

THE TEXAS WATER SOURCE

UPDATING CASS AND MARION CO. FOREST LANDOWNERS ON FORESTRY AND WATER ISSUES

Harvest Expectations and BMPs

Forest landowners, primarily those that have not harvested timber before, are often unaware of the outcomes associated with these operations, including the use of environmental practices, or BMPs. Knowing what to expect or stipulate can help prevent misunderstandings, as well as protect the health and productivity of your forestland. Remember, the more demands you place on your contractor, the less income you will receive, so a balancing act is critical. Listed below are some reasonable BMP expectations that forest landowners should have regarding operations conducted on their property.

- **Roads should be left in good condition.** Forest roads should be reshaped if necessary and stabilized to prevent erosion from occurring. Landowners, however, should not expect these roads to look like interstate highways.
- **Water resources should be protected.** Buffers, or streamside management zones (SMZs), should be left along streams and other sensitive areas. Careful, selective har-

vesting may be done; however, roads, landings, and firebreaks should be located outside of these areas.

- **Streams should be crossed appropriately.** If stream crossings cannot be avoided, minimizing the number of crossings as well as utilizing proper methods can help. Dirt crossings should not be used.
- **Operations should be halted when the tract is too wet.** Rutting caused from operating during wet conditions can lead not only to impacts to water quality, but site productivity as well.
- **Trash generated from the operation should be disposed properly.** Hydraulic fluid containers, tires, batteries, and seedling bags should be properly disposed of and not left on site.
- **Operations should be conducted on the contour.** Conducting operations on the contour can significantly reduce the amount of erosion, especially during mechanical site preparation and machine planting.

For more information:

- <http://texasforestservicetamu.edu/BMP>

Local Forest Landowner Association

Local landowner associations help landowners keep in touch with what is going on in the forest industry and know what is available to them. The **East Texas Timberland Owners Association** does just that for land-

owners with property in Bowie, Cass, Marion, and Red River counties. For information on how to join and upcoming meetings, contact Russell Lykins at the number or address on the back of this newsletter.

Inside this issue:

Natural Resources Conservation Service	2
NRCS Technical Assistance	2
Texas Statewide Assessment	3
Your Local NRCS Office	4

Agency Spotlight

Natural Resources Conservation Service - Helping People Help the Land

For more information:

- <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>
- <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/>

Since 1935, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), originally called the Soil Conservation Service, has provided leadership in a partnership effort to help America's private land owners and managers conserve their soil, water, and other natural resources.

NRCS's natural resources conservation programs help people reduce soil erosion, enhance water supplies, improve water quality, increase wildlife habitat, and reduce damages caused by floods and other natural disasters. Public benefits include enhanced natural resources that help sustain agricultural productivity and environmental quality while supporting continued economic development, recreation, and beauty.

The NRCS Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) Program provides technical assistance supported by science-based technology and tools to help people conserve, maintain, and im-

prove their natural resources. The CTA Program provides the technical capability, including direct conservation planning, design, and implementation assistance, that helps people plan and apply conservation on the land.

Some of their programs, such as Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) involve cost share assistance with certain practices.

Other programs and services include: Emergency Watershed Protection Program (Recovery), Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program, Healthy Forests Reserve Program, Resource Conservation and Development Program, Area-wide and Watershed Planning, Conservation Planning, Rapid Watershed Assessment, and Soil Survey Program.

NRCS Technical Assistance

For more information:

- <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cta/>
- <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cta/ctabenefits.html>

NRCS delivers conservation technical assistance through its voluntary Conservation Technical Assistance Program (CTA). CTA is available to any group or individual interested in conserving our natural resources and sustaining agricultural production in this country.

The CTA program functions through a national network of locally-based, professional conservationists located in nearly every county of the United States.

This assistance may be in the form of resource assessment, practice design, resource monitoring, or follow-up of installed practices.

Although the CTA program does not include financial or cost-share assistance, clients may develop conservation plans, which may serve as a springboard for those interested in participating in USDA financial assistance programs.

CTA planning can also serve as a door to financial assistance and easement conservation programs provided by other Federal, State, and local programs.

To receive technical assistance, individuals may contact their local NRCS office or the local conservation district. *[See page 4 for centers that serve Cass and Marion Co.]*

Texas Statewide Assessment

In 2008, the USDA Forest Service implemented a “Redesigned” State and Private Forestry (S&PF) program. It was conceived in response to the combined impacts of increasing pressure on the nation’s forests and decreasing S&PF resources and funds. The 2008 Farm Bill requires each state to analyze its forest conditions and trends and delineate priority rural and urban forest landscapes. From this state assessment, a statewide forest resource strategy, or response plan, will be developed that will be the basis for formulating competitive proposals for S&PF funds.

The **Texas Statewide Assessment of Forest Resources** was developed around the issues facing the state’s forest and tree resources rather than being based on the forest resources themselves. With input from interested stakeholders from across the state representing the diverse interests of the forest resource, Texas Forest Service program leaders identified six primary issues for the rural and urban forests of the state:

1. Population Growth and Urbanization
2. Central TX Woodlands Conservation
3. Sustainability of Forest Resources in East Texas
4. Water Quality and Quantity
5. Wildfire and Public Safety
6. Urban Forest Sustainability

When looking at the water issues, forests play an important role. Due to the rainfall pattern, most freshwater resources in Texas originate in the eastern portion of the state, making forests and wetlands a critical factor in meeting water needs.

Forests produce the cleanest water of any land use, providing numerous public benefits, including absorbing rainfall, reducing flooding, recharging

aquifers, and providing habitat for wildlife. Studies have shown that riparian forests and wetlands can trap over 80 percent of sediment and nutrients, as well as reduce peak flood periods by 50 percent.

With the Texas population exploding, increased demands have already been placed on clean water resources. Compounding this problem is the associated development and increase in impervious cover in areas where forest once existed, leading to declines in water quality. These declines can be mitigated through careful watershed planning and conservation design, a method in which land is developed in a manner that protects the natural environment features. Other solutions include establishing forests around drinking water sources and riparian areas, restoring wetlands to their original condition, and developing ecosystem service markets and incentives for private landowners to conserve their working forest landscapes.

A geospatial model was developed to determine the highest priority areas in which Cooperative Forestry efforts should be directed to protect water quality and quantity. The geospatial analysis identified two primary areas in which future efforts should be concentrated—East Texas and the Balcones Escarpment region of Central Texas. Focusing attention on these priority areas can help sustain our water resources, ensuring the high quality of life that Texans enjoy.

At the beginning of next year, watch for the draft of the Statewide Forest Resources Strategy based on the Texas Statewide Assessment of Forest Resources to be posted on the Texas Forest Service website for stakeholder input. The document will highlight how TFS plans to utilize the S&PF program to address the issues listed above.

From Texas Forest Service website

For more information:

- <http://txforestservice.tamu.edu/main/article.aspx?id=6598>

Did you know...

This is the last issue of *The Texas Water Source* newsletter for the Caddo Lake area; we are moving on to different watersheds. Keep in touch with the BMP Project by visiting the website on the back page of this newsletter. Thanks Cass and Marion County forest landowners!

Updating Cass and Marion Co. Forest Landowners on
Forestry and Water Issues

Distribution of *The Texas Water Source* is provided free of charge to forest landowners of Cass and Marion Counties. Funding has been provided through cooperation of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) and Texas Forest Service (TFS). PLEASE ADVISE US IF YOU WISH FOR YOUR NAME TO BE REMOVED FROM OUR MAILING LIST.

The Texas Forest Service is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer committed to Excellence Through Diversity.

Texas Forest Service offices serving Cass & Marion Co.:

Russell Lykins, District Forester, Linden
(903) 756-5571
rlykins@tfs.tamu.edu

Chris Duncan, BMP Forester, Longview
(903) 297-3910
cduncan@tfs.tamu.edu

Best Management Practices
Project
P. O. Box 310
Lufkin, TX 75902-0310

Phone: 936-639-8180

Email: dwork@tfs.tamu.edu

Your Local NRCS Office

USDA Service Centers are designed to be a single location where customers can access the services provided by the Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Rural Development agencies.

USDA Service Center for Cass and Marion Co.:

LINDEN SERVICE CENTER
207 HIGHWAY 8 N
LINDEN, TX 75563-5041

(903) 756-5491

(903) 756-7791 fax

Includes:

Farm Service Agency
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Conservation District

For offices of other counties, or for Cass and Marion Co. Rural Development offices, go to: <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app> and click on North Texas, then the county.



TDD Line: 1-866-419-4872