

Meet the Visionary Who Restored 5,500 Acres of Wrecked Texas Land to Paradise

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Video screen capture Nat Geo

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Fifty years ago, the wildly inspiring David Bamberger bought the worst land he could find with the aim of bringing it back to thriving life.

Although David Bamberger was born into poverty, he went on to become an immensely successful fast food tycoon before cashing in his chips and assuming the role of Totally Inspiring Steward Of The Land. It's not the storyline one might expect from somebody who started a fried chicken empire – but it's a beautiful story.

After selling his company, Bamberger took to the hills to begin his work. “My objective was to take the worst piece of land I could possible find in the Hill Country of Texas and begin the process of restoration,” he says in the short film *Selah: Water from Stone*. He settled upon a wasteland of 5,500 overgrazed acres of “wall-to-wall brush, there wasn't any grass, there wasn't any water, nobody wanted it,” he says – and thus, [Selah, Bamberger Ranch Preserve](#) was born. By “working with Mother Nature instead of against her,” he says, he was able to bring it back to beautiful, thriving life.

In the film below, Bamberger talks about the preserve's name, Selah, saying that the word means, "to stop, to pause, to look around you and reflect on everything you see. To me that's like Thoreau was to Walden Pond, it gives us a chance to say, 'what's my duty as a steward of this ranchland?' And I believe it's to take care of it and share it."

You can watch the short film here; prepare to be inspired! And if you should get any ideas for your own plot of land, should you have one, [take his advice](#):

"You don't need a bulldozer. You need a chainsaw, wheelbarrow, axes, hand tools, and a lot of friends coming out from time to time, and a little time. You can buy used equipment – don't waste your money on new – and you can accomplish on your property what I've done here."

Via National Geographic [Short Film Showcase](#)
