



Texas A&M Forest Service- Cool Season Fire Break Grant
Grant Funded Through USDA – Forest Service
Award # 21-DG-11083148-001 & # 22-DG-11083148-001 CFDA: 10.664

Scope of Project: The goal of this grant program is to reduce the negative impacts of wildland fires to communities on the plains of Texas. Projects will be located in the Panhandle, Northwest, and parts of Central Texas as defined by Texas A&M Forest Service Mitigation and Prevention Department and Applied Technology Department as high priority (see map for eligible counties). The projected outcome is to assist landowners by covering the costs of planting cool season fire breaks adjacent to and in strategic locations around communities at high risk from wind driven wildfires.

The great plains and rolling plains of Texas are a mostly flat or rolling landscape that is characterized by large wind driven wildfires. In the most extreme cases, these locations experience what is termed a Southern Plains Wildfire Outbreak. Fires that occur on these rangelands after previous wet cycles are often only contained when they reach a wide break in fuel like an agriculture field or recent burned scar, or the weather conditions moderate. Establishing wide fuel breaks planted in cool season grasses that are actively growing during the most common time of year for wind driven wildfires, is one strategy to reduce risk to communities.

Grant recipients in this program will be reimbursed for actual costs up to \$80 per acre for establishing a cool season fire break on their property. Work may be conducted by a hired contractor of the landowner's choosing or by the landowner themselves. Previous work conducted before agreement has been signed and a notice to proceed letter has been issued, will not be accepted. Individual landowners may submit more than one application. Only one application can be approved per landowner. If more applications are received than funding that is available, the applications will be reviewed on a competitive ranking system based on wildfire risk reduction criteria.

Maximum Total Reimbursement per recipient: Grant recipients will be reimbursed actual costs not to exceed \$80 per acre (see treatment descriptions below). Total limit of reimbursement per grant recipient is \$8,000. Reimbursable costs are limited to those expenditures listed below. Reimbursable expenses are only those that are directly related to preparation, plant, and establishment of the fuel break. At the discretion (or approval) of Texas A&M Forest Service, justifiable expenses that occurred before the date of the approval letter could be eligible for reimbursement if the expense is directly related to the project. The purchase of equipment is not reimbursable. Paid in full invoices are required documentation prior to our agency reimbursing actual costs. Use of the Texas A&M Forest Service Cost Reimbursement Reporting Form must be submitted along with invoices.



Application Process: This grant is competitive, and selection will be based on the goal of reducing wildfire risk to homes. Applications for the grant will open for the month of June and application reviews will begin in July. The applications will be reviewed by Texas A&M Forest Service Fuels Team and approved/declined based on the intent of the grant. Approval or declined notification letters for applicants will be mailed by July 31st.

The landowner is required to complete all questions on the application to be considered. The packet requires a map of the proposed project area displaying property owner's boundary, location of proposed fuel treatment or fuel break, dimensions of treatment, and landowner name with aerial imagery as map background. A Texas A&M Forest Service employee can assist landowners in creating an adequate map if the landowner has questions. The Map My Property application from Texas A&M Forest Service's Texas Forest Info website, is an easy method to produce an adequate map.

If an application is received and approved, the landowner will receive an acceptance letter with a W-9 Tax Form and a program Terms of Conditions Form to be signed and returned to Texas A&M Forest Service. Once all documents are received by Texas A&M Forest Service, the landowner will receive a letter with a "Notice to Proceed" with a pre-inspection. Only after the pre-inspection has been completed, may work begin.

A Texas A&M Forest Service staff member will reach out to schedule the pre-inspection. The Texas A&M Forest Service employee will take pre-treatment photos, confirm the dimensions of your project, and answer any remaining questions about the grant process.

After planting, the landowner will contact Texas A&M Forest Service to schedule a post-inspection visit which will verify the work dimensions have been completed. The post-inspection will calculate acreage and verify minimum dimensions were met in the approved location. After the post-inspection, the landowner must submit their receipts and invoices for reimbursement. Once the post-inspection is conducted and the reimbursement forms have been submitted, Texas A&M Forest Service will process all documentation and mail or direct deposit your reimbursement check.

For more information, visit our webpage: <https://tfsweb.tamu.edu/windbreak/> or call (254)633-8612
Send completed PDF applications to our email, csfb@tfs.tamu.edu

At all times during and after termination of this award, grant recipient shall, to the extent authorized under Texas law, indemnify and hold harmless Texas A&M Forest Service, The Texas A&M University System, its regents, officers, employees and affiliates against any claim, proceeding, demand, liability, or expenses (including legal expenses and reasonable attorneys' fees) which relates to injury to persons or property or against any other claim, proceeding, demand, expenses and liability of any kind arising out of or in connection with grant recipients performance under this grant agreement.



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Landowner/Applicant Information

Landowner Name/ Public Entity/ Company Name/ Partnership Name/ Trust Name/ or Non-Profit

Mailing Address **City, State** **Zip Code**

Home/Business Phone Number **Cell Number** **E-Mail Address**

Landowner/Applicant Signature **Date**

Note: Signatory must be authorized to sign legal documents for applicant.

Project Location

Latitude: _____ **Longitude:** _____

Note: This should be coordinates of the center of the fire break.

Physical address of the gate or directions from the nearest intersection:

County: _____ **City:** _____ **Zip Code:** _____



Project Details

Length of fire break: _____ **Width of fire break:** _____

Total acres of planted fire break: _____ acres.

*hint: length (ft.) * width (ft.) / 43,560 (ft.²) = acres*

The applicant acknowledges that the fire break will be a minimum of 300 ft wide.

Estimated total cost to be reimbursed: _____ **(Maximum is \$8,000)**

*hint: total acres * \$80 per acre = total cost*

Project Planting Description:

Note: See Page 5 for details of establishment terms.

Plan for removal of vegetation by summer:

Note: See page 5 for details of establishment terms.

Attachments:

- Project Map:** (<https://texasforestinfo.tamu.edu/mapmyproperty/> - free mapping tool)
-Map Must Include:
 - Landowner Name
 - Property boundary
 - Outline of proposed fire break/planting site with dimensions
 - Aerial imagery as map background.
- 2 Pictures of project location showing proposed planting area** (Optional)



Benefits of Cool Season Green Fire Breaks:

- Wide fuel breaks in strategic locations are one of the safest way for firefighters and suppression aircraft to work safely and successfully to contain a wind driven wildfire.
- In winter and early spring when wildfires often occur on the Texas plains cool season grasses are actively growing and not susceptible to die-back.
- These plants also provide increased forage for wildlife and livestock in winter and production of hay in late spring.
- Constructing firebreaks prior to a wildfire is a well-established technique, but wide patches of bare ground offer poor forage value and contribute to erosion.
- Planting cool season vegetation into firebreaks increased organic matter, soil moisture, and overall stability of the soil when compared to only disking or blading to create a fire break or bare dirt field.

Terms of establishment and maintenance:

- This program requires these linear shaped fire breaks to be a minimum of 300 feet wide (3X maximum flame lengths). Whole field planting is allowable but maximum width (smaller side of the rectangular treatment area) cannot be more than 1,000 ft.
- Maximum reimbursement per landowner is \$8,000.00 which equates to 100 acres (examples: 300 ft by 14,553 ft or 1,000 ft by 4,356 ft)
- The program requires disking/tillage of the site if it is not already free of vegetation. Planting may be done by broadcast and re-disking but use of a grain drill to maximize seed to soil contact is preferred.
- Use of rubber tire equipment to mow/bush hog or otherwise prepare the site is an allowable expense.
- Brush clearing with heavy machinery, herbicide, fertilization, irrigation, fencing, and purchase of equipment are not required practices and are not eligible for reimbursement but are allowable at the discretion of the landowner and at the landowner's expense.
- Prescribed burning/crop burning is not an acceptable method for removing the vegetation under the terms and conditions.
- Grazing is allowable after establishment at the landowner's discretion.
- Haying, harvesting, grazing, or plowing under are required between May 1 and July 30 (warm season following planting) as part of the terms and conditions. This reduces the chance grasses becoming summer cured and contributing to fires.
- Consider using annual native species that don't add to unnecessary build-up of thatch into the spring/summer growing season
- Eligible cool season grasses for planting in this program are: Cereal Grains (Oats, Wheat, Rye), Annual Rye grass, native cool season annual grasses, or cool season legumes.
- Not Eligible to be planted on the project acres during the September 30 to December 30 planting window: Corn, soybean, peanuts, sorghum, Sudan, haygrazers, Johnson grass, and commercial sunflower.
- Invoices listing itemized costs are required at time of reimbursement. Reimbursement cannot exceed \$80 per acre.
- Cost Reimbursement Reporting Form must be used with list of requested items for reimbursement.
- Items/costs eligible for reimbursement are limited to: 1) Services of a contractor 2) Seed 3) Equipment rental 4) Fuel 5) Lubricants 6) Filters.