



OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO RANGE MANAGEMENT AWARD

J. R. BELL

The Texas Section, Society for Range Management presents its most prestigious award, 2008 Outstanding Contribution to Range Management, to J. R. Bell. Each year the Texas Section awards the Outstanding Contribution to Range Management to the member that it feels has made the most significant and noteworthy contributions to the rangeland profession.

J.R. Bell retired from the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service as a Rangeland Management Specialist in 2000 after 32 years of service. J.R. and his wife Jan live in Amarillo and have two children.

He is currently self-employed as a Certified Rangeland Management Consultant. Since retirement J.R. has served as a technical brush and weed management consultant assisting DuPont with chemical brush and weed trial plots. J.R. also serves as a technical brush management consultant to the 6666 Ranch, headquarters at Guthrie, Texas since 2001. He has worked with the Bureau of Reclamation completing extensive plant community inventories in and around the Lake Meredith National Recreational Area and the Alibates National Monument over the past few years. J.R. also provides technical consultation to the Canadian River Water Authority on control of salt cedar and other invasive woody species along the Canadian River.

During J.R.'s career with the SCS/NRCS he served as an Area and Zone Range Management Specialist. He was responsible for providing rangeland technical assistance to land managers, training to NRCS personnel, and special assignments in 52 counties of the Texas Panhandle. He participated in countless public field days and workshops promoting sound rangeland management practices. J.R.'s personal experience, professional knowledge, and the ability to communicate with others rendered him exceptional as a speaker and trainer. He has had a positive influence on numerous NRCS employees and land managers who have had the opportunity and pleasure of working with him. J.R. is considered a wise and knowledgeable mentor by many.

Over the years J.R. has developed an excellent working relationship with West Texas A&M University, Texas Tech University, Clarendon College and Frank Phillips College. He provided regular educational and technical assistance to these schools ranging from classroom presentations to assisting with annual Range & Pasture Judging contest. Although J.R. has been retired since 2000, he still provides assistance to these schools when requested.

Other responsibilities while employed by the SCS/NRCS included working closely with other agency specialists from Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, US Fish & Wildlife Service and Texas Cooperative Extension as well as many other organizations as the NRCS technical leader. J.R. had the leadership role in working with other agencies to maintain and improve habitat for the lesser prairie chicken in the sand sagebrush and sand shin oak eco-systems.

J.R. has been a member of the Texas Section – Society for Range Management since 1977. He became a Certified Professional in Rangeland Management and Certified Range Management Consultant in 1997. As a long time member of the Texas Section he has served on the local arrangements committee for annual meetings at Amarillo (1985), Amarillo (1995) and served on the Plant ID and Technical Tour Committees at the 2007 annual meeting in Lubbock.

One of Bell's most recent contributions to the NRCS rangeland resource data system has been his work on ecological site descriptions. J.R. has developed 35 Ecological Site Descriptions in 4 Major Land Resource Areas of the Texas Panhandle while providing technical reviews of 45 additional Ecological Site Descriptions of the Southern High Plains. He also contracted with the NRCS in Oklahoma to prepare 5 ESD's for sites common to both states.

J.R.'s continued involvement in the promotion and support of rangeland management following his retirement from the NRCS in 2000 is testimony to his dedication to the rangeland resource and the range profession. Through the years J.R. has developed a great working relationship with co-workers, land managers, other agencies and academia throughout the State of Texas and adjoining states. He is well respected and held in high regards by many. J.R. is recognized as one of the leading experts on rangeland resources in the High Plains and Rolling Plains of Texas.

It is with warmest regards and gratitude for his many contributions that the Texas Section presents J. R. Bell the Outstanding Contribution to Range Management Award.