having received less than half its normal rainfall over the last nine months.

For more information on drought and other weather events or to view information specific to your part of the state visit: <https://climatexas.tamu.edu/drought/index.html>.

EMPLOYEE PROFILE



Zane Herrin

Zane Herrin is an Assistant Livestock Manager for the East Foundation Ranches, LLC. He is a Texas native, born in Midland and grew up near Big Spring. He has a degree in Wildlife Management with a concentration in Animal Production from Tarleton State University. Prior to joining the Foundation in October of 2015, Zane worked as the Livestock Manager at the Callaghan Ranch near Encinal.

Zane is primarily responsible for the Coloraditas Grazing Research and Demonstration Area. He oversees the six cow herds across the almost 19,000-acre project area and provides data and updates to the internal staff, the Board of Directors, and the Professional Advisory Group. In addition, he also helps work all the cattle on the ranches and appreciates Con't. adjacent.

RANCH REPORT

The start of the new year brings new cattle workings and different challenges to conquer. The last nine months have been fairly dry on the San Antonio Viejo leaving our rangelands in poor condition. Because of these conditions, we are working to vacate pastures of cattle by placing cattle in feed lots, heavily culling cows, and totally rethinking ranch wide stocking rates. We will work to vacate certain pastures and move cattle to other ranches as we make these changes. It will be a difficult task that will involve everyone working as a team.

The primary focus of these moves will be to protect the integrity of our native pastures across all of our ownerships. They include El Sauz, Buena Vista, Pinto, Aqua Dulce, Norte, Venada, Chapote, Muralla, and Corral. All of these pastures together comprise over 110,000 acres of our most important habitat. The next four months will consist of a lot of blood, sweat, and tears as we work against mother nature and have to make some tough decisions when it comes to culling and keeping cows.

Our mission is “to support wildlife conservation and other public benefits of ranching and private land stewardship.” Good stockmanship is one of the practices that leads to land stewardship. Stockmanship refers to how we handle the whole life of the animal in our care. It promotes skillful handling of livestock in

a safe, efficient, effective, and low-stress manner. Stockmanship and stewardship go hand in hand. Both can be used to effectively and efficiently manage our rangelands and livestock. Moving forward we must use both to grow and develop the production of our lands and livestock. The better care we take of our lands, the better that our cattle and wildlife will perform. However challenging the next several months will be, working together with stewardship and stockmanship in mind will make our operation stronger.



“Treat the earth well: it was not given to you by your parents, it was loaned to you by your children. We do not inherit the Earth from our Ancestors, we borrow it from our Children.” - Indian Proverb

- Gilly Riojas

EMPLOYEE PROFILE

(Continued)

being part of such a large landholding with the opportunity to grow and improve the cattle operation.

Zane spends a lot of his spare time working for the ranch. He enjoys riding green horses, working cattle, team roping, making leather cowboy gear for himself and others, and all things outdoors. He

is always trying to learn and grow to be a better person, cattleman, stockman, and land steward, through reading, attending educational events, or just talking with other professionals. Zane and his wife Sarah live on the San Antonio Viejo Ranch. They both work for the East Foundation Ranches.

FIELD OPERATIONS REPORT

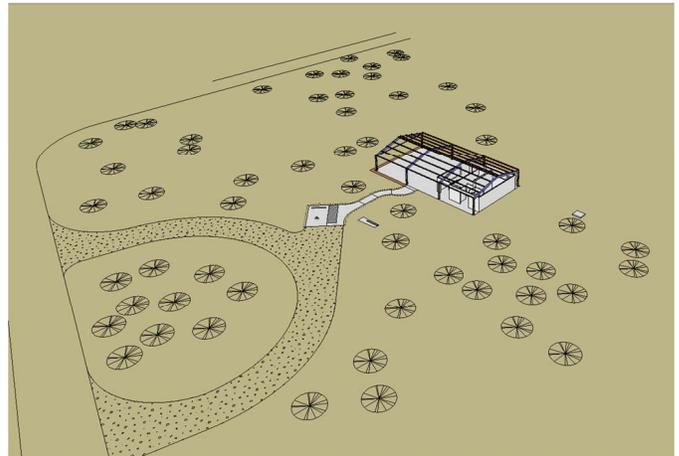
Since weather is very important to ranchers and farmers, I usually start my article talking about the weather. Our San Antonio Viejo Ranch is still pretty dry and our other ranches could also use some much needed rain. As most of you know, we had a very strange weather occurrence this past December. We received approximately four inches of snow around the Hebronville area, however at the San Antonio Viejo Ranch we received about 10 to 12 inches of snow, which is very unusual for South Texas. I noticed that the cattle and wildlife were a bit perplexed by the event. Being a South Texas native, I really did not realize how much the melted snow penetrates into the soil. In as much as the snow provided us with deep soil moisture, we are now praying for a good four inch rain.



As I mentioned in my last article, we have some major infrastructure projects for 2018. Listed are some projects that are up and running.

Education Pavilion

This project involves the construction of a 3000 square foot open air pavilion with men's and women's restrooms and storage area. This facility will enable us to provide educational outreach opportunities at our San Antonio Viejo Ranch. We have completed the bid process for this project and selected a contractor to construct this facility. We hope to start the construction of this project within 30 days.



PAST MEETINGS & EVENTS

November 11–12:

The East Foundation hosted 35 undergraduate and graduate students from Stephen F. Austin State University and TAMUK for our annual deer captures on the San Antonio Viejo Ranch.

December 5 & 13:

Northern Bobwhite aerial surveys in the Coloraditas Grazing Research and Demonstration Area and reference pastures.

December 6 & 21

Northern Bobwhite aerial surveys on the Buena Vista Ranch.

December 13:

Horses to Ride, Cattle to Cut book signing in Hebronville at First National Bank, approximately 100 attendees.

January 25:

The East Foundation hosted 10 special needs students and their caretakers from Roma ISD for a field day on the San Antonio Viejo Ranch.

Reverse Osmosis System

This project involves the construction of a Reverse Osmosis System that will serve all buildings around the San Antonio Viejo Headquarters. This project will provide our employees with quality drinking water and will also provide cost savings in plumbing repairs. This project has been completed and is up and running.

Fuel Station

This project provides our employees a safe fueling station that meets federal and state regulations. The foundation and electrical service for this project has been completed. We are waiting for the arrival of a new 7500 gallon fuel tank that is presently being constructed. We hope to have this project completed by the first part of March 2018.

Water System Upgrades

This project involves the construction of over 18.6 miles of water lines in an effort to create more reliable water sources and to improve better water distribution to eliminate dead areas. Our contractor, J&S Water Well Service, has completed the first phase (Mono system) of this project which has resulted in the elimination and retirement of four windmills. J&S has begun the second phase (Santa Domingo system) of this project that will take about a month to complete.



Renovation of the East House at El Sauz

This renovation project of the East house at our El Sauz Ranch will add value to this historical structure and provide additional overnight lodging accommodations. The work on this project has begun and is being performed in-house by our expert carpenters, Trey Dyer (our Senior Land Representative) and Matt Robinson (our Security Manager). When I say “expert carpenters”, I mean that these guys really know what they are doing

or at least they appear to be. The renovation process for this project will include installing a new septic system, upgrading the water system with storage, upgrading the bathroom, upgrading the living area by converting the porch area to a living space, and upgrading the kitchen and bedrooms. Since this facility will be so nice and popular, we have decided that we will need a reservation system to coordinate lodging requests.



Fencing and Road Projects

The fencing and roads projects have not begun, but we are in the process of contacting and obtaining bid quotes from contractors that are interested in constructing these projects.

- Chris Huff

Society of Range Management Nilgai Harvest

At its 2017 Annual Meeting, The Texas Section for the Society of Range Management held a raffle for a Nilgai hunt donated by The East Foundation. The hunt took place on the East Foundation's Santa Rosa Ranch in

Kenedy County. The lucky winner was Chase Walther, of Harlingen. Chase received his Bachelor's degree in Range and Wildlife Management from Texas A&M University-Kingsville and is currently pursuing a Master's Degree as well. His thesis project is focusing on the management of the invasive grass, Tanglehead, through prescribed burning and cattle grazing. Coincidentally, through Chase's studies, he has participated in several research projects on East Foundation Lands, including Whitetail Deer Captures and Prescribed Burns. Chase was able to harvest both a Nilgai cow and bull.

- Trey Dyer



SECURITY REPORT

Overall UDA traffic continues to be much slower than years past. This is what I have been telling everyone for some time now. This definitely does not mean it has stopped. It seems they show up at the most embarrassing or inconvenient times. In mid-November, we had our holiday party at the San Antonio Viejo. Midway through the party, we had some uninvited guests. Three UDAs showed up. I really had mixed feelings when this happened. On one hand, I was embarrassed that I was unable to keep these people from interfering with our festivities. On the other hand, I was embarrassed that we have it so good while these people have so little and are suffering so much that they came in to give up. It was inconvenient because I missed half the party dealing with these people, but fulfilling because I was able to feed them sandwiches from the party. Thanks to Sergio for missing half the party to assist me with detaining them until the Border Patrol showed up.

On Thanksgiving Day, Border Patrol contacted me. They were chasing a group in Ranchito and had caught seven with one being the guide. This is significant because the guide will be prosecuted. Also on Thanksgiving, I was cutting sign on FM 649. I came across some boot prints of four subjects. They were all wearing hunting/police type boots. This aroused my suspicion that they may be poachers instead of UDAs. Game Warden Carlos Maldonado arrived to assist. We set up surveillance thinking they would come back to FM 649 to be picked up if they killed a deer. Nobody came back, so the next morning, I tracked them several miles through the ranch until they entered another property. At that point, I assumed they were UDAs.

All through December and January, I received numerous calls from employees with UDA sightings on the SAV and Ranchito. Many thanks to the Border Patrol

PAST MEETINGS & EVENTS

January 25–26:

The East Foundation hosted 9 undergraduate and graduate students from Texas A&M University for coyote captures on the San Antonio Viejo Ranch. 24 GPS collars were placed on coyotes over 1.25 days to understand their movements relative to livestock husbandry practices.

January 30–February 2:

Large Mammal aerial surveys on El Sauz, Santa Rosa, and Buena Vista ranches.

February 5:

The East Foundation hosted 24 2nd graders and their teachers from Col. Santos Benavides Elementary in Laredo for a field day on the San Antonio Viejo Ranch.

February 7–9:

East Foundation personnel staffed a booth at the annual NAPE Summit in Houston.

agents that come to our assistance night or day- holiday or not.

We have installed another AED (Automated External Defibrillator) at the San Antonio Viejo. We now have one at the camp kitchen and one at the lodge. We were lucky enough to have Game Warden Captain Marvin Tamez come down and give a short course on the operation of the AED. We had great participation from everyone.

Hopefully, we will never have to use them, but it is comforting to have them on hand.

Deer Captures for this year are over. As security, I am on site for each event. I am there to assist with getting people in and out of the ranches, making sure the gates are closed, helping if anyone is injured and assisting with legal issues if any deer mortalities occur. This year was relatively uneventful. One student was stabbed in the arm with an antler. She was pretty tough about it. She just rubbed dirt on it, wrapped it up and kept on working. I think she holds promise to become a Game Warden someday. Dr. Hewitt took her to a medical facility that afternoon where she was checked out. If you have never been to a research deer capture, it should be added to your bucket list. It is an airshow, natural history program, rodeo, biology class, educational experience, ATV obstacle course and picnic all rolled into one event. The two capture helicopters performing their precision acrobatic movements in unison without hitting each other or crashing is a show in itself. It takes quite a pilot to position the helicopter in a manner to be low enough, fast enough and close enough to a running deer to allow the net gunner to deploy the net on the deer. The pilot performs all of that while still considering pilot stuff, like wind speed and direction, lift and power variables.

The net gunner is another talented and tough part of the team. The net gun is

a very bulky mechanism. It is powered by a 308-caliber rifle cartridge which, when fired, kicks like a mule. It is not shoulder fired, so the kick impact is felt in the hand and forearms. During one day of trapping, it is not unusual to fire the net gun near 100 times. That, in itself, is very demanding, but then he has to shoot while hanging out of the door of a helicopter while it is spinning, speeding, changing directions and elevations at a crazy rate of speed. There is also a lot of muscle strain occurring while fighting the “g” forces caused by the quickly turning helicopter. Then, to top it all off, many times there is only a small window of opportunity to get the shot off. In many areas, the brush is very thick. The net will not penetrate the brush and reach the deer. The deer has to be chased to an open area where the net can be properly applied to ensnare it. Also, moving the deer to a more open area makes it easier for the ground crew to reach the deer. The timing is critical. The gunner may only get a chance to deploy the net in an area the width of a road.



The next part of the team is the ground crew. They are the ones who are first to the deer after it has been tangled in a deployed net. They get it under control and tie three legs together so it will not get away or hurt itself. These guys ride four-wheeler ATVs. It is amazing how they can keep up with the helicopter and be to the netted deer in a matter of seconds after it has been netted. There is no hesitation or fear of injury in these guys. They have absolutely no regard

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 9–11:
Annual Meeting of the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society in Dallas.

February 12–16:
Annual “Behind the Gates” event involving 1,500 students, from multiple local ISDs, on the San Antonio Viejo Ranch.

February 13–16:
Large Mammal aerial surveys on the San Antonio Viejo Ranch.

March 20–21:
East Foundation quarterly meeting of Professional Advisors on the San Antonio Viejo Ranch.

March 27–28:
East Foundation quarterly meeting of its Board of Directors in San Antonio.

for their personal life or limb. They remind me of the old Johnny Horton song, “Battle of New Orleans”. The lyrics went “ well, they ran through the briars and they ran through the brambles and they ran through the bushes where a rabbit couldn’t go”. That is these guys!



One time, I was close by when a buck was netted. The net was tangled in the antlers but didn't trap or entangle the deer's legs, so the buck ran up into a brush motte. This motte was composed of about ten different species of south Texas brush- all of them covered in lots of thorns and stickers. The buck made it to about the middle of the motte before the trailing net tangled in the thorny mess. I was the first one there, which was highly unusual. I walked to the edge of the motte thinking I'll get ahold of the net and drag the buck out. I eased my way into the thorny mess and just got hold of the net when I hear brush breaking and cracking. I saw two flashes enter the motte from two different directions. Next thing I know, the buck was on the ground, tied up and there were two ground crew guys looking at me like I'm a slow old man. I consider myself active and not hesitant at all. After hanging out with these young men, I have to reconsider my thoughts. The last part of the helicopter crew is the net gun reloader. After the nets are removed from the deer, they are taken back to the reloader who untangles, carefully refolds and attaches the weights back to the nets to be used again. Once the deer has been tied up by the ground crew, the students pick the deer up and load it into a Polaris Ranger for transport to the processing area. The deer is tagged with the GPS location of capture and various types of data depending on type of research being performed. The deer is also blindfolded to reduce stress. The students

then proceed to the processing area. There is a group of professors, researchers, students and vet techs waiting to take samples and data from the deer.

Eventually, but quickly and quietly as possible, they finish processing the deer. The deer is then transferred to the release crew, who carry the deer to a nearby release site. The crew untangles the net from the deer, untie the feet while getting a good grip on the legs.



Then with a resounding call of “releasing!” they remove the blindfold and release the deer. The deer usually get to their feet, understandably a bit disoriented, look around and run away from the site. We believe many benefit from this activity and hope to continue for many years.

I received a call from Beau Hester who is an old friend. He is now Park Superintendent, State Park Officer of Devils River State Natural Area-Del Norte Unit. Now that's a title! Anyway, he ask if I knew where he could find an old windmill top. He was in need of one, and it didn't matter if it worked or not. I knew we had an old windmill scrap yard. I went to check and see if we had anything that would fit their needs that we did not use anymore. I found the perfect fit.



We then ran the request up the chain of command to Neal Wilkins. Long story, short, the windmill was donated. This was Neal's words back to Beau after Beau stated his thanks. "...We should be thanking you for giving life back to that old windmill. These old windmills each have their own soul. That one retired after it carried the burden of relieving droughts, depressions, and the hell-scorch of a thousand August afternoons. It faithfully suffered the howling north winds of late December. My prayer is that a small token from the San Antonio Viejo Ranch can live on as it graces the Del Norte Unit and the Devils River...." Here is a picture of the newly mounted windmill at the Del Norte Unit Headquarters.



We have started a remodeling project on the El Sauz Division. There is an old camp house called "Robert's House" on the ranch. Over the years, the house has deteriorated in the harsh coastal environment, but is in good structural shape. I hope that by the next newsletter edition, I can show some pictures of the project. I bring it up in this article because I am confused with something I found. While dismantling the bathroom shower, I found this.



Now the only people that have been tough enough to overnight in Robert's house in the last few years is our cowboy crew. That brings up the question, what cowboy is using a loofah?!

- Matt Robinson

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