

## **2023 Wildlife Conservationist – Gary Gardner, [Upper Llanos SWCD #225](#)**

Jack “Gary” Gardner, Jr. has been selected as the 2023 Wildlife Conservationist. Gary is a 4th generation rancher and landowner in Kimble County. His family’s ranch was established in the late 1800s and has continuously prospered throughout the years. In 2003, Gary and his mother Judy decided to high fence 3000 acres of their ranch and start a wildlife program. In 2011, they started working with the NRCS to assist them in their conservation efforts. They have participated in several NRCS programs throughout the years to put effective conservation practices on the ground. The Gardners have also implemented Texas Parks and Wildlife Conservation Plans. These plans offer a way for the landowner to work closely with a biologist to foster and support sound management and stewardship of wildlife and their habitats. The requirements of this program include spotlight deer surveys, helicopter counts, and site visits from biologists. Gary has also been diligent about brush control to improve water yields. He uses controlled burns, spraying, and shearing as methods of brush control. In addition, they have also utilized their goat herd to control brush on the ranch. The success of Gardner Ranch can be attributed to the conservation efforts that the Gardner Family has devoted a tremendous amount of time and effort to.