

Monday, January 18, 2016

Tour Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center
Arranged by Kevin Proctor, TALL XIII

We were greeted by Henderson County Ex Agent Rick Hirsch. He introduced the others present-Debbie Wade, Sr. Biologist - Jim Booker, Events Coordinator - Matt Tyler, TX Farm Credit & TALL XIII - Kevin Proctor, JD dealer & TALL XIII. He shared some information about agriculture in East Texas, and the impact it has. Ag is a big part of the East Texas economy, and fishing is a large part of it. Even though today is a holiday, the staff graciously came in to show us the fishery.

Jim Booker, events coordinator, Shared these facts about the fishery-

- 106 acres
- 23,000 square foot Visitor Center
- 300,000 gallons of aquaria
- 24,000 square feet of indoor hatchery and laboratories
- 1.2-acre public fishing pond
- 0.8-mile wetland trail
- 26,000-gallon dive tank aquarium
- 56 species of fish, reptiles, and mammals on display in natural habitats [Reservoir exhibit]
- 162 species of plants, shrubs, and trees
- 10,000 square feet of wildflower displays (seasonal)
- 45,000 square feet of bedded plants

They also have displayed in their hall of fame replicas of the largest bass ever caught in Texas; the former world and current state record blue catfish, Splash; and state record fish of other species. Splash weighed 121.5 pounds when caught from Lake Texoma in January 2004. She lived in the dive tank at the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center until her death in December 2005.

The ShareLunker program encourages anglers who have caught 13-pound-plus largemouth bass to lend or donate the fish to TPWD for spawning purposes. This improves the fish genetics, benefiting researchers & anglers.

One of the biggest problems the fishery faces is exotic fish, where people release their aquarium fish when they get tired of them or they grow too big. These non-native fish can really screw up the environment for the native species.

Dinner and Social
Hosted by Darren Rozell, TALL XII

We had a wonderful visiting and eating a wonderful dinner. Mr. Rozell, his family and the others who helped with the meal were great. I was especially pleased my husband, Matt, TALL XI, was welcomed to dinner.

Tuesday, January 19, 2016

Tour Scott's Miracle-Gro
Tony Chavez, Plant Manager

We began our day visiting the Scott's Miracle-Gro, where our own Jonah Parker introduced us to plant manager Tony Chavez and production supervisor Juan Escoto. The Tyler facility opened in 2013 and covers 63 acres. They start packaging in August for next season-get 2 million packed ahead-then work to maintain stock. They can produce 10,000 bags a day when running full out. Mr. Chavez and Mr. Escoto had set up a display of some of the different products this plant manufactures, and their ingredients.

Hat fitting and shopping, Cavender's Boot City
Terry Cooper, marketing director

We then visited Cavender's, where they very graciously gave each of us a cowboy hat, along when Hatco. We learned a bit of the history of Cavender's and the family. Mr. Cooper said they were truly a ranching family, and had many long-term employees. They try to "keep it real."

Lone Star Rose Nursery
Sam Goldwater, Owner

We visited one of the warehouses of Lone Star Rose Nursery, were manager Laryy camp shared with us about the rose business. Although Tyler is hailed as the "Rose Capital of the World," most commercially sold roses are grown in Arizona and packaged here in Tyler. The conditions in Arizona are good for roses-low humidity and good water. The low humidity helps prevent disease. The roses bushes are packed by the grower and trucked to Tyler, with about 30,000-50,000 bushes per truck. They are kept in cooling vaults at about 32-34 degrees, which keeps them dormant. The bushes have a shelf life of about 3 months while they are dormant. They can be kept in the vaults up until April. When they are packaged, it is a labor intensive process. Lone Star

employees about 45 people during the busy season, and cuts back to 10 during slow season.

Lunch sponsored by Lone Star Rose Nursery

We then moved to another of the Lone Star Rose Nursery's warehouses, where Mr. Goldwater, his wife and employees had laid a wonderful lunch for us. After eating, we heard from Mr. Goldwater and others. Kyle Tingler, Smith County extension agent in horticulture shared some of the history of roses around Tyler. Larry Hand, Special Ranger with Texas & Southwest Cattle Raisers, discussed how T&SWCR protects cattle ranchers from cattle theft.

Tour John Soule's Foods
Tom Ellis, Executive VP & COO, TALL Advisory Board

We headed for Tom Soule's Foods, where we saw a presentation by Tom Ellis. He told of the history the company, which began in 1976 in Tyler. The company has really flourished in the last 20 years, even going from looking for investors, to deciding against that and investing instead in ProView Foods, which opened John Soule's up to new markets. They plan to continue expand, and are looking for more acquisitions in the next few years. We then toured the plant, which is a state of the art facility. Food safety is key, with completely separate lines for raw and cooked foods.

Social and Reception at Hollytree Country Club
planned and hosted by BET "Build East Texas"

We attended a lovely social, reception and dinner at the Hollytree Country Club. We heard from several dignitaries, including Director Doug Steele from Texas AgriLife, and Chancellor John Sharp from Texas A&M. Among the awards and recognitions our own Zane Nicholson received the Jerry Lucy Scholarship.

Wednesday, January 20, 2016

Brookshire's Fresh store and grocery warehouse tour

We got up VERY early to go to Brookshire's Fresh grocery store. There we were treated to breakfast by Brookshire's and Texas Farm Credit. Two store trainers, Claudia and Sandy, opened the day with prayer. This is how Brookshire's traditionally starts the day at their stores. After breakfast we went to Brookshire's grocery warehouse. There, we saw how they store and manage their perishable goods. They also made ice at this warehouse, making up a supply in order to have plenty on hand in the hot months.

Next we went back to the store to tour this unique facility. Here, the focus is on providing superior and unique items for the customer. They stock regular grocery items, but also carry organic, gluten-free, specialties and exotic items. They do catering, have a huge prepared foods bar, and a large beer and wine section.

Tour Color Spot Nurseries, Inc.
Nolan Jeske, General Manager
David Newburn, Technical Services Lead

We then drove to Color Spot Nurseries, where we took a walking tour of their greenhouse and potting areas. Color Spot is one of the largest wholesalers in the nation, with 16 locations in Tyler and around the nation. They cater to more than 2,000 retail and commercial customers throughout the United States, specializing in the distribution of high quality bedding plants, vegetables, herbs, shrubs, premium blooming plants, ground cover, ornamentals and more. This facility consists of a 5.5 million sq ft greenhouse space. We were able to see the crew planting seedlings and where they are cared for on their way to being sent around the nation and to a homeowner's garden.

Stephen F. Austin State University-Poultry Research Center

We then departed for SFASU Poultry Research Center. We were served a great lunch sponsored by Texas farm Credit and Nacogdoches Farm Bureau.

SFASU Ag Department Overview
Dr. Dale Perritt, Department of Agriculture Chair, Professor

Dr. Perritt gave us an overview of the SFASU Ag. Department. SFASU had enrollment of 12,800 in the fall of 2015, and their Ag program and forestry program are considered among the best in the nation.

David Alders
Ag producer, broiler grower and cattle producer

Mr. Alders shared with us the history of the modern broiler chicken industry. From the early 1900s, where most everyone had their own backyard flocks providing eggs and meat, to today where the chicken industry produced 9 billion broilers, marketed 40 billion pounds of meat, and consumers spent over \$90 billion. This huge industry is served by thousands of family farmers who raise and care for the broilers. Mr. Alders

can have 160,000 chickens in his chicken houses at a time, and at a rotation of 5.5 times a year, he has up to 880,000 broilers through his farm. The bird flu, therefore is a disease they are keeping a close eye on, taking all precautions to protect their flock.

Dr. Joey Bray
Director of Poultry Science, Assistant Professor, SFASU Dept. of Ag.

Dr. Bray took us to the university's poultry houses, where we got a more hands-on look at production. The poultry houses are 43' wide and 500' long, which is typical of East Texas. The chicks are pulled from the hatchery at 12 hours old, and raised at the growing houses. They stay there approximately 49 days, when they are taken to the processing plants. They are loaded into the trucks to the plant by hand, and it takes around 3 hours to load 26,500 birds. They do keep a close watch on the houses for deads, and have to dispose of them. At the university, they have researched the most efficient way to deal with deads. Cremation is fastest, at several hours, but there is odor and pollution to deal with. Static composting eliminates those problems, but takes longest at 30-60 days. They are now working on vessel composting, which eliminates odor and pollution, but is fast at only 18 days. The drawback here-cost of installation.

Tour Pilgrim's Pride Processing Facility
Jeff Middleton, Manager
Tour led by Scott Bowers

We then drove to the Pilgrim's Pride processing center in Nacogdoches. There Scott Bowers took us to the viewing level, and showed us the processing floor. They process 1.2 million pounds of chicken a week, and plan to increase that soon. They have 1,400 employees, working two shifts.

Bugscuffle Inn & Retreat Center
Cushing, TX

We moved our group to the Bugscuffle Inn, where we would stay the next couple of night. After a delicious supper, we gathered for our evening's activities.

Texas Forest Service, History and Programs
Ron Hufford, TFS Executive Director, TALL Advisory Board

Mr. Hufford old gave us a history of the Texas Forest Service. It was created in 1915 in Temple, TX as an association for foresters, loggers, mills, and landowners. It began under the oversight of Texas A&M. TFS are certified in both the Sustainable Forestry Initiative and the Tree Farm program, to certify foresters. These groups are both

recognized in Europe. They also run educational programs such as project learning tree and the teacher conservation institute. These programs work to educate teachers so they can pass pertinent and accurate knowledge to their students.

Forestry in East Texas

Wes Moorehead

East Texas Forestry Operations Department Head, Texas A&M Forest Service

Next Mr. Moreland gave us a look at forestry in East Texas. The Texas Piney Woods cover 43 counties in East Texas, The 23 million acres in these counties have 12 million of their acres in forest. There are 71 lumber mills in East Texas. In 2013, the 60,900 jobs were a \$17.2 billion direct economic impact on the area. There were 132,560 total jobs had a \$30 billion total impact. This is a huge part of the agricultural industry in the area and the total area economy.

Thursday, January 21, 2016

Tour Logging Operation

Hap Hachtel, Consultant Forester

We started our day by heading out to a logging operation with Hap Hachtel and his son, Rob. Mr. Hachtel is a consultant forester, helping loggers determine which trees to cut when, to maintain good growth. We were able to watch the crew saw trees, strip the unwanted limbs, and load the truck.

Tour West Fraser Sawmill

Charley Colvin, Procurement Manager

We then drove to the West Fraser Sawmill. We broke into groups and toured the facility, from incoming trucks of cut trees to outgoing trucks of sawn lumber. They need 75-80 incoming trucks each day to run efficiently. After receiving the cut trees, they are stripped of bark, cut into planks, cut to size- 2x2, 2x4, 2x6, then cut to length using computers to get the most out pieces around any flaws in the wood. After it is cut and stacked, it is placed in the drying barn. Even on a rainy day like we had, the steam billows off the drying wood. Then it is stacked and readied to ship out. It was a really interesting tour.

Tour ArborGen Tree Nursery
Gene Bickerstaff, Nursery Manager

We went to ArborGen and after lunch, Mr. Bickerstaff gave us the history of the nursery. It began in 207 when 3 businesses merged their nurseries. The business has a 100 year aggregate history. This worldwide operation is headquartered in Ridgeville, SC, and has facilities in SE USA, New Zealand and Australia, and Brazil. They have advanced commercial pine germplasm, which provides faster growth, disease resistance, and improved wood quality and biomass production. In the Americas, they have 1/3 of the SE Pine market, with \$295M in sales. This location handled 50.4M seedlings this season (Dec 1-Feb 15). They plant an average of 545 trees/acre on 140 acres of irrigated ground. We then walked out to where they were pulling seedlings in the field, and then to the barn where they were packing them up for distribution.

Back at Bugscuffle Inn, we enjoyed another great meal, and began our evening activities.

SFASU Forestry Department
Dr. Hans Williams, Dean Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture

Dr. Williams shared with us about Steven F. Austin State University's College of Forestry. This college is considered the flagship college of SFASU, despite being the smallest college with 220 undergrads enrolled. It is one of the biggest forestry programs in the souther US. Among the degrees offered is a BS in Spacial Science, which includes GIS and mapping. These subjects are among the fastest growing segments in tech. SFASU's location in the central area of the Texas Piney Woods is a wonderful location to educate about forestry. We also learned that SFASU is not a land-grant college, nor is it part of a system, such as TXA&M.

We then gathered and went over plans and tips for our international trip, and for graduation. It is hard to believe we are so close to the end of this 2 year journey. I have learned so much, from both the sessions and people we have met, and my classmates. It has been such a great experience, and I am looking forward to our trip to Europe.

Friday, January 22, 2016

Character Driven Success
Beverly Chiodo, PhD, Professor, Department of Management, Texas State University

This morning we met with Dr. Chiodo. She was a WONDERFUL speaker. She gave us many ways to both grow our own character, and to nurture good character in others. This portion of our session was great, because she not only shared information that will

help in our business lives, but also in our personal lives. Some of the points she made that especially stuck with me-

A speech prepared in the mind reaches the minds of the hearers

-logically, clearly, step-by-step

A speech prepared in the heart reaches hearts of the hearers

-really believe in what you're sharing

A speech prepared in the life reaches the lives of the hearers

-an example, especially from your life, will make things clear

The deepest craving of the human heart of praise and recognition

What can we praise? Achievement & Character

If we praise good character, we will have good character.

When you praise a person's character, that person will

-follow you around

-receive energy and become enthusiastic

-become invested in making you a successful

-incorporate that quality more in their lives

When praising another person's character-

-name the character qualities

-define the quality

-give a specific example of how that person has demonstrated the character quality

-Tell that individual how your life has benefited through his or her words, attitude, or actions

"Think about your hero. Do you think of them as someone with extraordinary abilities who achieved with little effort? Now go find the truth. Find the truth of the tremendous effort that went into their success, and admire them more."

The word "respect" is important to men - the words "love" & "cherish" are important to women.