

Landowner Success with the Hill Country Headwaters Conservation Initiative



Two Mason County ranchers recently shared their stories about utilizing the [Hill Country Headwaters Conservation Initiative](#), funded by the [Regional Conservation Partnership Program](#), to achieve their stewardship goals. Though both operations are in the same county with a history of overgrazing and suppression of fire, they vary in topography and in management goals.

Through the RCPP, both landowners were able to begin implementing restoration of the lands utilizing advice from on-the-ground professional consultations and cost-share funding through NRCS.



Zesch Ranch

“The RCPP program provided guidance from experienced experts in land management in how, when, and in what sequence to help restore the land. The RCPP advice is not coming from someone who wants to sell you something; it is coming from someone who sincerely wants to help you with recognized expertise and funding, and this difference has a huge effect in your favor.” Hal Zesch, Zesch Ranch

RCPP partners also helped both landowners navigate the NRCS and FSA process through the local offices.

Both landowners have been pleased with the process and the results.

“I would absolutely tell everyone that can, to take advantage of the RCPP program and do not limit your dream of what you want to do. Figure out how you want to improve your land, come up with a plan and start asking questions of all the different agencies. Another consideration to keep in mind is that it is a cost share program, so you will have a stake and investment in it also.” Brian, Foreman at White Ranch

Both landowners offered similar sage advice regarding what to expect when implementing stewardship practices funded through RCPP.



Prescribed Burn at White Ranch

“Don’t rush but move thoughtfully and steadily on a good plan. Everyone makes some mistakes when doing something new, but just learn from every mistake and use that learning to do even better going forward.” Hal Zesch, Zesch Ranch



Before Prescribed Burn at White Ranch

“...dream of how you want to see your place ‘grow’ and always remember that for every action there is a reaction. Figure out how to balance it all, reassess every year and have patience. It is a marathon, not a sprint.” Brian, Foreman at White Ranch



Zesch Ranch

Like other awardees, these landowners’ projects were based on goals specific to their property, and they combined tried-and-tested stewardship practices to enhance soil cover, water quality and native biodiversity.

To find out more about the program and how to apply, click [here](#).