

## **Update on the *South Texas Natives Project***

*Anthony D. Falk, Keith A. Pawelek, Robert Obregon, Liisa L. Hewitt, and Forrest S. Smith*

The *South Texas Natives Project* (STNP) is celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> year of operations in 2020. As STNP hits this milestone, we are continuing to develop new seed releases for use in South Texas. We have also worked with commercial seed dealers to increase commercial seed quantities, and continue to conduct research focused on native plant restoration techniques that can be used by landowners, industries, and agencies.

The STNP, and the now statewide *Texas Native Seeds Program*, finalized two new plant releases in the past year. While we continue to make new releases, we have also maintained our focus on producing larger seed stocks to meet the growing demand from commercial seed companies. As native plant seed demand has increased in South Texas, so too has commercial grower interest, which requires greater amounts of foundation seed to be produced by STNP. Much of the recent demand for native plant seeds in the region is related to construction of new oil and gas pipelines.

Along with seed production, STNP staff continue to collect data on several large-scale and long-term restoration research projects. The goals of these projects are to evaluate the performance of our seed releases in new locations and to help refine restoration methodology, resulting in proven recommendations for practitioners. Particular areas of focus have been pollinator habitat restoration and restoration of sandy soils in the South Texas Sand Sheet. New research projects being initiated in 2020 will continue our focus on invasive grass control and explore the role of cover crops in restoration seedings.

*Cooperative funding provided by the many generous donors to the South Texas Natives Project.*