

Central and West Texas Family Forest and Woodland Owners 2011-2013

Texas A&M Forest Service

National Woodland Owner Survey



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Region



Area of Detail

Key Findings *[Family ownerships having 10+ acres of forests and woodlands]*

Characteristics	Number (thousand)	Area (million acres)
Total ownerships	236	35.4
Single-owner ownerships	84	12.8
Ownerships with absentee owners	148	16.9
Ownerships whose primary owner is retired	109	11.3
Ownerships having owners with a higher education degree	136	22.4
Ownerships whose primary owner is 55+ years old	155	28.1
Ownerships with at least 25 years of land tenure	88	16.1
Ownerships having a written management plan	41	7.2
Ownerships acquired by purchase	130	19.9
Ownerships where cost-share programs aren't known about	164	14.7
Ownerships where drought is the primary concern	167	31.1
Ownerships where hunting is a main recreational activity	138	29.9

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The term “forest and woodland” in this report includes land with at least 10% cover by live trees, and stands of sparse woodland species in a contiguous area at least 1 acre.

Estimates in this report are based on information obtained from randomly selected survey respondents and are therefore subject to sampling error.

The size of forest and woodland influences landowners’ motivations. Those with large acreage of forest and woodland generally prefer to manage their property actively.

Overview

Texas A&M Forest Service (TFS) works in partnership with the United States (U.S.) Forest Service to provide current information about the state’s forest resources and forestland owners. This joint effort is known as Forest Inventory and Analysis or FIA. This report presents key findings of FIA’s National Woodland Owner Survey (NWOS) for 2011-2013 and includes information on demographics, ownership status, management objectives, and other characteristics of family forest and woodland owners in Central & West Texas. Private forest and woodland owners not included in the family forest and woodland owners category are non-family partnerships, private companies, land conservation groups, non-governmental organizations, and clubs. Estimates in this report are for family forest and woodland owners who own at least 10 acres of forest and woodland, unless otherwise stated.



Total Area and Ownerships

There are 49.7 million acres of forests and woodlands in Central & West Texas, of which 47.2 million acres (94.9%) are privately-owned. There are 236,000 family forest and woodland ownerships in the region. These family ownerships collectively account for 35.4 million acres, which is about 75% of all private forests and woodlands in the region. Individual family ownership area varies, ranging from small tracts to large holdings consisting of thousands of acres. About 63% of family ownerships own less than 50 acres (Figure 1). About 48,000 ownerships own 100 or more acres of forests and woodlands accounting for a total of 29.7 million acres.

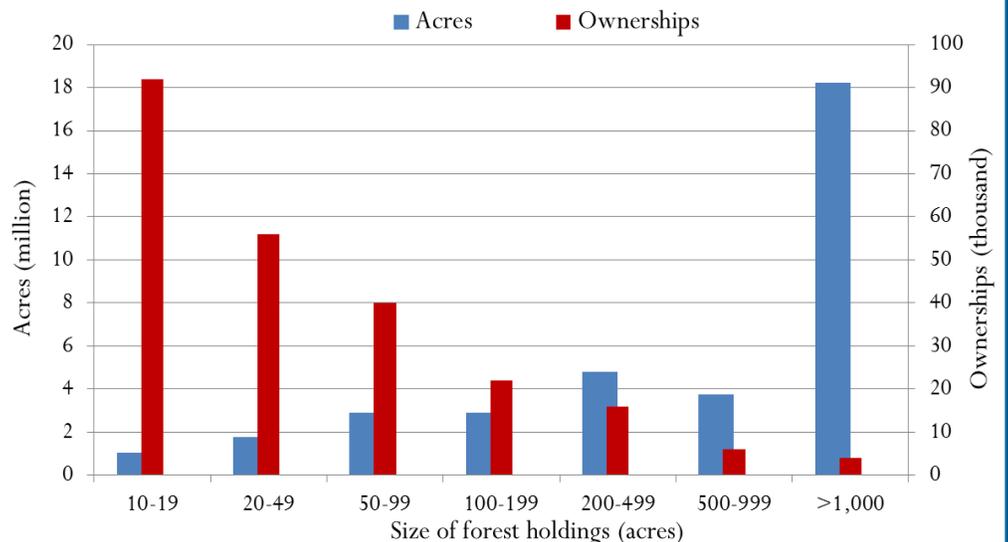


Figure 1. Area and number of family ownerships by size of holdings.

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An ownership is a legal entity that is composed of one or more individual owners.

Nationally, 43% of family ownerships holding 48% of forestland have primary decision makers who are at least 65 years of age. Elderly landowners may face unique challenges in managing their forests and woodlands.

Number of Owners

About 47% of family forest and woodland ownerships in Central & West Texas are a joint ownership of two owners, holding 11.7 million acres (Figure 2). About 36,000 ownerships accounting for 8.5 million acres are composed of more than two owners. In Central & West Texas, 4,000 trust or estate ownerships exist, covering 2.3 million acres of forests and woodlands.

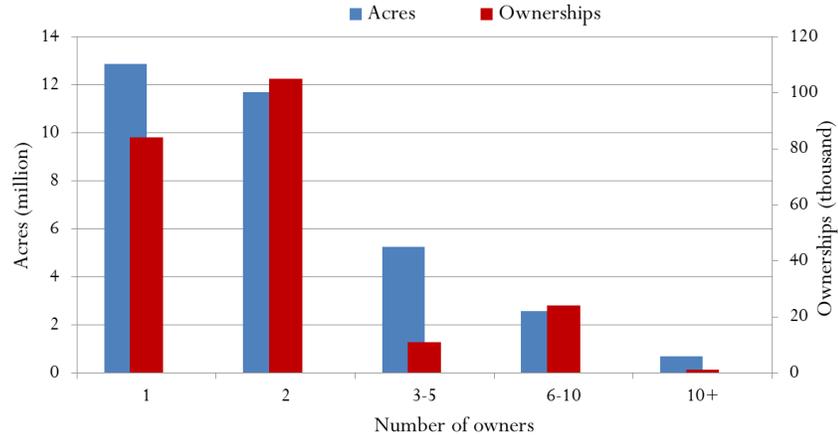


Figure 2. Number of owners.

Demographic Information

About two-thirds of family forest and woodland ownerships in Central & West Texas have primary owners who are 55 years of age or older (Figure 3). About 86% of primary owners are male and 14% female. About 58% of family ownerships have primary owners with a higher education degree (i.e. Associate, Bachelor, or Advanced). Another 21% have some college, and only 6% have formal education of 12th grade or lower.

About 37% of ownerships have an annual household income between \$50,000 and \$99,999 (Figure 3). About 46% of ownerships have retired primary owners and more than half of the ownerships (56%) do not rely on forests and woodlands for their household income.

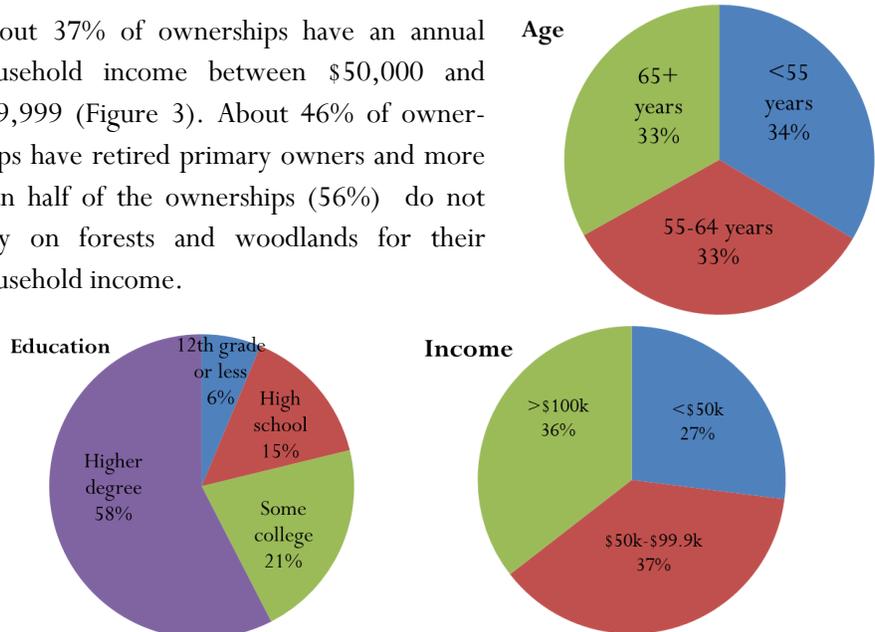


Figure 3. Age, education, and income distribution of primary owners.

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The categories in Figure 4 are not mutually exclusive. This means the same ownership can acquire land through more than one method.

The results in Figure 5 include ownerships that rated a reason as important or very important on a five-point Likert scale.

Land Acquisition

Most family ownerships in Central & West Texas either purchased or inherited their forests and woodlands. About 56% of ownerships accounting for 19.9 million acres purchased their land, and 40% of ownerships having 20.6 million acres inherited their land (Figure 4). About 46% of ownerships acquired land from their parents and/or spouse's parents.

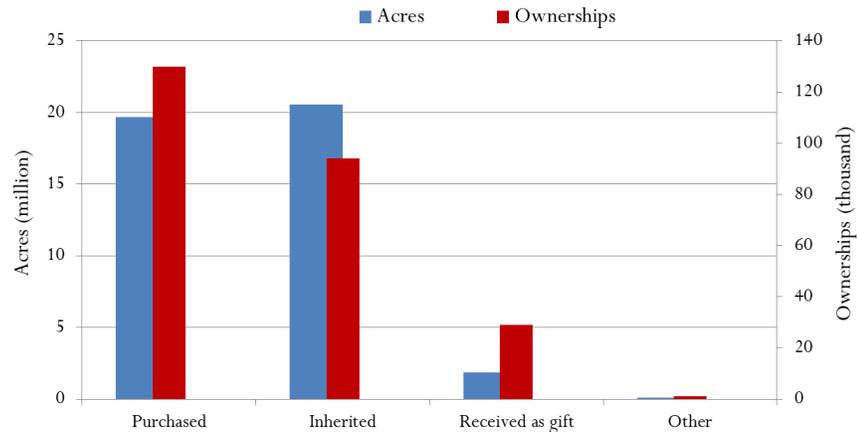


Figure 4. Method of family forest and woodland acquisition.

Reasons for Owning

Landowners in Central & West Texas own forests and woodlands for a variety of reasons. Enjoying the scenery and beauty is rated as the top primary reason for 204,000 ownerships accounting for 27.4 million acres (Figure 5). Other main reasons for owning forests and woodlands include to pass on to heirs, to protect nature or biological diversity, and to protect or improve wildlife habitat. Only 2% of ownerships accounting for 1.4 million acres hold land for timber products. About 118,000 ownerships (55%) accounting for 20.2 million acres hold land for hunting.

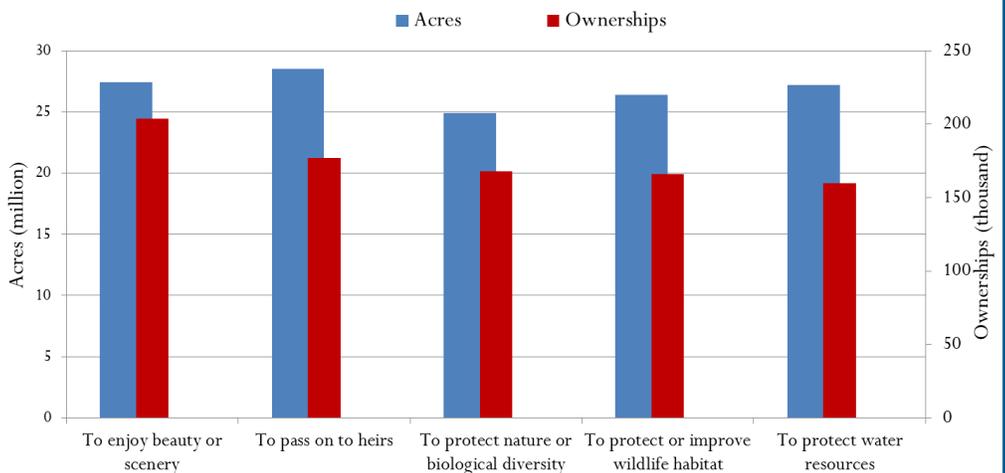


Figure 5. Top five reasons for owning forests and woodlands.

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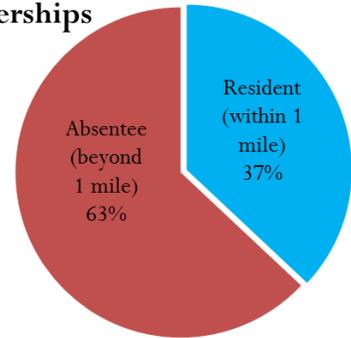
Absentee landowners may be more difficult to reach with resource management information or assistance than resident landowners.

Ownership changes may result in changes in management objectives. Frequent ownership changes create the need for continued educational efforts of natural resource management agencies.

Absentee Status

About 87,000 family ownerships (37%) in Central & West Texas accounting for 18.2 million acres of forests and woodlands have owners whose primary residence is within one mile of their forestland (Figure 6). Landowners residing within one mile of their property are defined as resident owners. The balance of ownerships (63%) have owners who reside more than one mile from their land, a class where the term absentee is usually applied. However, absentee ownerships are estimated to hold fewer acres of forests and woodlands than resident owners. Furthermore, about 40% of ownerships have vacation homes within one mile of their land.

Ownerships



Acres

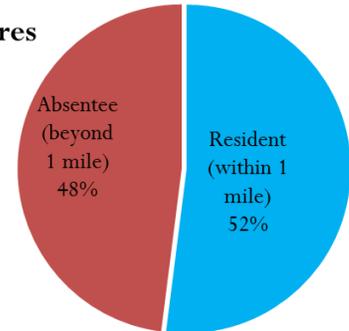


Figure 6. Resident and absentee ownerships in Central & West Texas.

Length of Ownership

About 135,000 family ownerships in Central & West Texas owning 17.6 million acres have tenure of 24 years or less (Figure 7). About 39% of ownerships having 16.1 million acres have tenure of 25 years and longer. Only 9,000 ownerships held their land more than 50 years. About 83% of ownerships have never sold or given away their holding of forests and woodlands in Central and West Texas.

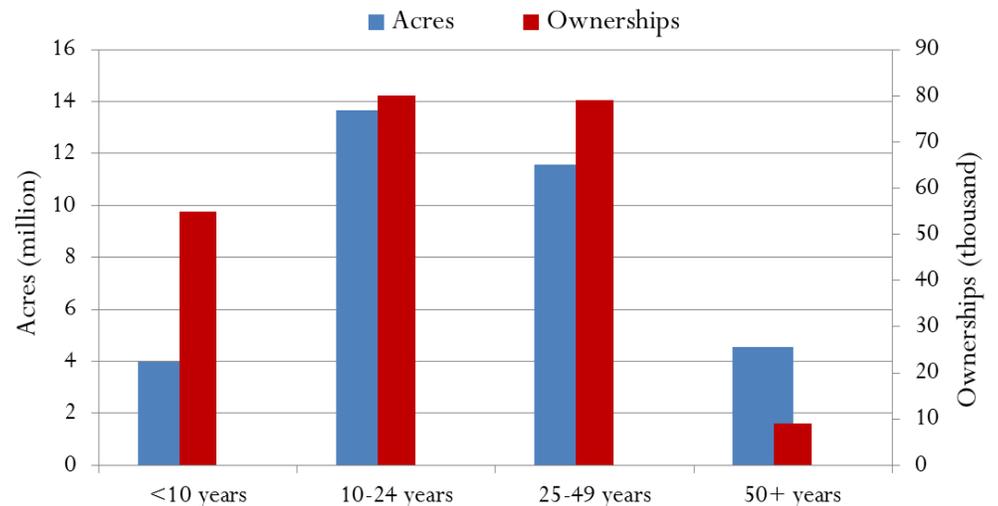


Figure 7. Forest and woodland tenure in Central & West Texas.

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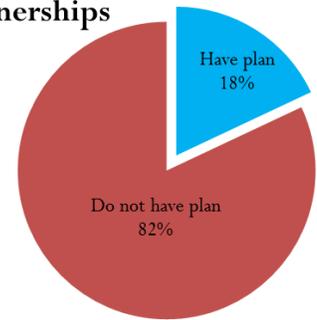
A written management plan can provide land management, estate planning, and other related benefits to landowners. TFS can assist landowners by preparing a stewardship plan for their property.

Professional land managers can provide technical advice on wildlife habitat management, invasive species control, pest management, water quality, and other sustainable land management practices.

Written Management Plan

In Central & West Texas, only 41,000 family forest and woodland ownerships (18%) accounting for 7.2 million acres have a written management plan (Figure 8). Of the 35.4 million acres, only 21% is held by ownerships with a written plan. About 67% of ownerships reported that they do not want/need a management plan. Among ownerships that have a written plan, 33% reported their plan was prepared by consulting foresters or other natural resource professionals. About 13% of ownerships have a management plan written by their owners, while TFS employees prepared plans for only 2% of ownerships. Moreover, 40,000 ownerships (98% of ownerships having a plan) accounting for 6.3 million acres have implemented the management plan.

Ownerships



Acres

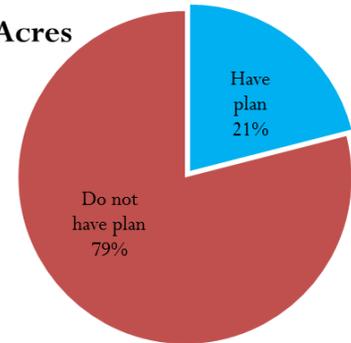


Figure 8. Ownerships having a written management plan.

Management Advice

Only 46,000 ownerships (20%) in Central & West Texas having 15.4 million acres of forests and woodlands received some form of management advice in the past five years (Figure 9). The most common sources of advice were federal and TFS employees. Federal employees served 20,000 family ownerships representing 10.1 million acres. TFS employees provided management advice to 20,000 ownerships having 8.4 million acres. About 56% of ownerships received management advice through a personal communication with someone knowledgeable on the subject. Major topics of management advice were wildlife habitat, insects and plant diseases, and land conservation.

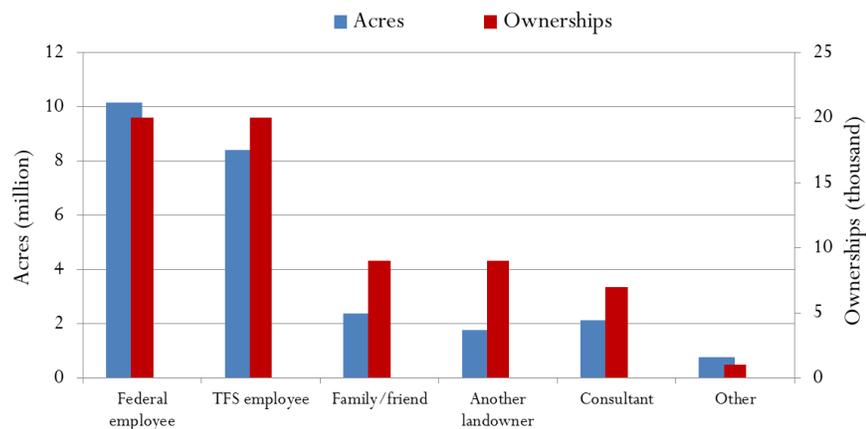


Figure 9. Sources of management advice.

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Some common financial assistance programs include: Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program and Texas Landowner Incentive Program (LIP). These programs are funded by various state, federal and NGO partners through which conservation practices are implemented to enhance, maintain and establish native ecosystems, both forested and non-forested.

Family forest and woodland landowners are a diverse group. Educational outreach programs should focus on the appropriate needs and interests of landowners.

Participation in Cost-Share Programs

In Central & West Texas, about 93% of family forest and woodland ownerships have never participated in any state or federal cost-share programs. In the past five years, only 3.1% of ownerships accounting for 10.5 million acres participated in such programs. An estimated 164,000 ownerships (68%) accounting for 14.7 million acres of land were not at all familiar with cost-share programs (Figure 10). Results suggests that landowners should be informed about federal and state cost-share programs through effective extension and outreach methods.

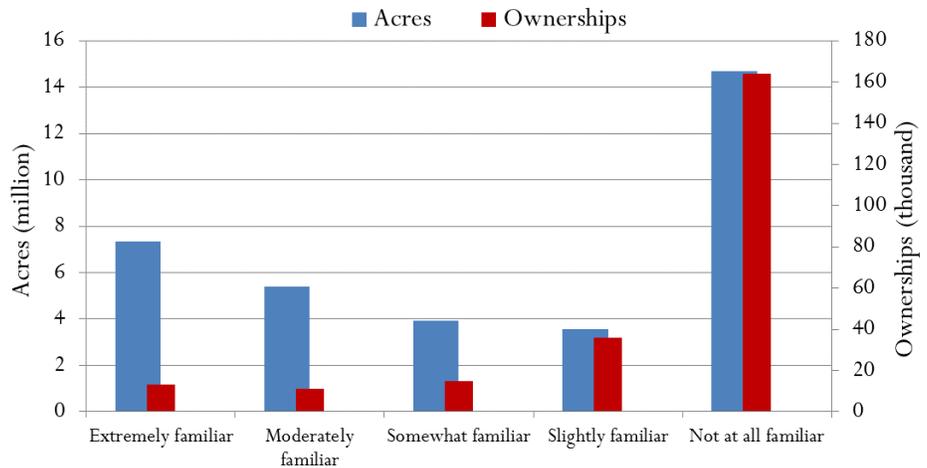


Figure 10. Landowners' level of familiarity with cost-share programs.

Preferred Outreach Methods

In Central & West Texas, 126,000 family forest and woodland ownerships (54%) accounting for 14.2 million acres stated that written materials, such as brochures or publications, is their preferred method to receive management information (Figure 11). About 42% of ownerships reported that the internet is their preferred way to receive management information. Talking to someone is the favored method for 51,000 family ownerships accounting for 9.7 million acres of forests and woodlands.

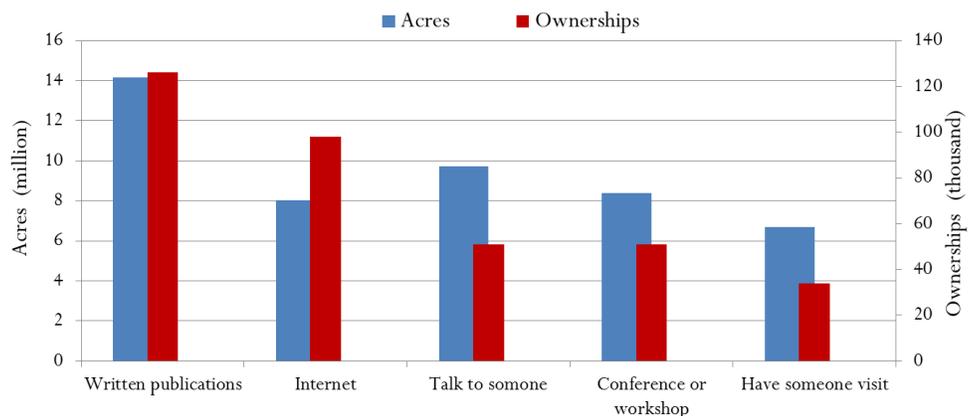


Figure 11. Preferred methods to receive information.

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TFS provides educational information to help increase landowners' knowledge and understanding on issues related to land stewardship, water quality, vegetation management, wildfire, and wildlife management.

**More
Information**

This report was prepared by Rajan Parajuli and Chris Edgar from Texas A&M Forest Service. Please feel free to contact us about information in this report or general information about forest landowners in Texas. We may be reached by phone at 979-458-6630 or by e-mail at rparajuli@tfs.tamu.edu and cedgar@tfs.tamu.edu.

Landowners' Concerns

About 167,000 family ownerships having 31.1 million acres of forests and woodlands expressed concerns about drought or lack of water. Other major concerns reported include keeping land intact for future generations, high property taxes, wildfire, and trespassing or poaching. On about 50% of ownerships, owners expressed concerns about water pollution and invasive plant species.

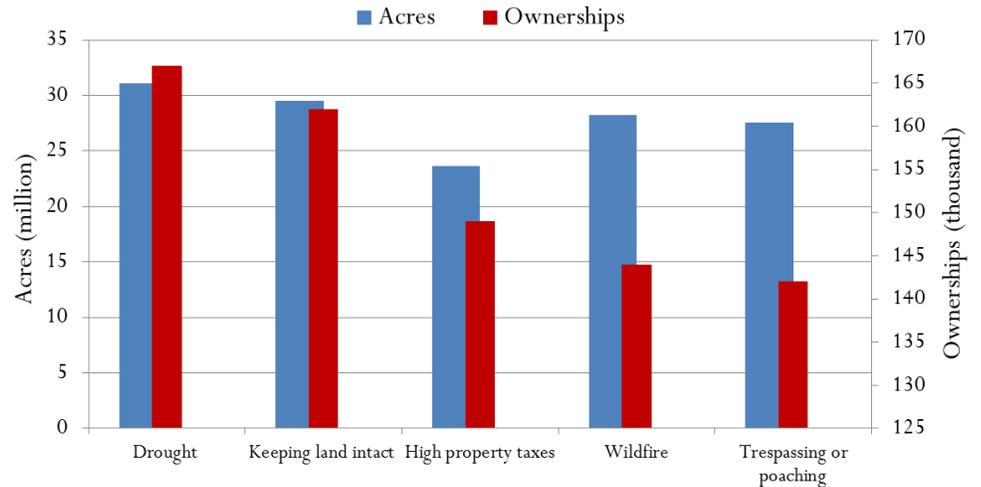


Figure 12. Major concerns of landowners in Central & West Texas.

Recreational Activities

In Central & West Texas, hunting is a major recreational activity on forests and woodlands. About 68% of ownerships accounting for 29.9 million acres reported hunting as a main recreational activity (Figure 13). Hiking, fishing, and camping are other common recreational activities in Central & West Texas. Most owners and their family members participate in recreational activities on their forests and woodlands.

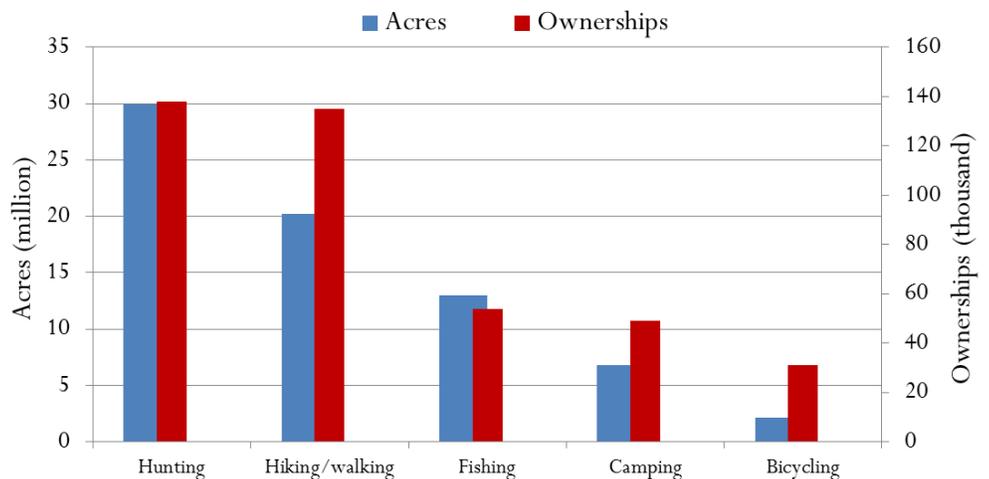


Figure 13. Recreation activities on forests and woodlands.