Dixon Water Foundation Rendezvous 2014

Ever think about where our resources come from or teach your child, sibling or youth their value? The importance of sustaining our natural resources is priceless. Taking the time now to adopt such practices only ensures those resources for future generations.

Thirty years ago, a group of ranchers, environmentalists, academics and government agencies joined forces with Allan Savory and others to form Holistic Management International. Today, the practice of Holistic Management has spread to 40 million acres being managed on six continents. Their influence has helped make a difference in the world.

Together with the Dixon Water Foundation, HMI will be hosting a multi-day gathering of Holistic Management practitioners, educators and others interested in sustainable agriculture, land and wildlife management. This event, scheduled for Nov. 7 through Nov. 11, invites land stewards, ranchers, organic farmers, producers and those wanting to learn more about managing land for a sustainable future to be a part of the Holistic Management Rendezvous 2014. Each day has a full agenda that can be viewed at www.holisticmanagement.org/rendezvous/. This year’s rendezvous will take place at the Dixon Water Foundation’s Leo Ranch near Decatur and the Running High Ranch in Bowie.

On Nov. 7, the Dixon Water Foundation and HMI will host the grand opening of the new Betty and Clint Josey Pavilion. This pavilion is not your typical structure: it is a unique, one-of-a-kind Living Building, the first of its kind in Texas. Completed in 2014, the pavilion is a 5,000-sq.-foot site for meetings and educational events at Leo Ranch. Lake/Flato architects of San Antonio designed the facility to meet the Living Building Challenge, the most rigorous international green-building certification. The Living Building Challenge is a natural fit for the foundation, which promotes healthy watersheds through sustainable land management. The pavilion generates all of its own clean, renewable energy, captures its own water and treats its own wastewater in a constructed wetland. The building materials used were non-toxic and sourced responsibly and as locally as possible. The pavilion is named after Clint Josey, the foundation’s vice president and board chairman, and his wife, Betty. Together, the two have been advocates of holistic land management for years.

“Like our livestock, this pavilion works in concert with nature,” says Robert Potts, the foundation’s president and CEO. “On our ranches, we use cattle to restore the land and create healthier watersheds. A Living Building brings those goals to life in another way.”

While at Leo Ranch, participants will also learn about grazing practices that can lead to improved economic performance and how holistic management im-

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proves soil and watershed health. The Dixon Water Foundation is dedicated to promoting healthy watersheds through sustainable land management to ensure that future generations have the water resources they need.

“The land in a watershed is like a bathtub. It catches precipitation and channels the water into a drain, such as a river or creek,” explains Megan Wilde, a foundation spokesperson. “A healthy watershed functions like a sponge, soaking up water when it rains and slowly releasing moisture when it’s dry. Our grazing practices improve soil health, which allows more rain to soak into the ground, so the land can capture and use that water and prevent it from running off, carrying away precious soil.”

The Dixon Water Foundation was founded in 1994 by the late Roger Dixon. The DWF owns and operates four cattle ranches: Mimms Unit in West Texas in Presidio County; Leo and Pittman Units in Cooke County; and Bear Creek Unit in North Texas in Parker County. Together the ranches total 15,000 acres. DWF also manages an additional four properties that total 16,000 acres of land using holistic methods of management.

These ranches each demonstrate environmentally and economically sound ways to manage rangeland. DWF offers their ranches as a host for educational programs, serving as an outdoor classroom for landowners, students and others interested in sustainable, natural ranch management. In addition to the ranches, DWF also funds annual grants to programs to support their mission in key Texas ecosystems. On its ranches, the foundation has found sustainable land management restores grasslands, improves soil health, increases biodiversity, benefits wildlife, reduces erosion, conserves water, boosts plant productivity and limits impact of drought.

After the introduction of the Josey Pavilion, Nov. 8, is an Open Gate at Leo Ranch. Open Gates are peer-to-peer action-based learning days with short presentations and small group exercises geared towards discoveries of land management techniques with guidance from experienced facilitators and producers.

The next Open Gate Learning Day will be at the Running High Ranch in Bowie. It is based on planning grazing to improve the water cycle. The day will be filled with short presentations, facilitated discussions and small group exercises to discover practical stocking and herd management strategies, strategies to improve water cycle on your landscape, better critical monitoring techniques and how to identify soil health indicators.

The Running High Ranch consists of about 4,900 acres of cattle and wildlife habitat that have been managed holistically for the last 20 years. Quail, turkey and deer provide hunting enterprises while a 92-acre lake and several ponds provide fishing opportunities.

Extensive land planning went into the creation of 50 paddocks and over 67,000 feet of underground water lines for the 500 cow/calf pairs that thrive on native and improved pastures without supplemental feeding.

There will also be a two-day optional Kids on the Land children’s program offered on both the DWF Leo Ranch and Running High Ranch. As part of the Holistic Management Rendezvous 2014, volunteers from the Kids on the Land non-profit organization, including Holistic Management Certified Educators, Peggy Maddox and Angie Dickson, will lead two one-hour sessions.

Lastly, the rendezvous will offer a post rendezvous workshop. It is titled Getting the Most from Your Human Resources: A Holistic Approach to Communication and Leadership Skills. It invites those who are a member of a farm/ranch family, non-profit organization employee, or a small business owner to stay after the rendezvous and participate in this workshop. After taking this course taught by Holistic Management Certified Educator, Peggy Sechrit, you will improve your ability to communicate, build leadership skills and build trusting and mutually beneficial relationships. Things you will learn include how to use Holistic Management to create effective decision-making processes and procedures, how to get the most out of team/family meetings, how to improve relationships and resolve conflicts, how to improve your communication skills and help others improve theirs, the art of listening, how to be a better leader, how to improve organizational structure and management and tools for increasing self-awareness and personal responsibility.

The holistic rendezvous 2014 has more than 30 knowledgeable presenters and key participants on deck to lead discussions and share valuable information throughout the entire rendezvous. Those individuals include Dr. Ann Adams, Jerry Addison, Jerry Bagg, Dr. Ben Bartlett, Dr. Lisa Bellow, Gerardo Bezanilla, Lauren Bradbury and Sallie Calhoun to name a few.

For detailed itinerary, fees, contact information and more, visit www.holisticmanagement.org/rendezvous.