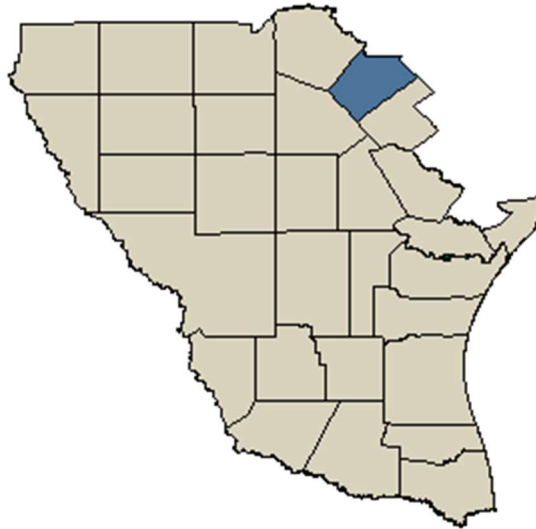


WILSON COUNTY APPRAISAL DISTRICT GUIDELINES FOR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT



SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS WILDLIFE DISTRICT [TPWD POST OAK SAVANNAH APPRAISAL REGION]

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT USE REQUIREMENTS

In 1995 Texas voters approved a proposition to allow landowners to use wildlife management as an agricultural use to receive agricultural valuation. The Comptroller of Public Accounts and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department issued guidelines as required by law. House Bill 3123, effective January 1, 2002, required that Texas Parks and Wildlife Department develop rules, and that the Comptroller of Public Accounts adopt those rules. This law allows landowners with an Ag Valuation to maintain their property tax savings while managing for native habitat and wildlife instead of livestock, crops, etc.

Wilson County Appraisal District has compiled criteria for agricultural appraisal valuation through wildlife management 1-d-1w appraisal valuation (hereafter referred to as wildlife management use) from state agency guidelines.

1. The land must be currently appraised as 1-d-1 open space land for agricultural, timber or ecological laboratory use.
2. The tract of land must meet the agricultural qualifications for the district on a stand-alone basis prior to converting to wildlife management.
3. A tract of land reduced in size since the previous tax year must meet a minimum acreage requirement of 15 acres.
4. The primary use of the land must be managing for native wildlife.
5. A minimum of three wildlife management practices must be performed each year according to the intensity standards set by Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TWPD) and the Comptroller.
 - Habitat Control
 - Erosion Control
 - Predator Control
 - Supplemental Water
 - Supplemental Food
 - Supplemental Shelter
 - Census Counts

These practices are further discussed and in *Guidelines for Qualification of Agricultural Land in Wildlife Management Use* a publication of the Comptroller of Public Accounts. You may find this publication at the following web address:

<http://www.window.state.tx.us/taxinfo/proptax/agrland/>

We also encourage landowners to reach out to the local wildlife biologist. You may find the contact information at the following web address:

https://tpwd.texas.gov/landwater/land/habitats/southtx_plain/regulatory/

HOW DOES WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT WORK?

A minimum of 3 of the practices listed (with several options per category) are required annually. A wildlife management plan must be filed along with an application for open-space use. The plan should provide several key pieces of information, including the target wildlife species and the planned management activities. The target species should be appropriate for your property, and the plan and activities should be appropriate for your region as outlined in the TPWD Wildlife Management Planning Guidelines for your ecoregion.

CAN I KEEP PART OF MY LAND IN AG AND PUT PART OF IT IN WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT?

Yes. You can divide your land between these two valuations. You cannot carry both on the same acre of land at the same time, however.

MAY I CONTINUE LIVESTOCK GRAZING OR OTHER AGRICULTURAL USES UNDER WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT?

Agricultural activities may be continued if they are compatible and secondary to your wildlife management use. You are not required to continue any form of agricultural production. Livestock can be a benefit to wildlife habitat if managed carefully.

IS FENCING REQUIRED?

No, fencing is not required but is allowed. High fences, low fences or no fences at all are compatible with wildlife management use as long as the fencing does not interfere with your wildlife management activities.

POOLING LAND TO FORM ASSOCIATIONS

Statewide, minimum sizes range from 12.5 acres in East Texas to 100 acres in the Trans Pecos. The appraisal district board of directors for each county makes the determination of the exact acreage needed within the statutory guidelines.

The guidelines permit landowners to pool lands to form a Wildlife Management Property Association (WMPA) and Co-ops. To qualify for wildlife management status, the acreage within the association or co-op must be contiguous. In addition, the association or co-op must have written agreement legally binding each owner to perform activities described in the management plan.

A wildlife management plan is required when initially applying for a wildlife management valuation. The district requires each individual landowner to submit an annual report each year. The annual report should list the activities conducted in the previous year and provides proof you are following your plan.

For more information about Wildlife Management Associations or how to get started, contact your local Wildlife District Leader. You may find information, including contact information, at <https://tpwd.texas.gov/landwater/land/associations/>

APPLICATION PROCESS

To convert land under an existing agricultural appraisal from traditional ag practices to wildlife management, two forms are required.

- New 1-d-1 Open Space Appraisal Application
- Wildlife Management Plan

A wildlife management plan shall be completed on the form prescribed by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) for each tract of land for which qualification for agricultural appraisal is sought based on wildlife management use. A copy of this wildlife management plan form may be obtained by contacting Texas Parks and Wildlife Department through www.tpwd.state.tx.us.

These forms are also located on the district's website, wilson-cad.org. The deadline to submit both forms is April 30. Once the plan is received by the district it will be reviewed. A site inspection may be requested by the district to ensure activities are being performed. The application is then approved or denied. In the event of a denial, a property owner will receive in writing that a property has been denied application and the reason for the denial; this will be sent via certified mail to the owner of record or their designee.

Landowners are not required to submit an application in subsequent years unless requested in writing by the district or a change in ownership or size of the property occurs. The district requests an Annual Report of activities for proof of compliance. To comply with rules and regulations, landowners must perform and document a minimum of three activities each calendar year. Annual reports should include good documentation including photos and maps of activities, dates performed, and possibly receipts for expenses. Annual Report Forms are also available on the district's website.

For Wildlife Management Services:

A wildlife property management service may prepare a wildlife management plan, provided all required information is included for each tract of land and the plan is signed by each landowner or an agent of the landowner designated in the manner required by Tax Code, §1.111 and §9.3044 of this title (relating to Appointment of Agents for Property Tax).