

FOREST STEWARDSHIP BRIEFINGS

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

GUIDANCE ON PROTECTED WATERS

from EPA website

For more information:

- <http://water.epa.gov/lawsregs/guidance/wetlands/CWAwaters.cfm>
- http://water.epa.gov/lawsregs/guidance/wetlands/upload/wous_guidance_4-2011.pdf
- http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getpage.cgi?position=all&page=24479&dbname=2011_register

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The Clean Water Act (CWA) establishes the basic structure for regulating discharges of pollutants into the waters of the United States and regulating quality standards for surface waters. The basis of the CWA was enacted in 1948 and was called the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, but the Act was significantly reorganized and expanded in 1972. "Clean Water Act" became the Act's common name with amendments in 1977.

The Clean Water Act applies only to waters that are "waters of the United States." However, over the past decade, interpretations of Supreme Court rulings caused confusion about which waters and wetlands are protected under the CWA.

U.S. EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have developed draft guidance in determining whether a waterway, water body, or wetland is protected by the Clean Water Act. This guidance would replace previous guidance and provide clearer, more predictable guidelines for determining which water bodies are protected by the Clean Water Act.

The draft guidance will be open for 60 days of public comment to allow all stakeholders to provide input and feedback before it is finalized. Comments must be received on or before July 1, 2011.

The proposed guidance provides:

- Clarification that small streams and streams that flow part of the year are protected under the Clean Water Act if they have a physical, chemical or biological

connection to larger bodies of water downstream and could affect the integrity of those downstream waters.

- Acknowledgment that when a water body does not have a surface connection to an interstate water or a traditional navigable water, but there is a significant physical, chemical or biological connection between the two, both waterbodies should be protected under the Clean Water Act.

- Recognition that waterbodies may be "traditional navigable waters," and subject to Clean Water Act protections, under a wider range of circumstances than identified in previous guidance.

- Clarification that interstate waters (crossing state borders) are protected.

This new guidance does not change any of the existing agriculture exemptions under the Clean Water Act. All of the Act's exemptions from permitting requirements for normal agriculture, forestry and ranching practices continue to apply. The guidance also clearly describes waters not regulated under the Act, including:

- Certain artificially irrigated areas.
- Many agricultural and roadside ditches.
- Artificial lakes or ponds, including farm and stock ponds.

Note that the email address in the Federal Register notice on page 24480 is incorrect. The correct email to submit comments to the docket is ow-docket@epa.gov. Include EPA-HQ-OW-2011-0409 in the subject line of the message.

URBAN WOODS VALUABLE TO BIRDS

from an article by Jeff Grabmeir, Ohio State University

For more information:

- <http://researchnews.osu.edu/archive/urbanforest.htm>

Research has found even tiny patches of woods in urban areas seem to provide adequate food and protection for some species of migrating birds as they fly between wintering and breeding grounds. This is important because, with the expansion of cities worldwide, migrating landbirds increasingly must pass through vast urban areas which offer very little of the forest habitats on which many species rely.

“The good news is that the birds in our study seemed to be finding enough food in even the smaller urban habitats to refuel and continue their journey,” said Stephen Matthews, co-author of the study and a post-doctoral researcher in the School of Environment and Natural Resources at Ohio State University. Matthews conducted the study with Paul Rodewald, an assistant professor of environment and natural resources at Ohio State.

These studies involved a secretive relative of the robin called Swainson’s Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*). [Some Swainson’s Thrushes migrate through Texas.] The researchers captured up to 91 Swainson’s Thrushes at a woodlot on the Ohio State campus while they were migrating through. The birds were then fitted with

tiny radio transmitters and released at one of seven wooded sites in the Columbus, Ohio area. The sites had forest sizes that ranged from less than two acres to about 94 acres in size.

Using radio transmitters, the researchers tracked how long the thrushes would stay in the woodlots where they were placed. If they left soon after release, that would suggest that the sites did not provide the food and habitat that they required.

Results showed that at the five largest release sites, all the birds stayed until they left to continue their migration north. At the two smallest sites (1.7 and 11.1 acres), 28 percent of the birds moved to other sites.

The Swainson’s Thrush is one of the more forest-sensitive species, so the fact that it could make do with even small, fragmented woodlots is encouraging. “These findings suggest that remnant forests within urban areas have conservation value for Swainson’s Thrushes and, potentially, other migrant landbirds,” Rodewald said. “Obviously, larger forest patches are better, but even smaller ones are worth saving.”

LAS CUEVAS EBONY

High on the north bank of the Rio Grande, near the present town of Los Ebanos, stands a giant Texas ebony. Overlooking one of that river's more important fords, it has witnessed years of history unfold. In 1846, General Zachary Taylor moved his army up river from Fort Brown and invaded Mexico from here.

Late in 1875, customs men learned that Mexican rustlers were picking up a large herd of cattle from the King Ranch, heading south. When they were spotted at the Cuevas Crossing, the famous Texas Ranger Captain L. H. McNelly was summoned from Fort Ringgold.

Captain Randlett and some troops of the 7th Cavalry accompanied McNelly and his Rangers to the crossing. Word was sent to the Mexican commandant at Las Cuevas (now San Miguel) requesting the return of the stolen cattle. When the Mexicans refused, Captain Randlett sent three customs men, six Rangers and about four of his troops across the river to get the cattle.

They were met in Las Cuevas by a small force of Mexican troops and townspeople, who engaged them in a half-hour gun battle. All of the Americans later returned safely, but five Mexicans were killed. Only about half of the cattle were recovered.

from Texas Forest Service website—Famous Trees of Texas

For more information:

- <http://famoustree-softexas.tamu.edu/TreeHistory.aspx?TreeName=LasCuevasEbony>

BMP ONLINE TRAINING COURSE

Texas Forest Service, with co-operation from Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Texas Forestry Association, and Texas Logging Council, has developed the latest version of the Pro Logger online Forestry Best Management Practices (BMP) refresher course.

The training is designed for individuals who have already taken the core BMP Training. It highlights some of the more important topics regarding BMPs and introduces some of the revisions that have been made to the Texas Forestry BMP Handbook in the August 2010 edition.

The course is broken down into the following sections:

- (1) Harvest Planning and Layout;
- (2) General Harvest and Site Prep Guidelines;
- (3) Roads;
- (4) Stream Crossings;
- (5) Streamside Management Zones;
- (6) Rutting; and
- (7) Wetland BMPs.

Each section ends with a short quiz which must be completed satisfactorily before advancing to the next section.

The new online training will be hosted by CFEGroup, an online continuing education management system for forestry professionals and forest landowners, founded by Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Ecosystem Science and Management Unit.

To find the new course you simply have to visit their website at www.cfegroup.org. Once on the website click on the training tab at the top of the page, click "List all Training Groups," then click on the "ProLogger Courses" link. Once you are on the ProLogger Courses page, simply click on the "Forestry BMP Course 1" link under the list of modules.

Individuals will receive 2 hours of continuing education for the Pro Logger Program for satisfactorily completing the training. The course fee can be paid for on the website.

by Chris Duncan, Staff Forester, TFS, Longview, TX

For more information:

- <http://www.cfegroup.org>

UPDATE ON TEXAS WILDFIRES AND MORE

This looks to be a prolonged fire season. For frequently updated information on the wildfire across Texas, go to <http://texasforestservice.tamu.edu/> and click on links to:

- Check on the current status and locations of individual fires and read fire prevention messages.
- View Google Earth maps of fire activity, fire danger, and burn bans.
- Sign up for daily wildfire updates by TFS e-News.

Texas Forest Service has established the VFD Emergency Assistance Fund to help volunteer fire departments battling the wildfires raging across the state. Donations are tax deductible and can be earmarked for particular departments, coun-

ties or regions. All proceeds (100 percent) will be distributed to volunteer fire departments via grants for firefighting expenses. You can make tax-deductible contributions to help volunteer fire departments that are helping to battle these wildfires. Click on the link under "Texans helping Texans: Want to help?" on the TFS homepage.

Also, you can read up on how TFS Forest Resource Protection staff work on protecting the people and resources of the State of Texas. Look under "Fire and Emergency Response" and click on the different topics.

For striking photos of fires in Texas, try this link: <http://www.theatlantic.com/infocus/2011/04/texas-wildfires/100050/> on *The Atlantic* website.

For more information:

- to <http://texasforestservice.tamu.edu/>
- <http://ticc.tamu.edu/>

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Editorial Board

- Rusty Wood, TPWD, Nacogdoches, Texas
- Joe Pase, TFS, Lufkin, Texas

LONGLEAF WORKSHOP COMING

Landowners and Longleaf: Growing Longleaf for Timber, Wildlife and Aesthetics

Date: Thursday, June 23, 2011

Time: 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Location: Diboll Civic Center
601 Dennis Street, Diboll, Texas

Lunch is provided.

For more information and an agenda, go to the Texas Forest Service website at texasforests.service.tamu.edu and click on Events Calendar at the bottom of the homepage. Go to June and click on the "Landowners and Longleaf" event listed on June 23.

RSVP by June 16 to Texas Forest Service Forester Shane Harrington at (254) 742-9874 or sharrington@tfs.tamu.edu.

Brought to you by the Texas-Louisiana Longleaf Taskforce and Texas Forest Service.



P. O. Box 310
Lufkin, TX 75902-0310

TDD Line: 1-866-419-4872

Phone: 936-639-8180

Email: dwork@tfs.tamu.edu