

## **Texas Native Seeds – West Texas Plant Evaluations**

*Colin S. Shackelford, Jameson S. Crumpler, Louis A. Harveson, Keith A. Pawelek, Anthony D. Falk, and Forrest S. Smith*

Construction was completed early summer 2013 on the 25-acre Sierra la Rana Plant Evaluation and Research facility south of Alpine, TX for the West Texas program region of *Texas Native Seeds*. New farm equipment, irrigation infrastructure, and fencing now make the site fully operational.

The first evaluation plantings of three grass species—sideoats grama, silver bluestem, and Hall's panicum—were installed in July 2013. A second round of evaluation plantings were completed in June 2014. Species planted in this second planting include: blue grama, sand dropseed, tobosa grass, vine mesquite, whiplash pappus grass, and slim/rough tridens. A total of nine grass species are currently under evaluation. These evaluations originate from plant materials collected from across the 37 counties included in the West Texas program area.

Plant species are evaluated for differences in hardiness, biomass production, seed production, and germination rates. At the end of the two year evaluation process, plants with the best performance are selected for further evaluation and eventual commercial release. Plant material from these evaluations will become the first commercially available seed sources developed specifically for restoration and reclamation projects in west Texas. Landowners, federal and state agencies, and other land use sectors will soon have price competitive, regionally adapted plant material with proven performance available on the commercial seed market.

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