

Natural Resources

New technologies invaluable to brush sculpting

By DALE ROLLINS

MY recent San Angelo, Texas, GIS workshop was full of information. Warren Theford of Precision Brush Control (www.precisionbrushcontrol.com) and Eric Redeker of Landitude Inc. (www.landitude.com) and the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute (ckwri.tamuk.edu) demonstrated how precision mapping and GIS tools have found a niche in brush sculpting. Marc Bartoskewitz, a biologist with the King Ranch, provided ex-

amples of how the nation's largest ranch incorporates GIS into its range management plans.

Matthew Schnup, a graduate student at Texas A&M University-Kingsville, illustrated new technologies for counting quail from helicopters.

Dandy Kothmann, a geospatial specialist with USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service, demonstrated how GIS can be used to assist ranchers with various resource planning issues (See websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov for one example.)

I spent most of the workshop with my mouth agape and uttering, "Wow!"

While the technologies for planning and implementing brush sculpting have changed immensely, the tools for the actual sculpting are hardly new.

Aldo Leopold, the "father" of wildlife management recognized that the "axe, plow, cow and fire" could be used to either ravage or restore wildlife habitat. For rangelands, Leopold's "axe" takes the form of a Caterpillar tractor or a spray

plane with an appropriate herbicide, serving as chisel and hammer for making habitat masterpieces.

I encourage you to incorporate both the new and old tools in your toolbox.



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