

June 24, 2011

**“Conserving Our Rural Heritage”  
2011 Farm & Range Forum Scheduled October 14-15 in Uvalde**

On October 14 and 15, the 2011 Farm & Range Forum will be held in Uvalde, Texas. The focus of this year’s forum is “Conserving Our Rural Heritage.” Landowners, urban and rural conservationists, and everyone interested in the history and dynamics of the region, its economic and social challenges and looming water issues is encouraged to participate. Uvalde County is an ideal setting for this dialog.

Friday afternoon, the forum will kick-off with a field trip to the Harris Ranch, where specialists will lead small groups in examination of recommended range management practices, riparian values and protection, and healthy rangeland plant diversity, as well as opportunities for income diversification. After a steak dinner at the ranch, participants will enjoy a campfire conversation.

Saturday’s program will be held at Uvalde’s Southwest Texas Junior College. It includes a range of informative panels as diverse as public benefits of private lands, land fragmentation, ways to maximize the conservation values of rural lands, and an update on estate planning and the legislature. The afternoon session on “Water in the West” looks at new developments in groundwater science, water resource planning, rain enhancement, rivers in peril, and more. Landowners will talk about conservation easements on their property, and we’ll learn about the “Barn Again” program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and its tax credit offering for barn restoration.

The keynote speaker during Saturday’s program is Con Mims, general manager of the Nueces River Authority.

As the regional population increases dramatically (projected to grow from 3.1 million to 4.3 million by 2030) and central Texas becomes more urbanized, the character of the land and the people is threatened with change. To sustain what people love and cherish as their rural heritage

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requires a strategy including incentives to help landowners conserve open spaces and provide good stewardship of our natural resources. This is a challenge to urban dwellers, as well as rural communities, because their objectives and interests in conservation and sustainability are intertwined. We all need clean air, healthy soils, pure water, and places for wildlife.

The Farm & Range Forum was developed to foster dialog between rural landowners and urban conservationists, recognizing that in Texas, with well over 90 percent of land in private ownership, habitat protection depends upon the financial ability of landowners to remain on their lands. Since 2000, regional Farm & Range Forums have been held in locations from Seguin and Bulverde to Hondo and Fredericksburg. This year's forum is being planned by the Bexar Audubon Society, Edwards Region Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative, Green Spaces Alliance of South Texas, Hill Country Alliance, Nueces River Authority, San Antonio Conservation Society, Texas Agricultural Land Trust, Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Texas Department of Agriculture, Texas Wildlife Association, and USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Continuing education credits have been approved for Certified Private Applicator, Certified Professional in Range Land Management, and Master Naturalist.

Sponsors and exhibitors are welcome. Contact Courtney Brittain at [cbrittain@texas-wildlife.org](mailto:cbrittain@texas-wildlife.org) or Helen Holdsworth at [hholdsworth@texas-wildlife.org](mailto:hholdsworth@texas-wildlife.org). Phone 800-TEX-WILD (800-839-9453). Registration forms are available at the following websites: [www.greensatx.org](http://www.greensatx.org), [www.texas-wildlife.org](http://www.texas-wildlife.org), [www.hillcountryalliance.org](http://www.hillcountryalliance.org), and [www.bexaraudubon.org](http://www.bexaraudubon.org).

A block of rooms is being held at the Uvalde Holiday Inn Express: (830) 278-7300. Ask for the "Farm & Range Forum" rate.

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## 2011 Farm& Range Forum Schedule\*

### Conserving Our Rural Heritage

#### **Friday**

- 12:00 noon Field trip at Harris Ranch  
Meet in Uvalde to caravan and/or carpool — additional instructions to follow
- 12:30pm Field trip begins promptly at 12:30 at Harris Ranch, followed by dinner & campfire  
Riparian Assessment: Sky Lewey, Steve Nelle  
Rangeland Plants: Patty Pasztor, Bill Neiman, Rose Cooper  
Range Management Practices: Phillip Wright, Kason Haby  
"Happy Hour" discussion — Mark Mapston, TxDoA Animal Services (invited)  
Dinner  
Campfire discussion — Rep. Tracy King

#### **Saturday**

- 7:30am Breakfast at Southwest Texas Junior College  
Hill Country Alliance video
- 8:00am Optional Session on Pesticide Laws & Regulations (for CEUs) — Daniel Jackson, Texas Department of Agriculture
- 9:00am Welcome, Recap of Friday's Program & Preview — Helen Holdsworth, Texas Wildlife Association
- 9:30am Moderator: Ashley House, Texas Agricultural Land Trust  
Public Benefits of Private Lands — Steve Jester, Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust  
Land Fragmentation & Implications for Range Management Practices — Roel Lopez, Texas A&M Institute for Renewable Natural Resources  
Maximizing Conservation Values of Rural Lands — Claude Ross, USDA-NRCS
- 10:40am Break
- 11:00am Moderator: Greg Pasztor, Bexar Audubon Society  
Estate Planning & Tax Update — Ryland Howard  
Legislative Update — Rep. Doug Miller (invited)  
Conserving Family Lands: Landowners with conservation easements
- 12:00 noon Introduction: Bryan Davis, Texas AgriLife Extension Service  
Agritourism, Nature Tourism, & Rural Heritage — Shelly Plante, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department
- 12:30pm Lunch served
- 12:50pm Introduction: Susan Hughes, Green Spaces Alliance  
Keynote by Con Mims, Nueces River Authority
- 1:30pm Introduction: Bruce Fried, Green Spaces Alliance  
"Barn Again" Program & Tax Credit for Barn Restoration — Stuart Johnson, San Antonio Conservation Society & National Trust for Historic Preservation
- 2:00pm "Water in the West" — Moderator: Susan Hughes, Green Spaces Alliance  
Western Rivers & Streams in Peril — Sky Lewey, Nueces River Authority  
Land Management Programs for Water Conservation — Philip Wright, USDA NRCS  
New Developments in Groundwater Science — Geary Schindel, Edwards Aquifer Authority
- 3:00pm Break
- 3:15pm Edwards Aquifer Authority: 15 Years Out — Luana Buckner, Edwards Aquifer Authority  
Water Resource Management: Past, Present, Future (Region L & GMA 10) — Con Mims, NRA
- 4:00pm Introduction: Ken Weidenfeller, Texas Department of Agriculture  
Rain Enhancement — Stephanie Beall & meteorologist, Southwest Texas Rain Enhancement Association
- 4:30pm Moderator: Helen Holdsworth, Texas Wildlife Association  
Q&A/Discussion/Breaking Issues

6.23.2011

\* Speakers, schedule, & topics subject to change.