Plowing Through the Puckerbrush:
A Texan’s Trek to New Hampshire

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Having devoted my entire career as a field soil scientist to mapping soils in South Texas, I knew I had many mapping methods still to learn. My awareness of this, however, did not prepare me for the mapping approaches that I saw on a 3-month summer detail to New Hampshire. This article is dedicated to those soil scientists, who, like me, had never mapped in an area having more than 23 inches of rain.

I had come from the land of the Pedocals, namely, Pearsall, TX. Slopes in the area are mainly 3% or less. With a 284-day growing season and a 23-inch average rainfall (it snowed once), the area is mainly used for range and pastureland or irrigated cropland (Fig. 1).

Most areas that need to be mapped are accessible by a pickup truck. Because of the wide open terrain, direction can be easily judged by sun

Fig. 1. Landscape of Frio County, TX in winter. The mesquite-dominated vegetation and bare mineral soil in the overgrazed rangeland contrast with the rootplowed and reseeded pasture.

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