

POND MANAGEMENT SEMINAR

CJ Brinlee, Soil Conservationist, USDA-NRCS

On June 1st, the Fannin County Pond Management Seminar was held at the South Annex in Bonham. The seminar began at 9 am with signup, coffee, and donuts preceding. Approximately 38 people attended the seminar, and speakers included Mr. Steve Deckard of the NRCS, Mr. Randy Moore of the NRCS, County Extension Agent Mr. Roger Skipper, and Mr. Bruce Hysmith of the Texas Parks and Wildlife.

Mr. Deckard began the seminar with a presentation on pond construction and site selection. He outlined several considerations for site selection based on soil types which can limit the efficiency of ponds and embankments. Mr. Deckard also outlined considerations on dam construction and maintenance, steps to take to prevent cutting through utilities lines during construction, and Texas laws to be taken into account when selecting sites and constructing ponds.

Mr. Randy Moore presented methods and considerations for sealing leaking ponds including compaction and clay blankets and the costly methods of applying bentonite and waterproof linings. He suggested methods for pond fertilization, when to do it for maximum efficiency and methods to follow as well as when not to fertilize. Mr. Moore also presented methods for clearing muddy ponds, and things to take into consideration when attempting it, after which he gave methods for waterfowl management and showed what aquatic plants shouldn't be removed when managing a pond for ducks.

Mr. Roger Skipper gave a presentation on aquatic vegetation identification and control describing several bothersome aquatic plants and suggesting methods and herbicides to control them. Herbicides that Mr. Skipper spoke about included copper and copper extracts, 2, 4-D, Reward®, Aquathol® and Hydrothol®, Rodeo®, and Sonar®. Mr. Skipper highlighted which plants each of these herbicides were most effective on, and considerations that should be taken when purchasing and applying them.

Finally, Mr. Bruce Hysmith presented methods for fish stocking rates and how to manage them. He gave guidelines for stocking rates for bass, bluegill, and catfish, and harvesting guidelines. Mr. Hysmith highlighted things to take into consideration when giving catfish food supplements such as not fertilizing the pond when doing so. He also spoke about things to consider when controlling crappie populations in small ponds, and utilizing grass carp for aquatic plant control.

Following the seminar was a catfish lunch provided by the Fannin Soil and Water Conservation District through a grant from the Lennox Foundation. A special thanks goes out to Jesse Rodriguez, Johnny Kay, Karl Kozlovsky, Leon Bowman, and Don Boon who fried the fish for us. If you missed the seminar and would like a copy of handouts outlining information given, please come by the Fannin Soil and Water Conservation District Offices at 200 E First Street.



Steve Deckard of the NRCS discussing pond site selection and construction.

Johnnie Kay and Jesse Rodriguez along with their helpers, Karl Kozlovsky, Leon Bowman and Clyde Hogue did an excellent job of frying fish for the lunch that followed the seminar. Our thanks to Don Boon for the shade.

