

# FOREST STEWARDSHIP BRIEFINGS

Timber ◇ Wildlife ◇ Water ◇ Soil ◇ Best Management Practices ◇ Forest Health ◇ Recreation ◇ Aesthetics

## AMERICA'S CHANGING WILDLIFE VALUES

*from America's Wildlife Values website and reports*

For more information:

- <https://sites.warnercnr.colostate.edu/wildlifevalues>
- <https://content.warnercnr.colostate.edu/AWV/TX-WildlifeValuesReport.pdf>

Societal changes, including urbanization, are leading to a shift in wildlife values among the American public. This shift could lead to more diverse expectations of fish and wildlife management agencies and opportunities to engage a new audience.

AMERICA'S WILDLIFE VALUES is one of the largest research efforts ever undertaken to understand the 'Human Dimensions' of wildlife management in the United States. The project is specifically designed to enhance the utility of human dimensions information for state fish and wildlife agencies.

America's Wildlife Values is a collaborative project supported by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Multistate Conservation Grant Program. The research team, led by Colorado State University's Department of Human Dimensions of Natural Resources, includes partners representing top academic/research institutions, regional fish and wildlife management associations, and state fish and wildlife agency personnel.

States are experiencing a number of social and demographic changes that have affected and will continue to affect wildlife management. Changes include human population growth and expansion, changes in in-migration rates and land use patterns, demographic shifts such as increasing income and education, growth in technology, and urbanization.

These changes are contributing to the many challenges that increasingly define the context of wildlife conservation, including, for example, habitat loss and fragmentation, loss of biodiversity, hunting declines, human-wildlife conflict, and a

rise in social conflict over wildlife-related issues. Further, these changes have redefined the "public interest" that agencies are charged with representing in decisions and provision of opportunities under the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation.

Some questions that arise for state fish and wildlife agencies in this context include:

- What strategies are needed to help agencies adapt in the face of societal change?
- How do agencies maintain trust and continue to remain relevant to an increasingly diverse constituency?
- What are ways for agencies to more effectively reach and engage non-traditional or underserved audiences while still being responsive to the needs of traditional stakeholders?

Researchers developed a 4-group typology to classify the value orientation of people:

- Traditionalists (or Utilitarians) - The most extreme in beliefs that wildlife should be used and managed for the benefit of people.
- Mutualists - The most extreme in seeing wildlife as part of their extended social network..
- Pluralists - Different situations or contexts result in this group emphasizing one orientation over the other.
- Distanced - Exhibit low levels of thought about and interest in wildlife.

The overall results of this study, plus results by state, can be found by following the link in the sidebar.

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## PROTECTING THE WATER SUPPLY

from City of Houston Public Works website; and article by Mac Martin, Texas A&M Forest Service Water Resource Forester

For more information:

- [www.publicworks.houstontx.gov/pud/drinkingwater.html](http://www.publicworks.houstontx.gov/pud/drinkingwater.html)
- [www.tceq.texas.gov/drinkingwater/SWAP](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/drinkingwater/SWAP)
- <https://bit.ly/3iFVN0F>

Source Water Protection (SWP) is the practice of monitoring and assessing the quality of our water resources, and implementing programs that reduce pollutants and chemical contaminants which could potentially have a negative impact on these resources. Protecting water resources from contaminants also helps to keep treatment costs down by eliminating the need for supplementary treatment procedures, thus keeping consumer costs down.

Eighty-six percent of Houston's water supply flows from the Trinity River into Lake Livingston, and from the San Jacinto River into Lake Conroe and Lake Houston. Deep underground wells drilled into the Evangeline and Chicot aquifers currently provide the other 14 percent.

The Source Water Protection Group in Houston partners with numerous government agencies to protect and monitor the rivers, lakes, wetlands, and watersheds that empty into the City's drinking water reservoirs. Real-time monitoring systems detect contaminants at numerous locations, enabling technicians and operators to identify potential contaminants within raw water resources.

Recently, Foresters from the Texas A&M Forest Service (TFS) Houston office provided training for the City of Houston's Source Water Protection Team. This team is a part of the City's Drinking Water Operations and is tasked with monitoring and assessing the quality of Houston's drinking water resources. This monitoring is pre-

dominantly taking place in the largely forested Lake Houston Watershed. In order to meet the growing surface water demands, Lake Houston will become the largest source of drinking water in the world by the end of 2020.

TFS and Source Water Protection are both part of the Texas Forests and Drinking Water Partnership. This initiative works to increase understanding and communication between the forest and drinking water sectors and is part of a larger, regional collaborative called the Southeastern Partnership for Forests and Water.

TFS has been working closely with the Houston SWP team on how to properly manage forests and implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) for watershed protection. Implementing BMPs is proven to protect water quality during forest operations, ensuring clean water for not only aquatic populations, but human consumers as well.

The recent eight-hour training consisted of a talk on the role of fire and the importance of prescribed burning in a forest ecosystem; a tour of several implemented BMPs on the W.G. Jones State Forest; and presentations on how TFS values the ecosystem benefits, including water quality, of a forested area.

In an area threatened by continued development, trainings and forest management practices like these help protect forested land that serves a critical function like protecting drinking water.

## ONLINE TOOL - MY TREE ID MOBLIE APP

*My Tree ID*, developed by Texas A&M Forest Service, facilitates tree species identification based on leaves, flowers, seed, bark, or location using a key, descriptions, and tree images. It contains over 1500 images from 475 different tree species within the continental U.S., and includes known occurrence maps from the Biota of North America Program for nearly all the species in the app. Individual tree detail

pages have complete descriptions including interesting facts and similar species.

The map feature allows users to input an address, select current location, or click on any point on the map to narrow the list. A full glossary and a tree age estimator tool complement the key and species list.

The app can be found in the Apple and Google Play app stores.

From Texas Forest Info site

For more information:

- <https://texasforestinfo.tamu.edu/MobileApps/MyTreeID>

## AGRI LIFE STATEWIDE WATER COMMITMENT

Texas A&M AgriLife is creating a new opportunity to bring together water resource expertise across Texas. A series of efforts are underway across the Texas A&M University System to improve the effectiveness of water programs across Texas, and increase engagement with global agricultural and health programs.

From rural to urban, private to industrial, agricultural to municipal, and geographical to political boundaries, the intersections of Texas surface and groundwater is varied and complex – requiring coordination for effectiveness.

This new approach will organize water program development and support based on regional priorities across Texas, such as in the case of Texas Water Resource Institute (TWRI). In essence, each region would be viewed as a type of living laboratory, where the knowledge generated through the regional program would be used to address similar issues as they arise across Texas, the nation, and the world.

Each of the TWRI regional programs will develop water research, extension, and education programs that reflect the priority needs of the water use and management community within the region. These pro-

grams would then serve as a resource for addressing similar water program needs for all regions of Texas.

Texas is rapidly evolving as populations increase across the state, but most notably in urban areas, creating and requiring new approaches to water resources. The AgriLife Center at Dallas has been on the leading edge of water advancement, serving as the information and activity hub that regional partners and stakeholders can turn to for information and education about water resources.

To streamline efforts in a new statewide programming model, AgriLife will focus on the creation of research, extension, and educational programs related to regional priorities such as resilient water resource management and the transition from rural to urban environments. Located in one of the fastest-growing areas in the country, the Dallas Center is within a dynamic urban environment which means “AgriLife Research and Extension is well positioned to leverage its resources and advance the developing field of sustainable urban systems science to better serve Texans’ diverse needs,” says Dr. Wendy Jepson, interim associate director for the TWRI at the AgriLife Center at Dallas.

*from Texas A&M AgriLife Today article published Oct. 7, 2020*

*For more information:*

- [www.morningagclips.com/texas-am-agrilife-expands-statewide-water-commitment](http://www.morningagclips.com/texas-am-agrilife-expands-statewide-water-commitment)

## CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE FUNDING

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Texas has announced the first funding application deadline of **December 4, 2020**, for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). A second funding application deadline will be **February 12, 2021**.

Applications are taken year around for NRCS programs, but deadlines are announced to rank and fund eligible conservation projects. Producers interested in signing up for EQIP should submit applications to their local USDA service center. If already a USDA client, a producer can submit applications online via [Farmers.gov](http://Farmers.gov).

EQIP is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers, including forest and woodland landowners. Technical assistance is provided without a fee from NRCS specialists to help landowners and land managers plan and implement conservation practices to help them meet their land management goals; address natural resource concerns; and improve soil, water, plant, animal, air, and related resources on agricultural land and non-industrial private forestland.

For additional information visit the NRCS Texas website or the NRCS EQIP page (see sidebar).

*from NRCS Press Release dated Oct. 19, 2020. Contact: Lori Ziehr*

- [www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov)
- <https://bit.ly/2HjczWG>

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**Editorial Advisor:**  
**Joe Pase, TFS-Retired; Lufkin, Texas**

## EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

**RiversEdge West's 19th Annual Conference** will take place virtually over the course of two weeks, from February 16-19 and February 23-26, 2021. The conference will feature a mix of live sessions and panels with interactive discussion, pre-recorded presentations followed by live Q&A, field tours, and demonstrations, as well as plenty of virtual networking opportunities!

**Abstracts for oral presentations are due on Nov. 19, 2020.**

More info:

<https://riversedgewest.org/events/2021-conference>

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### **Free Virtual Webinar: "The Three C's of Urban Riparian Restoration: Coordination, Communication, and Challenge"**

Riparian restoration efforts in urban areas must consider a patchwork of land ownership, myriad stakeholder values and goals, and varied resources and funding. When compared to remote areas where a primary goal of restoration is to increase ecological integrity, restoration in urban areas also includes potential development, access, recreation, and industry.

Register: <https://bit.ly/3og2IHg>



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