

South Texas cowboy church assists Montana flood recovery

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Volunteers from a South Texas cowboy church journeyed to Montana to help the owners of a feedlot recover from extensive flooding.

Four members of the [Cowboy Fellowship of Atascosa County](#), a Texas Baptist church in Jourdanton, traveled 1,500 miles from south of San Antonio to South Central Montana. The missions team removed debris and began making repairs at a family-owned feedlot that serves ranchers in the Carbon County area.



When the Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone River overflowed its banks, it left debris everywhere. (Courtesy Photo)

Earlier this summer, the Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone River overflowed its banks, causing massive damage to Fromberg, Bridger and other communities in Carbon County.

Pastor Pete Pawelek, pastor of Cowboy Fellowship of Atascosa County,

learned about the need in Montana from his friend Josh Sparkman at [No Fences Cowboy Church of Morgan County](#) in Alabama.

“We have done disaster relief for a long time,” Pawelek said. He noted members of the congregation served with [Texas Baptist Men disaster relief](#) after several major hurricanes, as well as responding to wildfires and floods close to home.

The prospect of helping ranchers in Montana repair damaged fences, stock pens and barns appealed to his congregation, Pawelek said.



Members of the volunteer mission team from Cowboy Church of Atascosa County who served in Montana were (left to right) David Nelson, team leader Manny Loya, Austin Zinsmeyer and Adam Zinsmeyer. (Courtesy Photo)

“It’s a unique opportunity particularly suited to a cowboy church,” he said.

Through the Alabama congregation, Cowboy Fellowship connected with Danny and Melissa Dorvall, whose feedlot in the Fromberg area sustained significant damage due to floods. Danny Dorvall’s parents—Brad and Tanya

Dorvall—also experienced damage at their ranch in Bridger.

Manny Loya led the four-person mission team that also included David Nelson, Adam Zinsmeyer and his son Austin Zinsmeyer. They focused on removing debris from the feedlot.

“Water overran the area, and it was washed out,” Loya said. “Pens were knocked over or shifted. Tractor tires were all over the place. There was debris from upstream everywhere, and a lot of knocked over trees. There was a lot of flooded farmland and ranchland, and the floods destroyed fence lines.”

The Texas Baptist volunteers served five working days in Montana, clearing away debris and seeking to restore as much as possible of what the flood damaged.

Dorvall made available all the heavy equipment he owned for the volunteers to use.

“The people there were great,” Loya said. “They fed us and kept us supplied with water and Gatorade. We really had free rein on their property, and they trusted us to do what they asked.”



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After the crew began making the trip home to South Texas, Melissa Dorvall wrote a note of appreciation on the church's [Facebook page](#): "My husband Danny and I cannot thank these men enough for helping to fix our feedlot. They are an answer to prayer, and we will never forget what they have done for us. A huge thank you also to their families and the church! They will forever be our friends."

Her husband Danny similarly [posted](#) photos along with the message: "The saying something good can come out of something bad is one I truly believe now. These four men from Texas were a blessing to my family and proof that the good came out of the bad. ... Not only did they help clean up, but they became lifelong friends. I can't put into words how much their help is appreciated by all of us!"

Both Loya and Pawelek said Cowboy Fellowship hopes to send another mission team to Montana in the near future.

Volunteers interested in learning more about disaster recovery needs in Montana can contact Cowboy Fellowship through its [Facebook page](#) or Loya at <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100000227852387>.