



Texas Excellence in Land Management Program Overview

The Texas Excellence in Land Management Program (TXELM) identifies and rewards landowners across Texas who protect, conserve, and sustain trees and natural resources on their properties for generations to come. Though many landowners are good stewards, the TXELM award is presented to those landowners who have written, multiple-use plans and are implementing management activities based on recommendations from resource professionals.

Program Rules

1. A basic eligibility requirement of 10 or more contiguous acres is needed for consideration.
2. At least 5-year ownership of property.
3. The landowner **MUST** have a written management plan for the property that:
 - Identifies the owner's management objectives;
 - Identifies and describes the resources (timber, wildlife, soil, water, recreation, etc.) that are to be managed; and
 - Contains a schedule, list, or description of the activities recommended to meet the stated objectives.
4. A nomination form (see attached) needs to be completed and submitted. Besides the basic landowner information, the form will list the current land uses for the tract, the primary and secondary objectives, and the practices that have been implemented over the last five years. It will contain endorsements by at least one resource professional that can attest to the management activities. A copy of the management plan must be included with the nomination form.
5. Nominations will be reviewed on a continuous basis. There are no timelines or deadlines. Landowners will be informed of their selection as a recipient of the Texas Excellence in Land Management Award and will receive a metal sign for their property and a certificate signed by the State Forester. A presentation ceremony, either at a Forest Landowner Association meeting or some other public event of the landowner's choosing (Rotary, Lions, etc.), is encouraged.

Practice Accomplishments

There is an established point system to highlight what landowners have accomplished on their property during the past five years (see attached checklist). This is an attempt to quantify the relative value of implementing different stewardship practices on the ground.

A threshold of 30 total points has been established for certification; nominations need to score at least 30 points to be considered.

Submission Guidelines

1. Complete the nomination form.
 - a. Make sure landowner's name is spelled correctly. This is what is used when making the certificate.
 - b. Make sure you and/or another nominator sign the form on page 3.
2. Send the completed form and a copy of the management plan to TXELM@tfs.tamu.edu or to the address listed on the bottom of the nomination form.
 - a. A photo copy of the plan is acceptable.
 - b. Make sure the maps are legible if photocopied.
 - c. For those who have supplemental information, attachments, or appendices that you put in each plan, attachment of these documents is not required. Only send the main body of the plan that includes the tract information, management recommendations, timeline, and maps.
3. The Nomination Processor will process the nomination, assigning points to the qualifying practices.
4. The Nomination Processor will then send the nomination form and management plan on to the Forest Stewardship Coordinator and Associate Director, who will sign the forms and route them to the TFS State Forester to sign the certificate. All are returned to the Nomination Processor.
5. The Nomination Processor will notify the landowner by letter of their recognition.
6. The Nomination Processor or Forest Stewardship Coordinator will notify the TFS representative of the landowner's recognition and will coordinate getting the sign and certificate to the TFS representative or other nominator. It is up to the nominator to make sure the sign and certificate get to the landowner.
 - a. Presenting the sign and certificate to the landowner at a landowners meeting is preferred. If the landowner does not wish or is unable to do that, then the sign and certificate can be picked up at the TFS office (or whatever arrangement you and the landowner choose to make).
 - b. If the landowner lives far away, the certificate can be mailed directly to them and the local TFS representative can put the sign up somewhere on the property, with the landowner's permission, if there is a place to easily attach it.

Other Considerations

- To qualify for points, practices must have been implemented in the last 5 years under the current owner. An exception would be an SMZ, which could have been left years ago, but has been maintained throughout more recent silvicultural practices. This is considered an "ongoing" practice. Same with the boundary lines - fencing, signs, paint.
- Tree plantings need to be considered "established," meaning they've been in the ground a year, or at least until after the first survival check, and are determined to have good survival.
- If you are unsure whether a certain practice qualifies, go ahead and list it on the nomination form with a description. It could possibly receive points due to its similarity to another practice or could be considered to be added to the checklist.
- Planned practices that have not been implemented do not qualify.

