

Grassland Restoration in Northeast Texas—The Riverby Ranch Project

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The *Texas Native Seeds* Program has been successful over its 20-year history at the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute (CKWRI) because it is based on ecologically-sound principles. For example, because plants are locally-adapted to their environment we can custom-fit particular varieties of species to specific restoration needs. We are applying this approach in East Texas with *East Texas Natives*, a regional component of the statewide *Texas Native Seeds* Program of the CKWRI. *East Texas Natives* is a collaborative initiative that is currently developing regionally-adapted native seed sources for habitat restoration on private and public lands in East Texas.

The Riverby Ranch, located in the Oak Woods and Prairies ecoregion of Fannin County, has been selected as part of the Bois d'Arc Lake mitigation project in the North Texas Municipal Water District. Overall project goals include long-term and sustainable restoration of about 15,000 acres associated with future water development for northeast Texas. We will apply the expertise developed in the *Texas Natives Seeds* Program to identify locally-adapted native species and site-specific restoration strategies that will achieve overall project goals. Replicated large-plot evaluation trials will be established throughout 3,200 acres of grassland on the Riverby Ranch. We will test seed varieties and seed mixtures and monitor plant performance in long-term trials to document vegetation establishment and plant community dynamics.

This information will be used to develop current and future restoration efforts at this site. Our findings will also provide the basis for developing restoration guidelines that can be applied throughout east Texas.

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