

TOM CARR RECEIVES GRASSLAND AWARD

The Carr Ranch was homesteaded around 1883 by the Lacey family. The homesteaded land included parts of the current Carr and Herrman Ranches. Land ownership transferred from Lacey to Hildebrand to Carr, primarily through marriage.

Heavily infested through the encroachment of Eastern Red Cedar, clearing of trees on the ranch was of utmost importance, and so it began in 1985 through 1987.

In 2004, Tom learned from some neighbors about a grant program available for Eastern Red Cedar removal through the Comanche Pool Resource Foundation and Kansas Partners for Fish and Wildlife. Under the agreement mechanical removal of approximately 440 acres of cedars scattered across 880 acres of grassland was accomplished. The ten year agreement recommended a prescribed burn of the cleared acres and a prescribed burn over all acres at least once during the length of the agreement.

Upon retirement from the University of Illinois in 2010, Tom and Jo moved to Medicine Lodge. A quick evaluation of the ranch resulted in a renewed effort to eliminate Eastern Red Cedars. Cedar infestation had actually increased since the drought had prevented the prescribed burn from being conducted. A specific area of approximately 92 acres of very heavy ERC infestation was a major concern. Tom was able to receive assistance through an agreement with Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks to clean up those acres.

In 2011, the Carrs entered into a five year Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program agreement. The conservation plan included obstruction removal, a prescribed burn and a prescribed grazing program. Jo and Tom continued to remove all cedars in the perimeter fences. Commercial cutting of cedars also continued in preparation of a prescribed burn which was done in 2014 with the assistance of neighbors and members of the Gyp Hills Prescribed Burn Association. In order to provide needed fuel for the burn, pastures were not grazed in 2012 and 2013. Tom says the burns exceeded their expectation in eliminating cedars on the ranch. They plan to burn again in five years.

Congratulations Tom, and thanks for providing leadership within Barber County regarding grassland management.