

Domestic, industrial and irrigation water use; 2) brush encroachment because fires no longer sculpt the rangeland. Cedar (ashe juniper) prevents aquifer recharge and; 3) overgrazing has reduced water infiltration, increased water runoff, increased erosion and reduced the number of animals the land will support..

Much of this area was once covered by prairie grasses including little bluestem, big bluestem, indiagrass, switchgrass, sideoats

Olmstead (1857) writes of his travels after crossing the Blanco River west of Austin:

*“.....We pitched our tent at night in a live-oak grove...Behind us were the continuous wooded heights, with a thick screen of cedars; before us, very beautiful prairies, rolling off far to the southward, with the smooth grassed surface, varied here and there by herds of cattle, and little belts, mottes and groups of liveoak.”*

grama and others. Cedar, which was easily killed by fire, was limited to the canyon areas. Liveoaks were restricted to smaller mottes, re-sprouting following burns.

#### **THE SOLUTION:**

Good range management enhances plant and wildlife diversity and replenishes thousands of gallons of water per acre to the aquifers. To do this one can:

**1: Manage woody plants and restrict cedar by using the technique called “brush sculpting”** to increase forage for livestock, benefit wildlife, care for endangered species, protect riparian areas and reduce soil erosion. But remember that **cedar has always been present and does provide food, shelter, cover, nesting sites and windbreak for wildlife and livestock.**

#### **2: Reduce livestock numbers and**

**rotate livestock** among pastures and develop a good range management plan. Use the rule of thumb of “grazing half and leaving half” when it comes to forage and provide an extended period of rest to allow plants time to mature and strengthen reserves.

**3: Be wise water users.** Xeriscape landscaping will reduce water and pesticide usage, reduce the size of manicured lawns in the landscape and increase natural or “wildscape” areas, and conserve water usage in and outside the home.

**4: Teach others** to be wise water users and good stewards of our natural resources. The next generation looks at us as examples and at the things we do with this invaluable heritage and resource. **It takes 500 years to rebuild 1" of top soil** so the things we do will have a long and lasting effect.

## **Landscaping**

### **Landscape Water Conservation**

#### **...Xeriscape...**

In urban areas of Texas, about 25 percent of the water supply is used for landscape and garden watering. Much of this water is used to maintain traditionally high water-demanding landscapes, or it is simply applied inefficiently. When planning to add new landscaping or redesigning existing landscapes, the following suggestions could save as much as half of the water needed to maintain a traditional landscape.

#### **Xeriscape**

(zir-i-skap) - quality landscaping that conserves water and protects the environment.

By incorporating these 7 principles, you can help preserve our most precious natural