
FOREST STEWARDSHIP BRIEFINGS

Timber ✪ Wildlife ✪ Water Quality ✪ Soil Conservation ✪ Best Management Practices ✪ Recreation ✪ Aesthetics

TEXAS FOREST SERVICE P. O. Box 310 Lufkin, Texas 75902-0310

e-mail dwork@tfs.tamu.edu

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WQ Management Plans

Texas Senate Bill 503 of the 73rd Legislature created a program that provides landowners involved in agriculture and silviculture an opportunity to comply with state water quality laws through traditional voluntary, incentive-based programs. Site-specific forestry water quality management plans, developed in cooperation with local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, ensure that forestry operations are carried out following forestry Best Management Practices to help protect water quality and prevent soil erosion.

Once the water quality management plan (WQMP) is developed and approved by the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board, it becomes certified and the landowner must implement scheduled events as specified in the plan. A landowner operating under a certified WQMP has essentially the same legal status for nonpoint source pollution as an entity operating under a Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission point source pollution permit.

Other benefits to having a certified WQMP include: the plan changes to meet your needs as they change; provides you an opportunity to meet with experts to review and make recommendations to your plan; allows a landowner to install conservation methods over a period of time; cost share opportunities are possible.

To request assistance for a site-specific WQMP, contact your local Texas Forest Service office. ✪

For more information: Jacob Donellan, TFS BMP Project, (903) 665-7400, or jdonellan@tfs.tamu.edu

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What Is Agroforestry?

Agroforestry practices are intentional combinations of trees with crops and/or livestock that involve intensive management of the components as an integrated agroecosystem. Such integration utilizes more of the productive capacity of the land and helps to balance economic production with resource conservation.

A wide range of agroforestry combinations may be grouped into five basic types of practices:

Alley Cropping – combines trees, planted in single or grouped rows, with agricultural or horticultural crops that are cultivated in the wide alleys between the tree rows. Annual crops cultivated between rows of nut or fruit trees or high-value hardwoods provide extra income before the trees come into bearing and early in the long-term timber rotation.

Windbreaks – enhance crop production, protect livestock, control soil erosion, improve bee pollination of crops, and provide wildlife habitat.

Riparian Buffer Strips – perennial vegetation (trees, shrubs, grass) planted between cropland or pastures and streams, lakes, wetlands, ponds, or drainage ditches. They reduce runoff and nonpoint source pollution from agricultural activities on adjacent lands by trapping sediment, filtering excess nutrients and degrading pesticides. They also stabilize streambanks, protect floodplains, enhance aquatic and terrestrial habitat, improve landscape appearance, provide harvestable products, and function as a windbreak.

Silvopasture – combines trees with forage (pasture or hay) and livestock production. The overstory tree component provides shade and wind shelter.

Forest Farming – utilizes a forested area for producing shade-tolerant specialty crops which are sold for medicinal, ornamental or culinary uses. ✪

For more information: Jim Robinson, NRCS, www.unl.edu/nac/; Assn. for Temperate Agroforestry, <http://web.missouri.edu/~afta/>

Wildlife and Habitat Management on Small Acreages

Wildlife and habitat management on smaller properties can be challenging. Can you really manage habitat for white-tailed deer on 20 acres? No, but there are things landowners can do to benefit wildlife on almost any size property, especially with a little creative thinking.

Fallow disking – disking the soil in the winter months after the first freeze but prior to the first green up of spring. This promotes the germination and growth of grass, weed and wildflower seeds already present in the soil.

Supplemental water – stock ponds, troughs, windmill overflow basins, wildlife guzzlers, plastic drums.

Supplemental food – wildlife feeders, food plots. Feeders, while often providing a good place to observe or harvest animals, usually do not provide a substantial benefit to most wildlife species. They also may increase the threat of predation and spread of diseases. Food plots planted in native plant species are generally a better option. Native grasses, forbs (weeds) and wildflowers usually provide a better nutritional benefit. However, feeders and food plots should always be viewed as secondary to proper habitat management.

Brush management – In Texas, Ashe juniper (cedar) and mesquite are invasive species that require management. Mature juniper, especially on land with a

history of overgrazing and lack of natural wildfires, can take over the landscape. A little work to remove some of this brush to create a “patchy” landscape will greatly benefit many species of wildlife. Remember, some cedar is beneficial because it is evergreen and provides year-round cover for many wildlife species.

Supplemental shelter – nest boxes, brush piles. Instead of burning all piles of cleared juniper, leave a few piles to create habitat and escape cover for small birds and mammals. Nest boxes for bluebirds and wood ducks are also simple and easy ways to provide valuable nesting habitat.

Annual census – for monitoring the stability, growth and health of populations of many wildlife species.

Wildlife cooperatives – Landowners joined together with common objectives and goals can manage wildlife habitat on a much larger scale than they could independently.

There are many other ways to manage wildlife habitat. Contact your local Texas Parks and Wildlife office for information on how to obtain assistance with wildlife habitat management on your property under the Private Lands and Habitat Program.★

For more information: Nathan Rains, TPWD, (817) 641-3367, or nathan@htcomp.net

A Living Legacy - The Texas Heritage Forest Program

The stewardship of Texas’ forests has been a proud calling for generations of Texans. It remains so today. Texas forestlands are owned by 250,000 men, women and families across the state.

Every year, vast tracts of Texas forest disappear as private acreage gets sold or subdivided. This situation has prompted the TFS, in partnership with the Texas A&M Foundation, to initiate the Texas Heritage Forest Program. This program enables landowners to establish a unique, prominent, living legacy of forestlands and endowing research, education and extension projects that honor the people and places the landowner cherishes.

A gift of forestland may take two distinct forms:
GIFT OF PROPERTY FOR DEMONSTRATION FORESTS –

The TFS will accept a limited number of properties to serve as Demonstration Forests located around the state. In honor of donors or other designees, these forests will be maintained for the education and enjoyment of future generations. Proceeds from the sale of timber from these properties will be used to fund endowments to help offset the cost of demonstration programs.

GIFT OF TIMBERLAND TO CREATE ENDOWMENTS – The TFS also welcomes gifts to be managed or sold, at its discretion, to establish service and educational endowments. Each endowment becomes a permanent legacy, named to honor the donor or loved ones.★

For more information: TFS Headquarters, (979) 458-6600, or tx-stateforester@tamu.edu

BITS · AND · PIECES

CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR LOGGING PROFESSIONALS:

2001 BMP WORKSHOPS

JUNE 6, 7, 8

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-FOR REGISTRATION, CALL TFA. AT (936) 632-8733

LANDOWNER MEETINGS DEALING WITH STEWARDSHIP ISSUES:

Wood/Upshur Counties Forest Landowners Meeting

- Apr. 21, 2001, in Gilmer. For more information, call (903) 734-7007 (Texas Forest Service, Gilmer).

Houston County Forest Landowners Meeting

- July 28, 2001, in Crockett. For more information, call (936) 544-7798 (Texas Forest Service, Crockett).

TEXAS SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FORESTERS ANNUAL MEETING: - MAY 1-3, 2001

Location: Rayburn Country (near Jasper)

Theme: "Forestry Opportunities – Surviving or Leading"

-For registration brochure, contact Kathy Flannery, TSAF Chair, at kflannery@tfs.tamu.edu, (903) 693-9398; or Ken Addy, TSAF Chair-elect, at ken.addy@lpcorp.com, (936) 788-9750.

❖Vote for a national tree for the United States. You can vote at the Arbor Day Foundation's website at www.arborday.org, which contains educational material on the list of tree candidates. Online voting will take place through midnight before National Arbor Day, the last Friday in April, April 27, 2001.

❖Texas Parks & Wildlife Press announces an online bookstore offering a variety of titles about the Texas outdoors, including the *Official Guide to Texas State Parks*, the *Official Guide to Texas Wildlife Management Areas*, and the *Learn About . . .* series of children's activity books. Books can be ordered online at www.tpwpress.com or by calling 1-800-747-1726.

WE WISH TO THANK THE FOLLOWING CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS QUARTER'S NEWSLETTER:

Nathan Rains, TPWD, Cleburne, TX
John Burk, TPWD, Nacogdoches, TX

To Turkey Hunt. . .or Not?

In trying to establish a population of turkeys, some landowners and hunting club presidents tend to over-regulate their hunters. Five breeding seasons of protection has proven to be more than enough time for an eastern turkey population to become established. Turkey population densities, growth, and rate and distance of expansion are controlled by habitat quality. Turkeys need "mature" forests that are open at ground level with good long-distance visibility and at least some of the forest in mast-producing hardwood.

Let's Do Some Math

Example: We stock 5 gobblers to 15 hens. With adequate acorn production during the fall, at least 14 of the 15 will lay 10 eggs each. If you have good nesting habitat (knee-high grasses and weeds with some scattered shrubs), your nest success (eggs hatched) can be up to 40%, or 56 poult on the ground. The average re-nesting rate for turkeys on good range is 50%. Therefore, the 8 hens that lost their original nests will lay again with an average clutch size of 7, or 56 more eggs, and 22 more poult. If you have good brood rearing cover (knee-high grasses and weeds with no shrubs), your poult survival will probably average about 50%, or about 39 new turkeys added to your population. A clutch of turkeys will have a 50/50 sex ratio, so your second year population will consist of 23 gobblers and 30 hens (1.3 hens/gobbler), considering some natural mortality. We stock at a 3-to-1 ratio, which is about what the ratio should be for adequate reproduction.

The Bottom Line

Turkeys are very mobile. Normal turkey populations will expand rapidly into new country during successive years of above-average reproductive success. As high quality habitat becomes saturated, more marginal sites will begin to see turkeys. When the population experiences a decline in response to successive droughts or habitat fragmentation, populations in marginal areas will disperse back into higher quality areas. The net long-term affect is a naturally occurring ebb and flow in turkey populations that is unaffected by conservative harvest. Not a single turkey has been added to your population by needlessly denying yourself or your club this hunting opportunity.★

For more information: John Burk, TPWD, (936) 560-5779, or jb Burk@sfasu.edu

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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Stewardship Workshop

The Selah, Bamberger Ranch near Johnson City, Texas will be conducting a workshop on Hill Country Land Stewardship. The next workshop date is September 29, 2001, rain or shine.

The subjects include:

- ◆ Cedar Management
- ◆ Water Conservation
- ◆ Wildlife Management
- ◆ Wildlife Agricultural Exemption
- ◆ Grasses
- ◆ Tree Planting
- ◆ Endangered Species

This eight-hour outdoor workshop will be conducted by their experienced ranch personnel.

The ranch also offers other workshops, tours and field days. Check their website for dates, costs, descriptions, and location.★

For more information: www.bambergeranch.org; (830) 868-4639