Form PWD 885-W7000
1-D-1 Open Space Agricultural Valuation
Wildlife Management Plan

Instructions

This form is intended for use by landowners wishing to manage for wildlife under the 1-d-l Open Space Agricultural Valuation. In order to be eligible, the property must already have a I-d-1 Open Space Agricultural Valuation.

This form is intended to accompany the 1-d- l Open Space Agricultural Valuation Form that can be obtained from your county Central Appraisal District.

Submit all completed applications to your county Central Appraisal District between January 1 and April 30 of each tax year. For further assistance with this form, contact your local office of Texas Parks and Wildlife.

DO NOT SUBMIT THIS FORM TO TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE. Any forms received by Texas Parks and Wildlife will be returned.

FOR ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE PLEASE CONTACT
TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE
WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST
RACHEL PATTERSON
512-332-7280
rachel.patterson@tpwd.texas.gov
www.tpwd.texas.gov

Caldwell County
Wildlife Management Application Procedures

1) Property must be in agricultural use and qualified for agricultural appraisal at the time the land is converted to wildlife management use.

2) Owner must submit prior to May I of the year they wish to qualify:
* Signed statement of decision to change to wildlife management
* New l-d-1agricultural application indicating change of use to wildlife management.
* Copy of the owner's 5 year wildlife management plan.

3) Appraiser compares the owner's plan to the Comptroller's guide and the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department Activities and Practices Management Planning Guidelines to determine if the owner's plan meets required level of intensity.

4) Appraiser inspects property with owner to verify initial implementation of plan practices. Determination to grant, deny or disapprove the wildlife management application will be made prior to May 15.

5) Wildlife Management Report is to be submitted annually prior to January 31st. The owner will provide the District will all records such as journals, receipts, photos, census documentation, or other evidence.

6) Non-compliance or lack of implementation of plan will result in revocation of value.

LAND SIZE REQUIREMENTS

Minimum of 16.6 acres of land, which may include up to one acre for a home site. If land is part of a qualifying wildlife management property association, or is habitat for endangered or threatened species, the land size requirement is a minimum of 11.1 acres.

DEGREE OF INTENSITY

Degree of intensity will, at a minimum, be equal to the requirements as set out in the laws of the State of Texas, the Comptroller's Guidelines for Qualification of Agricultural Land in Wildlife Management Use, and the Comprehensive Wildlife Management Planning Guidelines for the Post Oak and Blackland Prairies prescribed by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. A higher level of intensity will be expected on lands smaller than 200 acres, with the expected degree of intensity level increasing as the tract size decreases.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Caldwell Co. Appr. District
211 Bufkin Lane
PO Box 900
Lockhart, TX 78644
(512) 398-5550

TX Parks & Wildlife Dept.
4200 Smith School Rd.
Austin, TX 78744
(512) 389-4395,
(800) 792-1112

Caldwell Co. Extension Office
1400 B FM 20 East
Lockhart, TX 78644
(512) 398-3122

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PLAN GUIDELINES
FOR 1-d-lw PROPERTY TAX VALUATION

The following is intended to provide landowners with information to assist them in developing their own Wildlife Management Plan (WMP) for I-d-1 Wildlife Management Property Tax Valuation. The management practices discussed are intended as guidelines and to make landowners aware of the possibilities for their property. The format presented s hould be followed as closely as is possible. The Appraisal District requires that a WMP be prepared for the property, and that the plan be developed for a five (5) year period or a one (I) year plan submitted annually.

The first thing to consider is: What do you want to do? That is, what is your goal in managing your property for wildlife? It can be anything from managing for songbirds and bats to managing for white-tailed deer and turkey. What is important to remember is that:

The land must be used to generate a sustaining breeding, migrating, or wintering population of indigenous wild animals.

Once your goal (or goals) has been determined, evaluate which of the 7 acceptable management practices that you can implement on your property. You must implement at least 3 of the 7 practices each year to qualify. For each practice there are several management techniques that can be used. Additionally, there are levels of intensity for each practice and technique that must be satisfied, and you must address these intensity levels when writing your plan. The following is a list of management practices and minimum intensity levels for each practice.

1. **Habitat Control**
    a. Grazing Management: Select the type of grazing system to be implemented and attach an initial grazing schedule to the plan.
    b. Prescribed Burning: A minimum of 15% of acreage annually burned over 7 years.
    c. Range Enhancement: A minimum of 10% of the total area designated in the plan, or a minimum of 10 acres annually, whichever is smaller, until the project is completed.
    d. Brush Management: A minimum of 10% of the total area designated in the plan, or a minimum of IO acres annually, whichever is smaller. Can include the planting of a minimum of 150 individuals of native tree and shrub species per acre per year for the area designated in the plan. Also includes the removal of trees and brush.
    e. Riparian Management and Enhancement: A minimum of one project must be implemented every *5* years to qualify.
    f. Wetland Enhancement: Construction of a new project will qualify for *5* years.
    g. Habitat Protection for Species of Concern: A minimum of one project must be implemented every *5* years to qualify.
    h. Prescribed Control of Native, Exotic and Feral Species: The removal or control of exotic vegetation or the conversion of tame grass pastures must affect a minimum of 100/4 of the area designated in the plan, or 10 acres annually, whichever is smaller. Also includes the removal of exotic or feral wildlife.
    1. Wildlife Restoration: An approved restoration plan at a scale capable of supporting a sustainable population.
2. Erosion Control
    a. Pond Construction and Major Repair: A minimum of one project must be completed every *5* years to qualify.

b. Gully Shaping: A minimum of one project must be completed every *5* years to qualify.
c. Streamside, Pond, and Wetland Revegetation: A minimum of one project must be completed every 3 years, affecting a minimum of *5* acres per project. •
d. Plant Establishment on Critical Areas (erodible): A minimum of 150 seedlings per acre must be planted annually on 10 acres or a *minimum* of 10% of the total designated area treated annually.
e. Dike/Levee Construction/Management: A minimum of one project must be completed every *5* years.
f. Establish Water Diversion: A minimum of one project must be completed every *5* years.

3. Predator Control

a. Predator Management: The predator control plan should be prepared or approved by a competent professional and include the list, duration and intensity of methods to remove the target species annually.
b. Imported Red Fire Ant Control: Proper treatment of at least 10 acres or 10% of infested area per year, whichever is more.
c. Control of Cowbirds: Removal of at least 100 cowbirds annually is required to qualify.
d. Grackle/Starling/House Sparrow Control: Removal of at least I00 grackles/starlings/house sparrows annually is required to qualify.

4. Providing **Supplemental Supplies of \Vater**
   a. Marsh/Wetland Restoration or Development: A minimum requirement of one marsh/wetland restored or developed per *5* years; or annual water management of project or existing wetland.
   b. Spring Development and/or Enhancement: A minimum of one project per *5* years must be completed to qualify; or existing or restored springs consistently managed to prevent degradation. ••

5. Providing **Supplemental Supplies of Food**
   a. Grazing Management: Same as above.
   b. Prescribed Burning: Same as above.
   c. Range Enhancement: Same as above.
   d. Food Plots: A minimum of I% of the acreage should be planted in both winter and summer food plots.
   e. Feeders and Mineral Supplementation: A minimum of one free-choice feeder per 320 acres in use during the recommended time period, with a minimum of 16% crude protein feed required to qualify.
   f Managing Tame Pasture, Old Fields and Croplands: A minimum of 5% of the designated area must be treated annually to qualify.
   g. Transition Management of Tame Grass Monocultures: A minimum of25% of the designated area must be treated annually to qualify.

6. Providing **Supplemental Shelters**
   a. Nest Boxes. Bat Boxes: Number and location of nest boxes should be consistent with habitat needs and territorial requirements of the target species, and sufficient over the area to provide a real supplement to the target population and address an identified severe limiting factor as part of a comprehensive wildlife management plan.
   b. Brush Piles and Slash Retention: A minimum of 3 percent of the designated area must be treated annually to qualify.
   c. Fence Line Management: A minimum width of 30 yards and length of I00 yards of fence line management per ¼ mile of fence is required annually to qualify.

d. Hay meadow. Pasture and Cropland Management for Wildlife: Mowing/swathing of hay fields should be postponed until after the peak of nesting/rearing period of ground-nesting birds and mammals (July 15). Mow/shred 1/3 of open areas per year, preferably in strips or mosaic types of patterns, to create edge and structural diversity.

e. Half-Cutting Trees or Shrubs: A minimum of one clump of trees/shrubs per *50* yards on at least I0% of acreage or 10 acres, whichever is smaller, annually to qualify.

f Woody Plant/Shrub Establishment: Plant a minimum of *500* seedlings annually, or 4 rows in a 120-foot width by a¼ mile in length.

g. Natural Cavity/Snag Development: A minimum of *5* snags per acre, on 5% of the acreage, must be retained/created annually to qualify.

7. Making Census Counts to Determine Populations: For census activity to qualify for deer, a combination of methods must be used to obtain a reasonable assessment of the deer herd for habitat and harvest management. For most properties, *this* will require spotlight surveys, daylight or incidental observations, and harvest data for all deer (age, weight, and antler measurements). Similar intensity should be applied for other species to qualify in this activity.-.

a. Spotlight Counts: A minimum of 3 counts, or a minimum of 15 surveyed miles, must be completed annually.

b. Aerial Counts: Counts should employ accepted methodology for the region and be performed by a trained individual annually.

c. Track Counts: Counts made on 3 consecutive days, minimum, using accepted methodology.

d. Daylight Deer Herd/Wildlife Composition Counts. A minimum transect length of 15 miles (can be 1 short line run several times to total 15 miles), or obtain 100 observations. On smaller tracts, at least *5* separate, two hour counts during early morning or late afternoon from deer stands (blinds) may be used. .,

e. Harvest Data Collect/Record Keeping: Collect all age, weight, and antler development data from harvested deer. Age and sex information should be obtained from game birds and waterfowl to determine sex ratios and annual production.

f Browse Utilization Surveys: A minimum of 30, 12 foot circular, plots are required per each major vegetative site.

g. Census of Endangered, Threatened, or Protected Wildlife: Regular, periodic counts of the target species.

h. Census and Monitoring of Nongame Wildlife Species: Regular, periodic counts of nongame wildlife species. *This* practice also includes developing checklists of wildlife diversity for the property.

1. Miscellaneous Counts: Specific species may require special survey techniques.

Time/area counts
- Roost counts
- Song bird transects and counts

Quail call and covey counts
- Point counts
- Drift fences and pitfall traps
- Small mammal traps
- Bat census
- Stand counts for deer
- Herd composition surveys
- Nest box surveys between March 15 and August 15

PREPARING A WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PLAN

A WMP should include six (6) major sections

1. **Description of the Property**

Go to the County Appraisal District and collect a legal description of the property containing plat number, abstract number, and survey. Describe the location by giving direction, road name or number, and mileage from the nearest town. Describe the property in detail: soil types (can be obtained from soil survey at the Natural Resource Conservation Service or NRCS), vegetation types (include plant list of major species for woody plants, grasses, and forbs), improved pastures, cultivated land, and acreage of each. Also include topography description and water distribution. Discuss the history of the property and past land uses. Discuss current land uses: livestock, hunting, recreation, etc.

2. Goals and **Objectives**

Describe in detail what you want to do with the property. Is it for hunting, bird watching, preserving nature, etc.? Be specific with regards to what species or group of species you want to target and why, and how will your management impact those populations.

3. Management Practices

This is one of the most important sections of a WMP and the largest part of the paper. List and discuss each management practice you want to implement. For each practice that you choose, address intensity levels (discussed above) and the following questions:

a. What species are you targeting or impacting with the practice (songbirds, deer, etc.)?
b. How will the practice benefit the target species (improve habitat, increase population, etc.)?
c. How will the practice be conducted or performed (procedure)?
d. When will the practice be conducted or performed (Time Schedule)?
e. How often will the practice be conducted or performed (Time Schedule)?
f How much of the practice will be implemented (intensity), or acreage affected?
g. Where, specifically on the property, will the practice be conducted or performed (Map)?

4. Time Schedule

Make out a general, tentative time schedule to give yourself some deadlines to work under. It's not practical to try and set an exact day or even week. Think in terms of months and seasons (spring, summer, fall, winter). Many of the management practices are most affective when performed during the proper time of year (disking during the fall and \winter). for each practice, list the season/month and year in which they are to be executed.

5. Record Keeping

In addition to the biological records that you are required to keep for the various management practices, also keep records on all the activities that you perform. Put in the plan that you will be collecting receipts (contract labor, leasing equipment, seed, etc.). Keep all these records on file for future reference so that you can have documentation for possible site inspections by the appraiser. Take photographs of any habitat practices that you do prior to, during, and after implementation, or for any other type of practice that might alter the landscape (food plots). Mark on your map where these photos will be taken from and set a post at the site so that you can take the picture from the same point over time. Cameras that print the date on the photo would be beneficial.

6. Map of the Property

At the end of your plan, include a map of the property that shows the major vegetation types, the areas you intend to implement management practices, and what those practices are. Label or number the practices so that they correspond back to your Time Schedule. This will assist the appraiser in knowing when, where, and what management practices are being conducted. The map can be an aerial photo, topographic map, prepared on a computer, or hand drawn. Try to make it as neat and professional as possible given your available resources.

Don't be concerned that the WMP you are preparing.is too long. It's important to fully analyze, organize, deliberate, and describe in detail what you want to do with your land and how you are going to do it. This thorough preparation will greatly assist you in carrying out your goals and objectives and give the appraiser confidence in approving your property for 1-d-l Wildlife Management Property Tax Valuation.