



7R Ranch – A living model of ranching and ecological resilience

Sharon Valverde

Lake Granbury Master Gardeners
Monthly Meeting

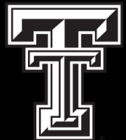
May 2026



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources
Davis College™

Introductions...

- Sharon Valverde
 - Research Associate/Adjunct Faculty at Texas Tech University
 - Background in wildlife management – especially mammals
 - Recently moved to Granbury from being an Assistant Professor at the University of West Alabama

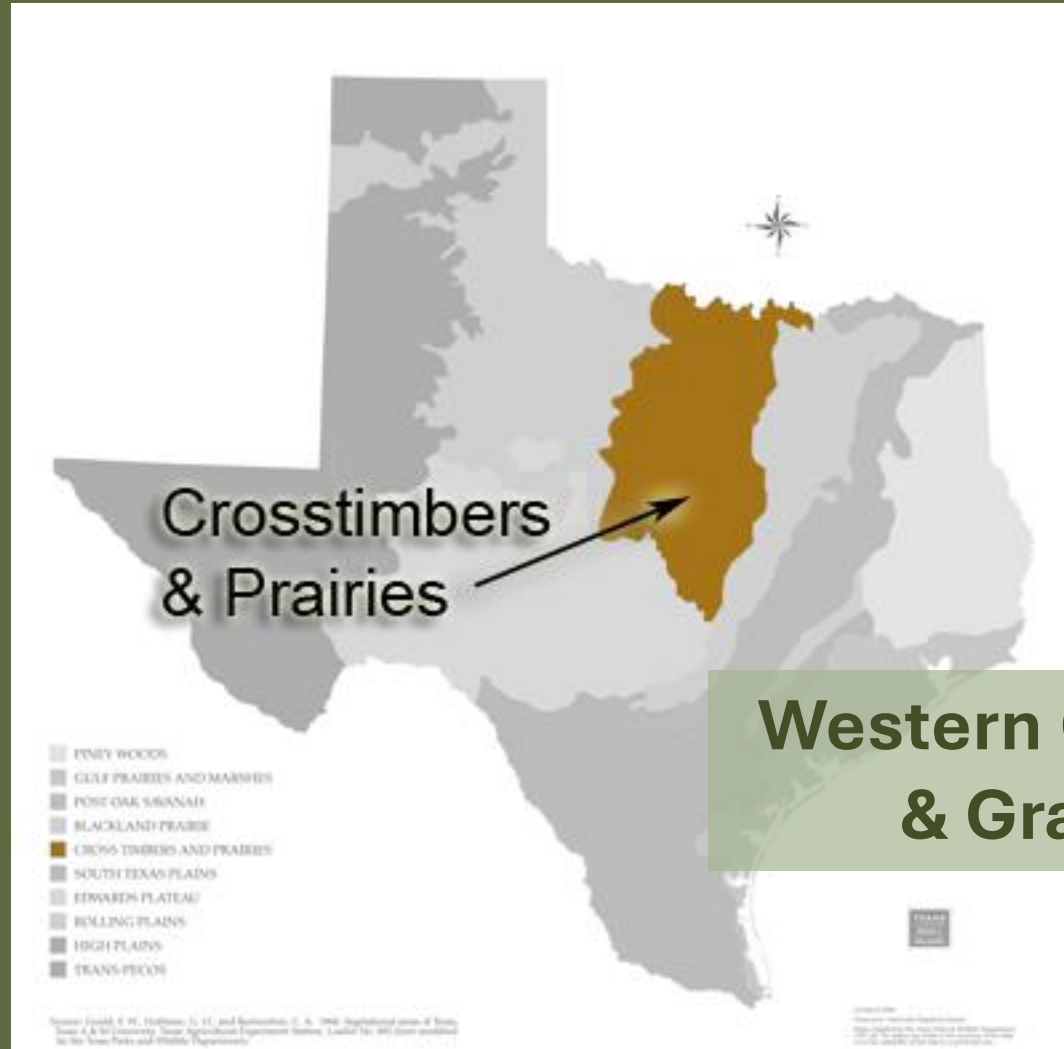


Introductions...

- 7R Ranch
 - 1500 ac **restored, currently-working ranch** in Acton, TX
 - **Living model of a resilient ecosystem**
- Donated to Texas Tech University by Murray Randle
- Active restoration since early 1980s
- Future **educational center** for K-12, college, and adults

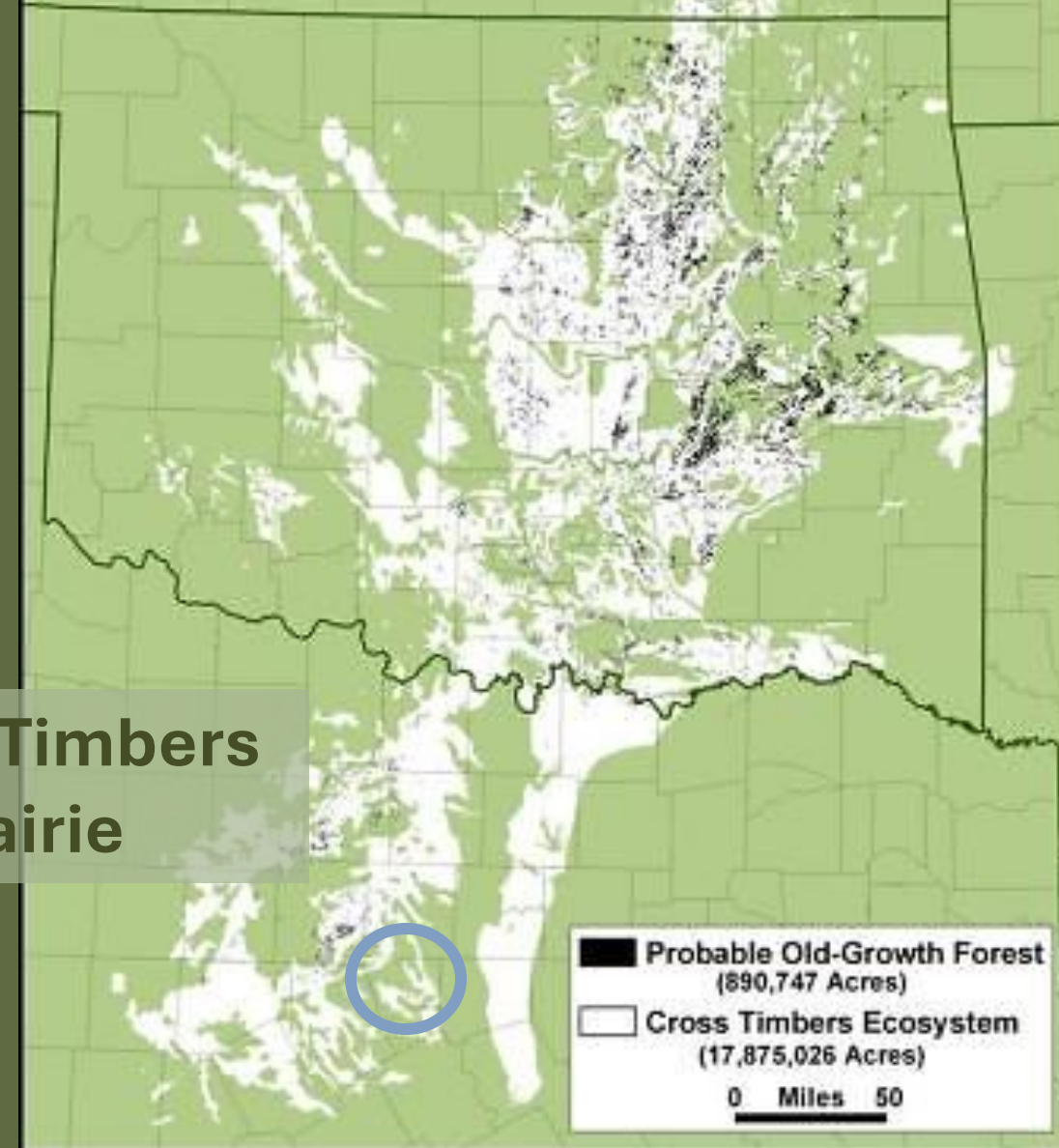


Living model of what?

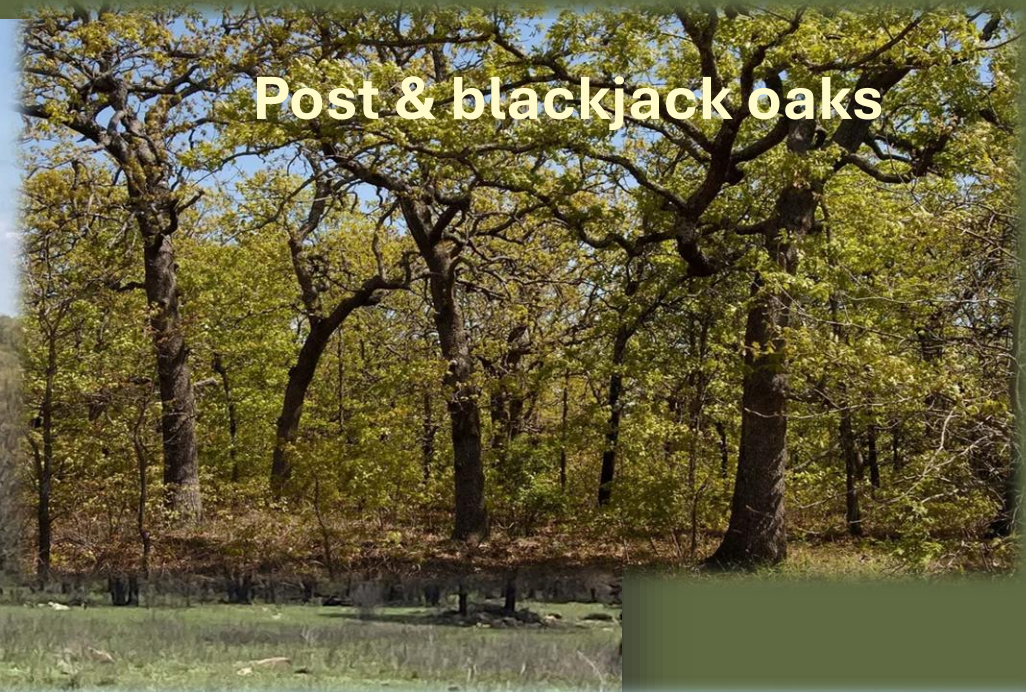


The Ancient Cross Timbers

Tree-Ring Laboratory
University of Arkansas



What this region should look like...



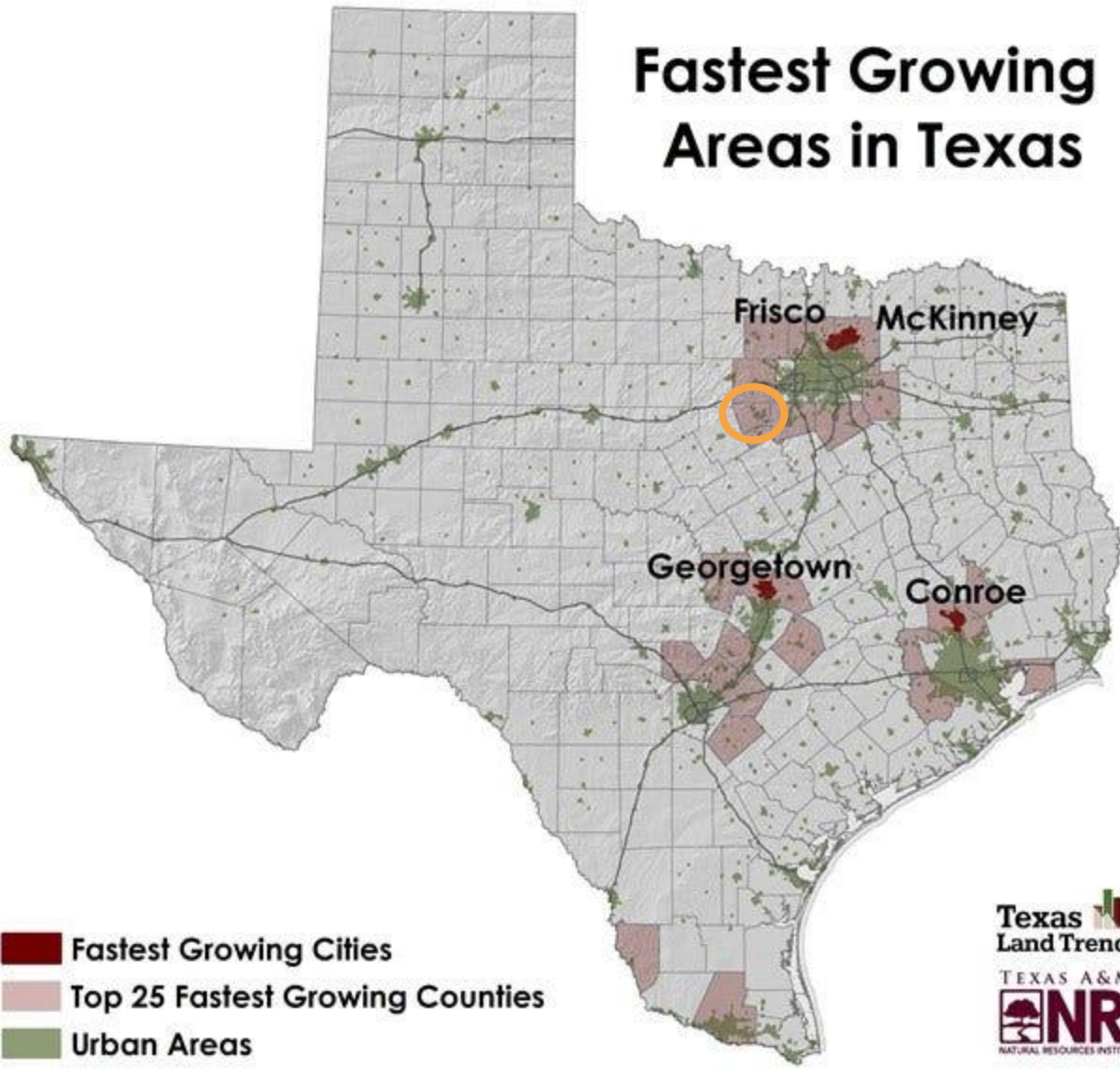
Post & blackjack oaks



Little bluestem, big bluestem, switchgrass, & Indian grass

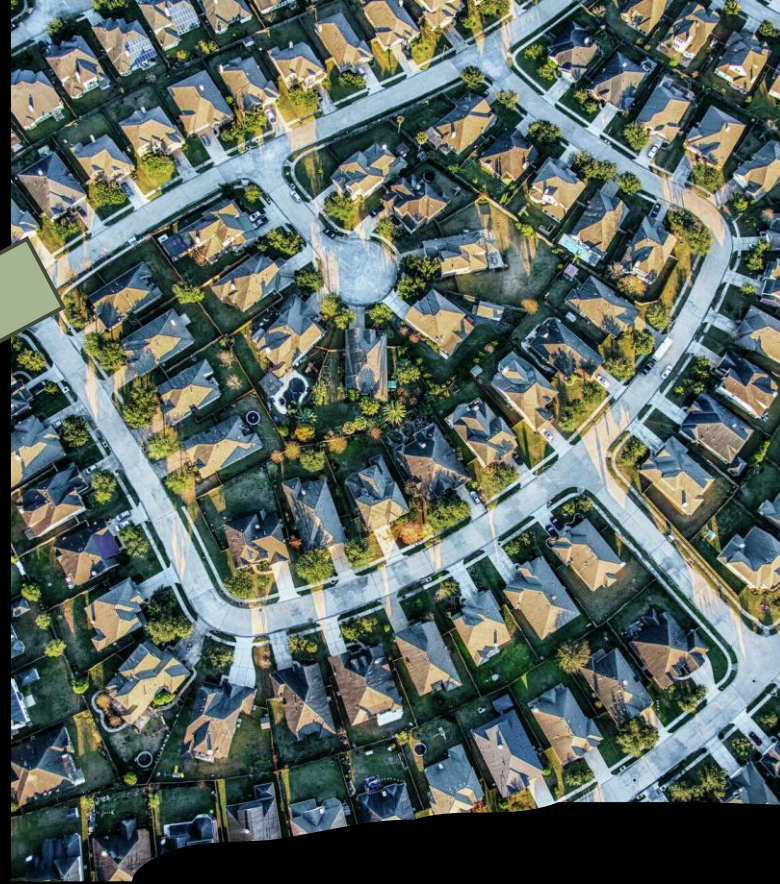


Fastest Growing Areas in Texas



- Fastest Growing Cities
- Top 25 Fastest Growing Counties
- Urban Areas

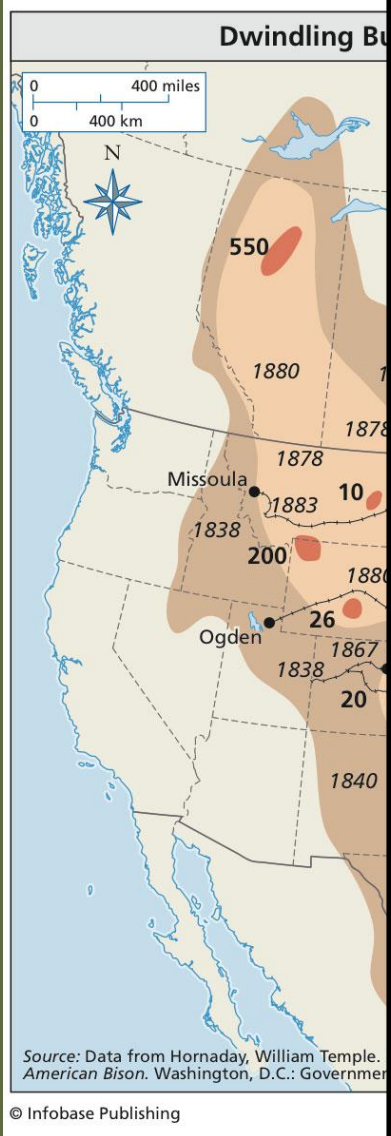




So, what happened?



Back in the day...



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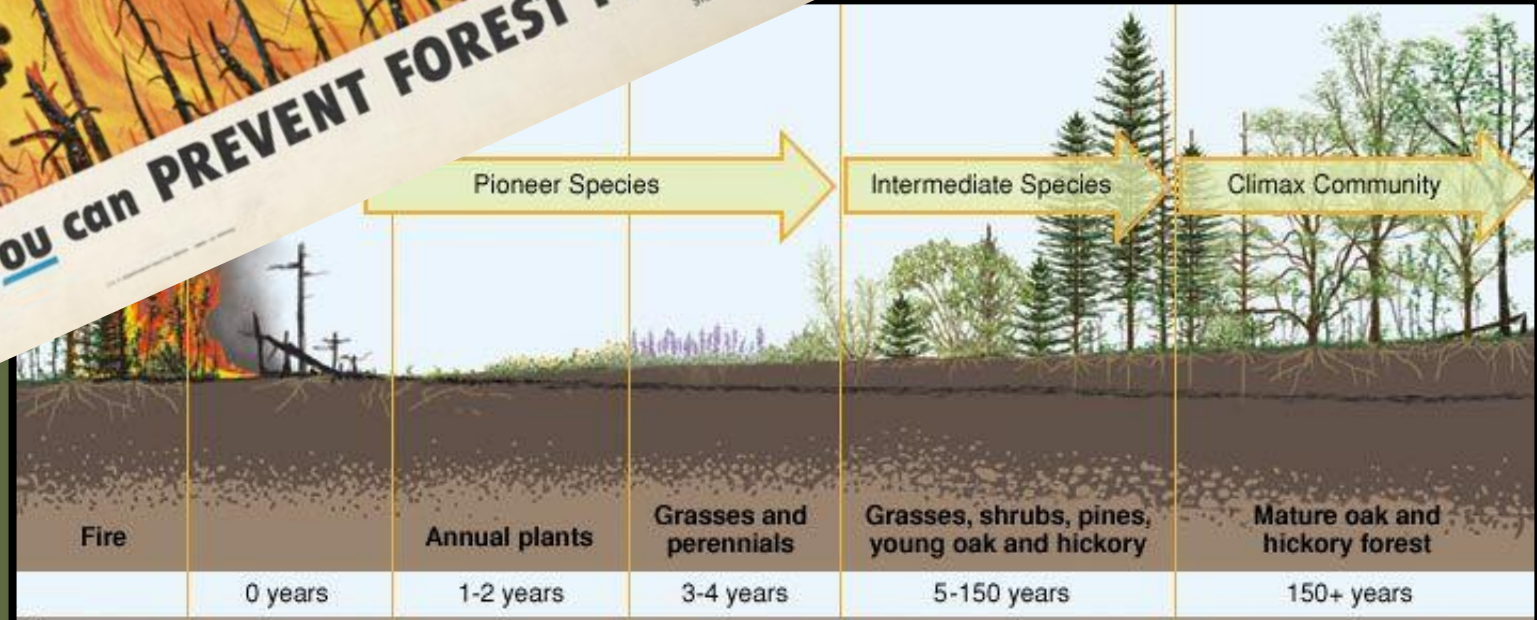
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Back in the day...



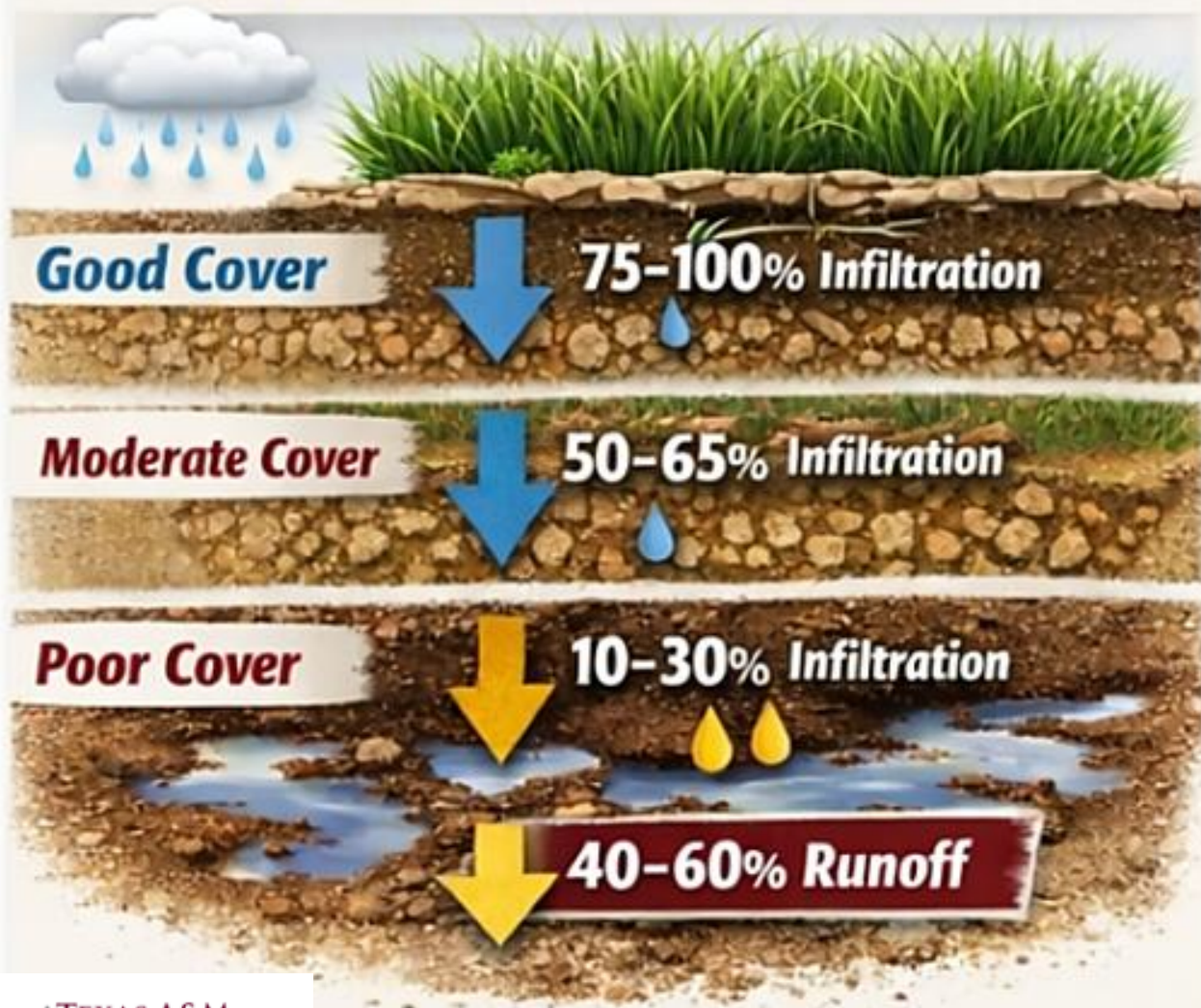


So, what happened?
We lost the natural
disturbance factors.



Water Movement on Rangeland

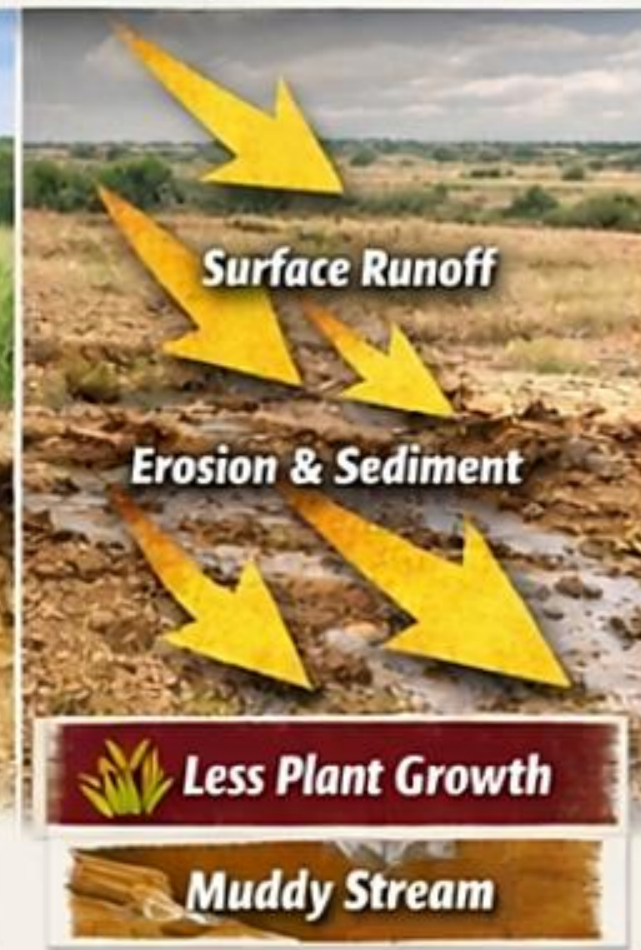
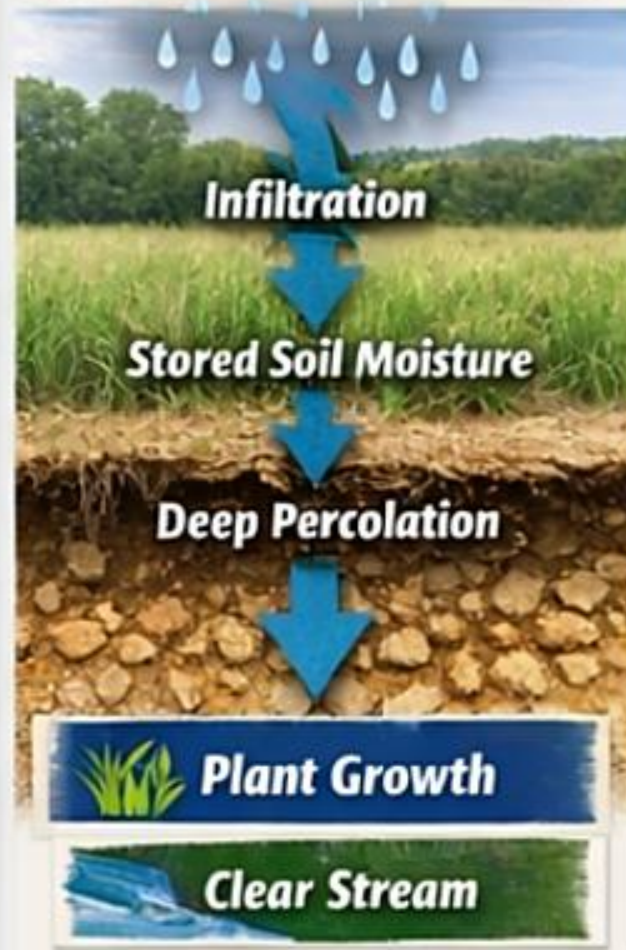
Vegetation Cover Makes a Difference



Fate of Rainfall on Rangeland

Rain Infiltrates

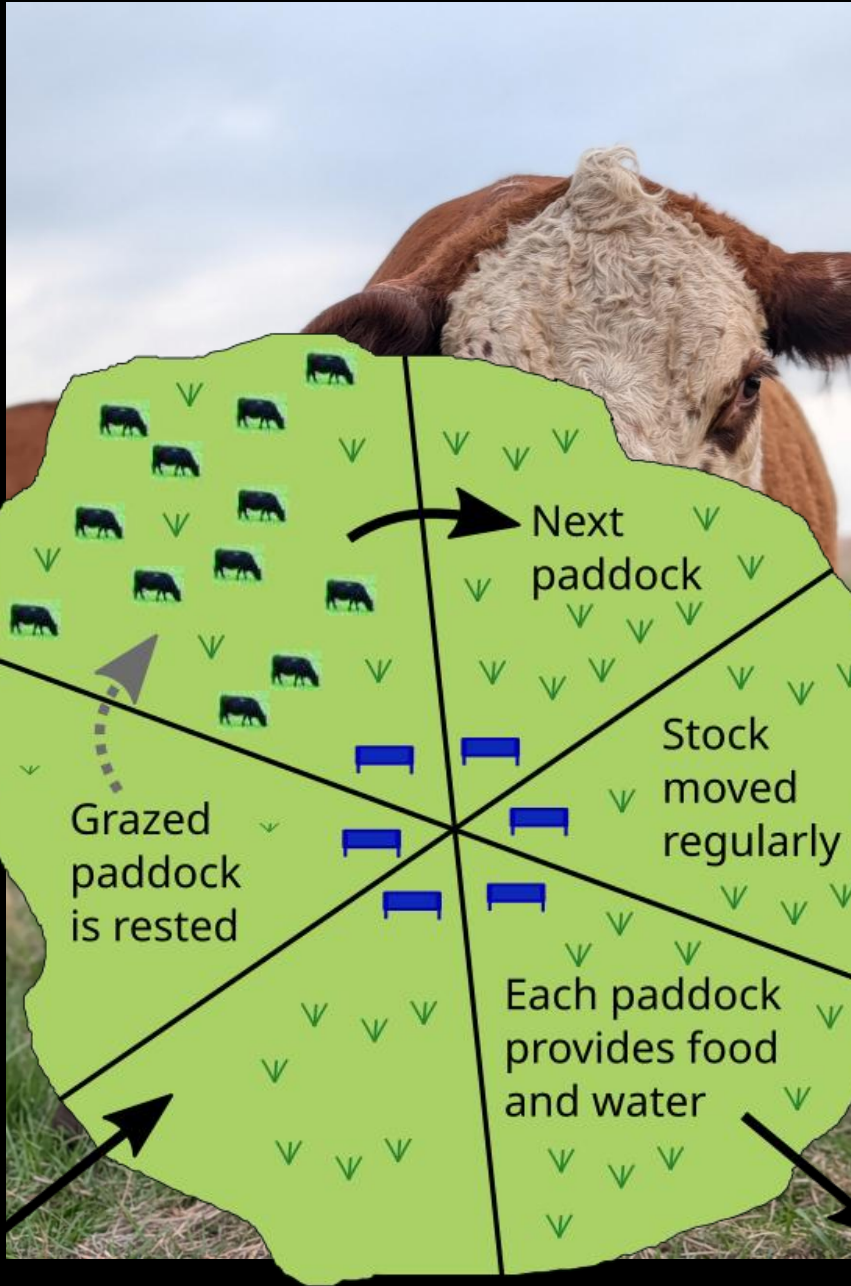
Rain Runs Off





We lost the natural disturbance factors. Now, how do we fix it?







Purpose of 7R Ranch

- "Our mission is to be the **educational, research, and engagement** hub that uses a living model of a working ranch to promote **ranching heritage, land stewardship, and resilient ecosystems.**"
- 7R will function as a **restored remnant** in a changing landscape and an example of how **ranching can be a positive force for supporting regional biodiversity**
- An **outdoor classroom**, especially for people who have no idea what Texas "should" look like or why intact ecosystems are so valuable



Thanks for the history lesson, Sharon, but what kind of biodiversity are we talking about...?

(i.e. where are the flower pictures?)



Spiderwort



Carolina Woollywhite



Chalk Hill Hymonpappus



Winecup Mallow (and Texas Star?)



Spurge Nettle



Vetch



Vervain



Crimson Clover



Texas Bluebonnet



Berlandier's Sundrops



Stiff Greenthread?





Mimosa



Dakota Mock Vervain



More Stiff Greenthread





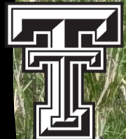
Antelopehorn Milkweed



Trailing Krameria



Antelopehorn Milkweed!





Dot-Seed Plantain

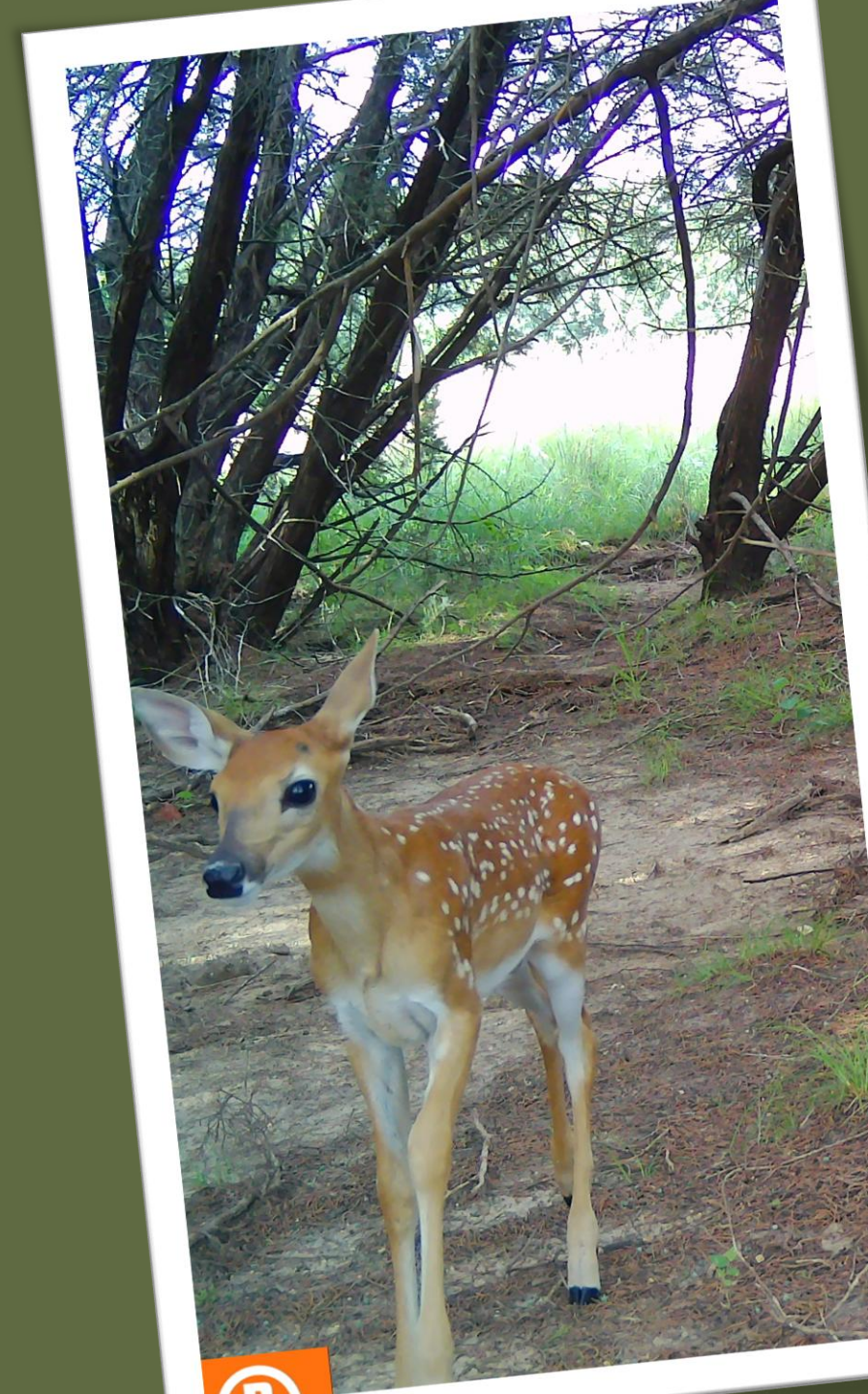


Four-Nerved Daisy



Ongoing Efforts at 7R

- Research
 - *A lot of in-field efforts are currently stalled while legal processes complete the transition from Mr. Randle's estate to TTU...*
 - Hoping to restart those this summer!
 - Previous summers = *game camera surveys, acoustic bat surveys, acoustic bird surveys, pressed plant collection*
- Education
- Outreach/Engagement



Ongoing Efforts at 7R

- Research
- Education
 - Developing educational programs for regional K-12 students
 - Talking to teachers right now about what is most needed/useful
 - Developing smaller workshops that could be hosted off-site
- Outreach/Engagement

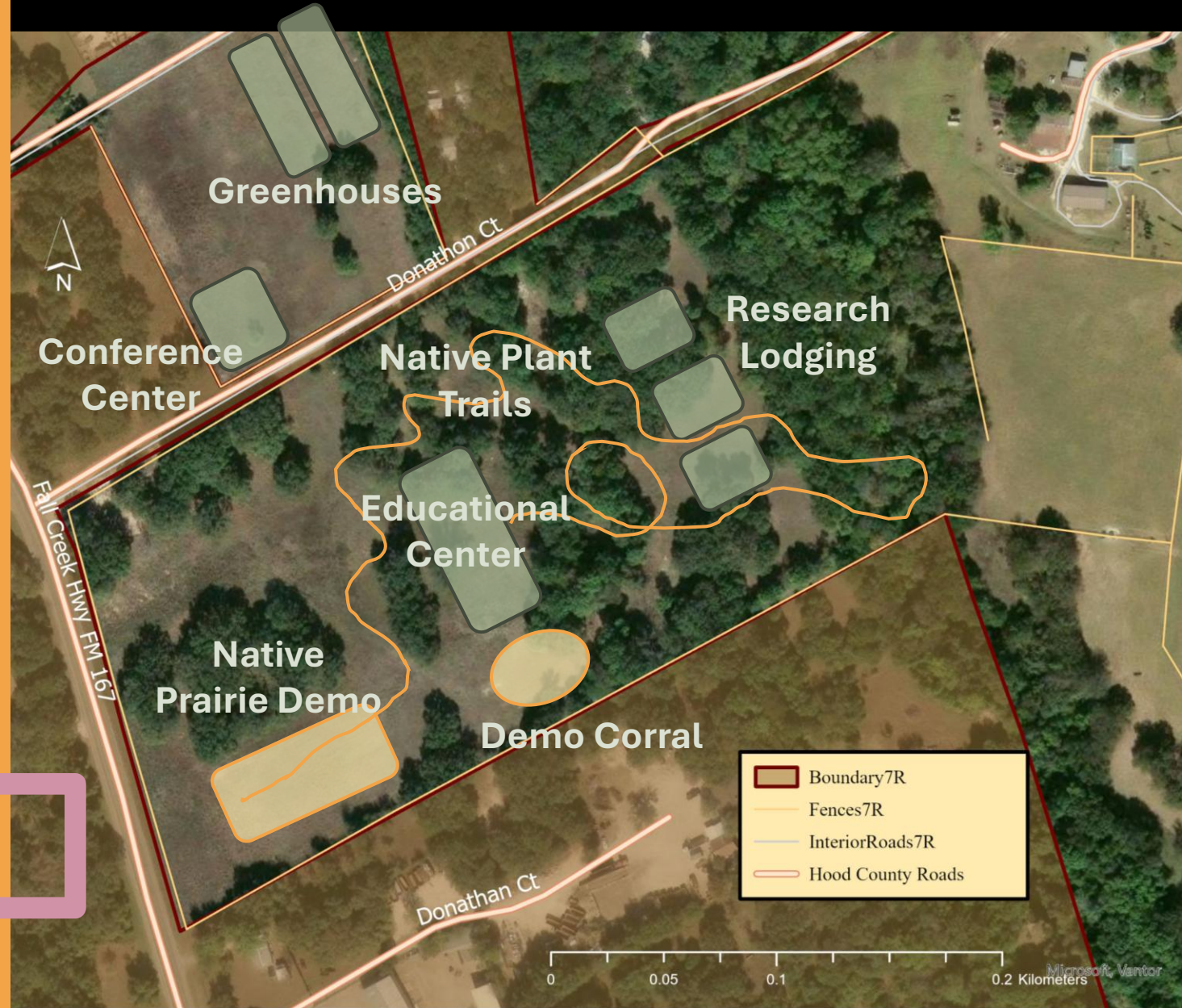


Ongoing Efforts at 7R

- Research
- Education
- Outreach/Engagement
 - Developing partnerships where we can support regional educational efforts
 - Romancing the Monarch!
 - Festivals at the Acton Nature Center
 - Ranch Day at Texas Tech
 - Etc.



Future Plans for 7R: an educational center!





Are we looking for people to engage? Yes!

- Soon...
 - But we would love to host a “field trip” with anyone interested in this group!
- Eventually!
 - Workshops on native plants and their roles in ecosystems
 - Plant “bioblitzes”
 - Monarch habitat surveying
 - Volunteers to assist with native plant educational trails!!





Thank you!

Any questions?



