

Stewardship Management Plans

Long-term care of private land is critically important to Texas. Sound management practices increase land productivity and enhance ecosystem services provided by forests. These critical benefits include clean air and water, improved wildlife habitat, and additional opportunities for quality outdoor recreation.

Texas A&M Forest Service (TFS) promotes land stewardship to land-owners all over Texas—from the Pineywoods of East Texas to the West Texas Panhandle. Professional assistance is tailored to your individual needs.

A written plan for your property is the foundation of good land stewardship. TFS foresters are available to help you develop a written 10-year course of action, outlining step-by-step measures that will enable you to meet your goals and objectives for your property.

A TFS forester will meet with you on your property to discuss your land objectives and how to meet those objectives. A multi-purpose Stewardship Plan addresses numerous resource elements including timber, water, wildlife, forest health, and more.

Natural resources in the East Texas region are threatened by poor land management, invasive species, and rapid population growth. As a Texas landowner, you have the ability to conserve East Texas trees and natural resources for future generations. TFS is available to help address your interests in trees, wildlife, recrea-

tion, and water, as well as concerns about wildfire, forest health, and diseases. Call your local TFS office or a private consulting forester for information on obtaining a Stewardship Plan for managing your property.

Successful implementation of a written Stewardship Plan can result in being nominated and recognized as good stewards of the land with the Certified Forest Steward award. This award is presented to any Texas landowner that owns at least 10 acres, has a written Stewardship plan, and implements aspects of that plan while using Best Management Practices that protect soil and water. Recipients receive a metal sign for their property and a certificate signed by the State Forester.



For more information:

<https://tfsweb.tamu.edu/Stewardship/>

Who Owns Texas Water?

Water comes from either groundwater or surface water. Surface water is found in ponds, lakes, rivers, streams, and bays. Groundwater filters down from the earth's surface and accumulates underground in aquifers.

In Texas, water rights depend on whether the water is surface water or groundwater. Surface water is publicly owned and governed by the State. Without a permit from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), landowners may only use surface water for domestic and livestock purposes. If a landowner wishes to use the surface water for other uses such as irrigation, manufacturing, or power, s/he must obtain a permit.

Diffused surface water is commonly referred to as storm water, drainage water, or surface runoff. Texas law states that diffused surface water is the property of the landowner until it enters a natural watercourse, where it becomes property of the state. This means that a landowner may harvest the rainwater into the soil, or capture and store drain-

age water, as long as the water is captured before it reaches a natural water course.

Unlike surface water, groundwater is the property of the landowner. This allows a landowner the right to capture the water beneath his/her property, and sell, lease, and move the water pumped from his/her property to a neighbor, corporation, or city.

Historically, groundwater has been governed by "the rule of capture," which allows a person, with legal right to the groundwater, the right to pump whatever groundwater is available, regardless of the effects that pumping may have on neighboring water wells. Texas courts have limited the rule of capture in order to prohibit a landowner from:

- Pumping water for the purpose of harming adjoining neighbors; or for wasteful purposes
- Causing land subsidence (sinking) on adjoining land from negligent pumping; and,
- Drilling a slant well that crosses the adjoining property line.

Organization Spotlight

What is GLO?

It's actually G-L-O. It stands for Texas General Land Agency. They are the oldest state agency in Texas, established in 1837. The position of Land Commissioner was established before the position of governor in Texas.

The original purpose was to create an organization that would manage public land. When The Republic of Texas entered the Union and became the state of Texas, public land remained under the state's possession. This was because the federal government would not accept land for payment owed.

Today, the GLO manages 13 million acres of state land and Gulf shore tidelands. The Texas GLO is

Texas GLO



involved in the Sabine Pass to Galveston Bay project. The GLO also maintains a website, Texas Beach Water, to help monitor fecal bacteria levels in Gulf Coast waters. There are multiple monitoring stations near Sabine Pass and Sea Rim State Park.

The Texas GLO also sponsors the Adopt-A-Beach program to reduce litter. They also assist in oil-spill prevention and response.

For more information:

- <https://www.glo.texas.gov>
- <https://cgis.glo.texas.gov/Beachwatch/>

Prepare for Hurricane Season

Unfortunately, hurricane season is getting closer. June 1st, 2021, is the start of hurricane season with it closing on November 30th.

While you can't control the tropics, you can control how prepared you and your family are. Having a plan is the first step. Here are some basic questions to think about when making a plan:

- How will you receive emergency alerts?
- What is my shelter plan?
- What is my evacuation route?
- What is my family/household communication plan?
- Do I need to update my emergency preparedness kit?

Other considerations include if you or a family member have any specific medical or dietary needs it is imperative to take enough medication and food when you evacuate. If you own or rent a home, you may want to consider purchasing flood insurance because traditional insurance does not always cover this.

Individuals and/or families should have a well stocked emergency kit. Recommendations for contents are below although individual needs will vary.

- 1 gallon of water/person/day for at least 3 days.
- Food for 3 days/person & manual can opener
- Battery powered or hand crank radio
- Flashlight (and extra batteries)
- First aid kit
- Wet wipes, trash bags, personal hygiene items
- Toilet paper and paper towels
- Wrench/pliers to turn off utilities if needed
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape

Additionally, you should be sure to fill your personal vehicles up with gas before the storm makes landfall. Also, if you have children, consider adding some electricity free activities such as a coloring book to keep them entertained.

Family pets and livestock also need to be taken care of during a hurricane. Enough food and water should be available as well as any medications. Documentation such as rabies vaccine, adoption records, etc. as well as collar/tag are important to bring. If you have a small pet, consider putting it in a carrier for easier transport. For larger pets, be sure to have a leash and collar.

Livestock can be more difficult to care for during a natural disaster such as a hurricane due to their size. Stock up on feed and hay before the storm as well as basic first aid supplies. Gather medical records for easy access. Take good, identifiable pictures of your livestock in case any get loose. Evacuation is ideal, but may not be possible. If not, turn out the animals on high ground with solid shelter. Place feed/hay under shelter to keep it dry. Leaving the animals in a closed barn after you evacuate could kill them if the barn collapses or is severely damaged.

Finally, be sure to have a carbon monoxide detector and refrain from using generators, grills, camp stoves, etc. inside or near your house.

For more information:

- General: <https://www.ready.gov/hurricanes>
- Texas Specific: <https://gov.texas.gov/hurricane>
- Kids: <https://www.ready.gov/kids/prepare-your-family>
- Pets: <https://tinyurl.com/1rxtew0m>
- Livestock: <https://tinyurl.com/1pj9qe28>



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FOREST SERVICE

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**Texas A&M Forest Service
offices serving you:**

Sarah Bailey—Water Resources
Forester, Hudson office

(936) 639-8182
sarah.bailey@tfs.tamu.edu

Office of the District Forester
Jasper/Orange counties

(409) 423-2890

Texas Forest Info

Texas A&M Forest Service has designed some great (and free!) web applications to help you manage your property.

You can access them via www.texasforestinfo.com.

There are multiple applications including “Plan My Land”, “Map My Property”, “Forestry Herbicide Prescriptions”, “My Land Management Connector”, among others.

Plan My Land has features to help you identify any sensitive areas of your property, soil types, and elevation. You can also get recommendations for culvert sizes and regeneration method suitability.

Map My Property is a simple tool that allows you to map the boundaries of a tract and export the area into another mapping software or as a map itself. You can also view soils on this app.

Forestry Herbicide Prescriptions gives you recommendations for tank mixes or single solution based off of desired species, weed species, timing of application, and stand age.

My Land Management Connector is a database of service providers that you can contact for various forestry and woods road needs. If you are a service provider/contractor you can list your services on here for free.

Texas A&M Forest Service
Water Resources
P. O. Box 310
Lufkin, TX 75902-0310

Email: sarah.bailey@tfs.tamu.edu

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