

NO LAND NO WATER™

Do you know where your water comes from? Before water can freely flow from our taps at home, it begins as a single raindrop. The instant availability of fresh, clean drinking water flowing from a faucet is easily, and unfortunately, something that we all can take for granted.

The Texas Agricultural Land Trust reminds us of the importance of water, but also the value of stewardship on agricultural working lands with their message of “**NO LAND NO WATER™**.” Texas farmers, ranchers, and foresters are constantly aware of the significance of this natural resource, and have been working with their local Soil and Water Conservation Districts to voluntarily implement conservation practices that increase the quantity and improve the quality of our water, while conserving water through innovative agricultural practices.

When it rains in Texas, 83% of it falls on farms, ranches, and forests. In these areas, the rainfall either infiltrates down into the groundwater, absorbs into the soil, or it runs off into creeks, rivers, and reservoirs. On the other hand, in urban areas, water cannot absorb into the ground as readily due to impervious barriers such as paved roads, houses, apartments and office buildings. This results in much more runoff, as well as less groundwater flow that prevents our much needed and relied upon aquifers from recharging.

Rural working lands are crucial to protecting and preserving the water resources of Texas, and our water sustainability depends in large part on the stewardship and conservation of these private lands. These rural lands also provide the scenic landscapes across our state that agricultural producers have managed for wildlife, timber, migratory birds, and even bees and butterflies. These are benefits that all Texans enjoy. Yet, frankly, these are benefits that we rarely pay for.

However, fragmentation, the breaking up and selling of large land parcels, is impacting our land resources, and thus negatively influencing our water resources. As recent rainfall events have reminded us, the loss of open space and privately-owned working lands can lead to devastating floods due to the loss of permeable cover and the increase of concrete, asphalt, houses, and buildings in urban areas.

“There is too little public recognition of how much we all depend upon farmers as stewards of our soil, water and wildlife resources.”

John F. Kennedy

Nevertheless, Texas agricultural producers, with the assistance of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, the Texas Agricultural Land Trust, and many other conservation agencies, strive to be good stewards. With proper management, their operations will greatly impact the quality and quantity of drinking water for all Texans.

So where does our water come from? It comes from land stewardship on private working lands. Let’s all do our part for a clean and plentiful water resource. Remember, **NO LAND NO WATER™**. The lands we protect today will sustain our future.