



South Texas Natives

Rangeland Demonstration Planting Project Progress Report August-December 2008

Introduction

The “Demonstration Plantings of Native Plant Species on Rangelands in South Texas” project is off and running. In 2008 we planted plots at 6 ranches in Webb, Duval, Jim Hogg, Kleberg, and San Patricio counties. This spring we hope to plant 4 additional locations. Timely rains on 4 of the 2008 plantings have facilitated a great deal of useful information already. At these 4 sites, 2 plant species have performed very well, confirming the importance of Dilley germplasm slender grama’s and Zapata germplasm Rio Grande clammyweed’s utility as quick and reliably establishing native plant species for rangeland plantings. Early results have shown establishment of most of the other planted species at one site or another. Future data collection efforts will be focused on documenting and experimentally determining the changes in these newly established native plant communities at each site. Our past work has demonstrated that many exotic grasses in south Texas begin to establish and out-compete native plantings in the 1st year after seeding. We hope that the seeding mixture used coupled with the timing of several of these plantings will help manage these invasive events, and successfully diversify the planting sites for many years to come.

Beyond the research and experimental part of this project, is the demonstrative value of this effort. Several NRCS and TPWD employees, as well as numerous private landowners have already inquired about or expressed interest in these plantings. We hope to continue meeting the goal of educating potential users of native seed through these plantings, and would like to hold the first field days in 2009 at some sites.

2008 Accomplishments

Sites Planted in 2008 were:

Cactus Jack Ranch, Webb County-August 20, 2008

Temple Ranch, Duval County-August 21, 2008

Las Cuatas Ranch, Jim Hogg County-August 21, 2008

Thompson Ranch, Kleberg County-September 4, 2008

Kilam Tynan Ranch, San Patricio County-September 16, 2008

Rancho Blanco, Webb County-October 8, 2008



Seed mix

Species included in the Demonstration Planting Seed mix were selected based on the potential seed mix that will be available for purchase by landowners and restoration personnel in the near future. The five grasses included are already being produced and sold by commercial seed salesmen (availability varies). The forb species included are those that have been released, are pending release, or will be released in the next few years.

Early succesional grass species that are competitive with exotic grasses make up 30% of the mix, bunchgrasses make up 33%, annual forbs 24%, cool season forbs 19%, perennial forbs 11%, and warm season forbs 16%. The ratio of grasses to forbs in the mix is 65%:35%. The composition of the seed mix and ratios of each plant type may be extremely important in later years when deciding on the best strategies for restoration plantings in south Texas. We hope to use these plantings as a pilot project to begin devising these strategies.

Rangeland Demonstration Planting Project

SEED MIX

<u>Species</u>	<u>% of seed mix</u>
Dilley Germplasm slender grama	20
Welder Germplasm shortspike windmillgrass	9
Kinney Germplasm false rhodesgrass	10
Catarina bristlegrass blend	13
La Salle Germplasm Arizona cottontop	13
BeeRich Germplasm deer pea vetch	8
Zapata Germplasm Rio Grande clammyweed	5
Divot tallow weed blend	11
Goliad Germplasm orange zexmenia	10
Prairie acacia	1

Planting Site Photos



Temple Ranch Planting, with excellent early emergence of Rio Grande clammyweed, slender grama and Arizona cottontop.



Cactus Jack Ranch Planting, showing edge of seeded plot; to the left is disked and unseeded, right is disked and seeded, and background is untreated. Cover on right of photo is largely slender grama and Arizona cottontop.



Las Cuatas Ranch Planting, showing Arizona cottontop plant with seedheads 60 days after seeding.



Thompson Ranch Planting, showing excellent emergence and cover by slender grama and Arizona cottontop.



Kilam Tynan Ranch Planting, showing little emergence to date, because of poor rainfall. Rio Grande clammyweed was the only planted species observed at the 60 day evaluation.



Rancho Blanco Planting, picture taken following seeding in October, no significant rainfall or emergence has been observed to date.



Summary

South Texas Natives is extremely appreciative to each of the cooperating landowners in this project. If we can be of assistance to you in anyway, feel free to contact me. I am especially interested in your own observations and suggestions, so don't hesitate to call or email.

Thanks Again!

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