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# Mitigating Drought with Holistic Management

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## Workshop Results

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### Participants' Remarks

*"I loved learning about enriching and managing the soil."*

*"I really think the soil information I bring away will be immediately put to use. "*

*"Betsy Ross opened up an entire area of thought I had not considered. What is nature trying to do with each component she provides? "*

*"I have a better understanding of how to use livestock to improve biological cycle."*

*"Loved the comments from Walt on real life examples of what they have experienced. "*

*"I learned how to develop an accurate forecast/plan for a grazing strategy. "*

*"The benefit of group brainstorming to gain solutions to problems and the benefit of what HMI has to offer were the most useful."*

*"Since I am at the beginning of my journey, the practical and most elementary information in planning my place seems the most pertinent. "*

*"I learned simple, economical ways to tackle the weaklink, such as water availability, the relationship between land planning & grazing, holistic goals, being flexible in your plans."*

*"I appreciate the opportunity to discuss solutions to particular challenges on my property."*

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## Introduction to Holistic Management® & Ecosystem Function

**Bear Creek Ranch – Aledo, TX  
September 19-20<sup>th</sup>, 2013**



### **Number of Participants – 35**

The first in a three-part series of Mitigating Drought with Holistic Management workshops was held at Bear Creek Ranch, in Aledo, TX, September 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013. The workshop began with an introduction to Holistic Management from Certified Educator, Peggy Sechrist. An introduction to Ecosystem Processes in Relationship to Drought followed, with Richard Teague covering Upland Function including key indicators and barriers, Steve Nelle discussing Riparian Function, and Betsy Ross talking about Biological Wealth, including how it's created, and its relationship to drought. Peggy Sechrist also talked about Uses of Monitoring for Biological Wealth During Drought. There were numerous outdoor exercises, with participants delegated into smaller groups, where they were taught how to identify ecosystem indicators, how to read the land, and how to set up a transect in order to collect and record data.

### Participants learned:

- Holistic Management Principles and Practices
- Key Principles of ecosystem processes in relationship to drought
- Steps to restoring biological health/wealth
- How to use monitoring for biological wealth during drought
- How to set up monitoring
- How to use monitoring data to create a desired future
- How to select the best tools for their operation

### PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

Program Impact on Knowledge	Percent Increase in Knowledge
Average that expanded professional networks	100%
The role of biology in drought mitigation	87%
How riparian and upland landscapes function	75%
The value of setting up and collecting monitoring data to mitigate drought	75%
The value of building biological wealth during drought	64%
Understanding of how nature functions as a whole system	31%

Program Impact on Level of Confidence to:	Percent Change in Confidence
Assess ecosystem function in riparian landscapes	88%
Assess ecosystem function in upland landscapes	88%
Monitor ecosystem health	88%

Program Impact on Behavior	Percent Intending to Change Management Practices
Participant Satisfaction with Program	90%
Participants intending to change management practices	88%
Participants intending to begin biological monitoring on their land	88%

## Grazing Planning During Drought

**Bear Creek Ranch – Aledo, TX  
October 24-25<sup>th</sup>, 2013**



### **Number of Participants – 48**

The second in a three-part series of Mitigating Drought with Holistic Management workshops was held at Bear Creek Ranch, in Aledo, TX, October 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup>, 2013. The workshop began with an introduction to Principles & Purpose of Holistic Grazing from Certified Educator, Peggy Sechrist. Rancher Walt Davis then talked about various drought elements in relation to planned grazing, including how important it is to have the right enterprises in order to be sustainable. Peggy Sechrist demonstrated how to measure forage in Animal Days per Acre, or ADA's. Participants worked in 2-person teams to create a grazing chart, then returned to the pastures, looking at both just-grazed pastures as well as pastures recovered enough to re-graze. Dixon Ranch manager Robby Tuggle and Walt Davis spent a great deal of time answering participant's questions.

### Participants learned:

- Principles & purpose of Holistic Grazing
- How to create a grazing plan
- How to measure forage and animal days per acre
- Holistic Grazing Guidelines
- Decision making in times of drought

### PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

Program Impact on Knowledge	Percent Increase in Knowledge
How a growing season grazing plan is different from a non-growing grazing plan	60%
How to measure forage for a holistic grazing plan	54%
Benefits of grazing and animal impact as management tools	48%
The relationship of planned grazing to increased water storage in the soil	45%
The role of organic matter in drought mitigation	42%

Program Impact on Level of Confidence to:	Percent Change in Confidence
Complete a grazing plan	100%
Assess forage volume for grazing planning	84%
Monitor ecosystem health	84%

Program Impact on Behavior	Percent Intending to Change Management Practices
Participants intending to change management practices	100%
Participants intending to create a grazing plan for livestock	100%
Participant Satisfaction	96%

## Holistic Land Planning for Drought Mitigation

**Bear Creek Ranch – Aledo, TX  
November 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013**



### **Number of Participants – 38**

The third in a three-part series of Mitigating Drought with Holistic Management workshops was held at Bear Creek Ranch, in Aledo, TX, November 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013. The workshop began with a series of PowerPoint presentations focusing on how and why to create a land plan. Stock density considerations were explained by rancher Walt Davis. After Walt, Peggy Sechrist led the class through the process of Holistic Management Land Planning, including understanding goals as a roadmap, creative planning, refining to one best plan, and how to implement and monitor the plan. Later, Dixon Ranch General Manager Robby Tuggle and Bear Creek Ranch Manager Danny Parker led a tour of the ranch, explaining the layout of the facility, and why it works perfectly in a variety of situations with both ranch cattle and sheep.

### Participants learned:

- Basic principles & steps of Holistic Land Planning
- Refining goals for land future
- Creative planning
- Refining to the one best plan
- How to successfully implement and monitor that plan
- Integrated planning from all three workshops
- Key points to consider for drought mitigation

### PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

Program Impact on Knowledge	Percent Increase in Knowledge
Steps to develop a holistic land plan to achieve a triple-bottom line	80%
How to increase animal performance through land planning	67%
Benefits of land planning as a strategy to mitigate drought	66%
How to develop water infrastructure to achieve goals while mitigating drought	64%
How land planning can improve ecological function for drought	62%

Program Impact on Level of Confidence to:	Percent Change in Confidence
Ability to complete a land plan	96%
Gather critical information for land planning	92%
Ability to implement the plan when it generates income	88%

Program Impact on Behavior	Percent Intending to Change Management Practices
Participants intending to create a land plan	100%
Participants intending to change management practices	92%
Participant Satisfaction	92%

