



TEXAS STATE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION BOARD

Program News and Activities

OCTOBER 2012

The TSSWCB produces this monthly update of the agency's activities as an informational service to local Soil and Water Conservation District Directors. I hope you find this information helpful, and if you have any questions about specific programs or projects please don't hesitate to call your local field representative or our state headquarters.

REX ISOM

Executive Director

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UPCOMING STATE BOARD WORK SESSION AND MEETING

The State Board has scheduled a Work Session on **Wednesday, November 14, 2012** and a formal State Board Meeting on **Thursday, November 15, 2012**. More information is available at

<http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/boardmeetings>, or by contacting Karen Preece at (254) 773-2250, ext. 245 or kpreece@tsswcb.texas.gov.

BUDGET AND ACCOUNTING

- The last day work can be completed for EQIP is September 30th.
- The deadline for submitting a final EQIP claim is October 31st.
- Annual Financial Statements for fiscal year 2012 are due October 31, 2012
- Supplemental payments for fiscal year 2012 will be made November 1st.
- The blanket Director and Officers liability insurance policy was renewed on September 1st for fiscal year 2013. There are no changes in the policy from 2012. Please contact us if you would like a copy of your renewed policy.
- Important dates and deadlines through December 31, 2012 may also be found on the SWCD resources page of the TSSWCB website.

For more budget and accounting information, contact Kenny Zajicek at (254) 773-2250 ext. 236 or kzajicek@tsswcb.texas.gov

HUMAN RESOURCES

TSSWCB is currently recruiting for the following State position at this time:

Database Administrator – Temple

Independent Contractor Opportunities (Non-State Employee Positions)

TSSWCB does intend to engage the services of **contracted** conservation planners to provide services including recruitment of landowners and/or agricultural land operators and the development of conservation plans, in the specified sub-watersheds inside Wilson, Karnes, and Goliad counties. This initiative is a component of the United States Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service’s (USDA-NRCS) overall San Antonio River Watershed Protection Plan Implementation Conservation Initiative. Interested individuals should visit

http://esbd.cpa.state.tx.us/bid_show.cfm?bidid=98000 for more information. **These positions will be independent contractors and will not be state employees.**

For additional information on posted vacancies or to download an application, visit <https://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/employment>.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Program Overview

The TSSWCB Special Projects department provides coordination for the Annual State Meeting of Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Directors, facilitates open government functions required by the Texas Administrative Procedures Act, and directs the completion of other mandatory agency responsibilities such as publishing the agency’s Semi-Annual Report and coordinating rule-making functions.

Annual State Meeting of SWCD Directors
Mark your calendars for October 28 – 30, 2013 and plan on attending the 73rd Annual State Meeting held in Fort Worth.

Texas Prescribed Burn Board Meeting

On October 8, 2012 Special Projects Group Public Affairs Specialist [Rusty Ray] attended the Texas Prescribed Burn Board meeting in Austin. The Board welcomed five new members and focused attention on the following issues:

- The newly created Not-for-Profit Certified and Insured Prescribed Burn Manager category,
- Defining the required Continuing Fire Training units more accurately, and
- Reinstating the Prescribed Burn Advisory Board.

The Texas Prescribed Burn Board sets standards for prescribed burning, develops a comprehensive training curriculum for prescribed burn managers, sets standards for certification, recertification and training of burn managers, establishes minimum education and professional requirements for instructors for the approved curriculum, sets minimum insurance requirements for prescribed burn managers, and is a program managed by TDA. The TSSWCB holds a position on the Board.

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Water Enhancement Program

Educational Booklet

A new publication titled, “Brush Management—Increasing Usable Water Supplies” has been published by the TSSWCB. The program was initiated by the TSSWCB Water Enhancement Office and local SWCDs. The purpose of the document is to serve as education document that presents an overview of the research efforts to increase available water supplies through scientific based research projects.

SWCD Director and Employee Program Development Workshop

Though dates have not yet been established, a Program Development Workshop will be scheduled in February 2013. Dates for the workshop will be announced shortly after the Annual Meeting of SWCD Directors.

Region 4 Wildlife Contest

The Region IV Wildlife contest will be held October 31st at the SFA Experimental forest located near Nacogdoches.

Top winners in this contest will be eligible to compete in the State Contest to be held in April of 2013.

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<http://www.facebook.com/tsswcb>

<http://www.linkedin.com/company/968674>



Conservation News

Conservation News is a collection of readily available current news and information regarding natural resource issues. TSSWCB periodically distributes Conservation News via email to those interested. To subscribe, send an email to conservation-news-subscribe@tsswcb.texas.gov.

Conservation News is also available at <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/news>.

Conservation Video Library

There are over 200 conservation-related videos available; the 2011 catalog can be downloaded at <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/infoed/videolibrary>. No rental fees are assessed to those wishing to borrow videos from the library.

Ordering a Video

Select a video from the Conservation Video Catalog, then contact Loren Warrick at lwarrick@tsswcb.texas.gov to check it out. The Association of Texas SWCDs will pay the first transit postage costs to mail the video(s) to the requester. Postage for returning the video(s) will be the responsibility of the borrower. All videos must be insured upon return.

WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN PROGRAM

With the passage of Senate Bill 503 in 1993, the Texas Legislature directed the TSSWCB to implement water quality management plans (WQMPs) to abate agricultural and silvicultural nonpoint source pollution. A WQMP is a site-specific plan developed through and approved by SWCDs. The agency has been implementing WQMPs on private lands since late 1993 and has certified 10,155 plans on 3,962,551 acres as of October 19, 2012. All agriculture and silviculture producers in the state are eligible to have a water quality management plan developed. The TSSWCB identifies areas of the state where water quality is being negatively impacted by agricultural and silvicultural nonpoint source pollution and allocates funding to those priority areas to serve as financial incentives to increase participation in the program. SWCDs with lakes, rivers or stream segments listed on the 303(d) list as impaired due to agriculture are eligible to be included as priority areas. All animal feeding operations are considered to be high priority and are eligible to receive financial incentives to install needed practices in their WQMP through their priority area or statewide assistance program. From September 1, 2012 through October 19, 2012 there have been 24 new WQMPs certified on 24,733 acres. There have also been 26 applications approved for financial incentives to assist producers with the implementation of agricultural nonpoint source pollution abatement practices. More information about the WQMP Program is available at <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/wqmp>.

POULTRY WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN PROGRAM

On October 18, 2012, TSSWCB Poultry Operations [Mark Cochran, Teresa Reese] Field Representative [Don Brandenberger] and Flood Control Operations and Regional Coordinator [Lee Munz] were given a guided tour of the Sanderson Farms, Inc. poultry processing plant at Waco. The plant was completed and began operation in 2007 and is one of the newest such

plants in the United States. It processes about 1.25 million birds per week. The plant has virtually no waste, as all materials are used in some beneficial way. The plant is just east of Waco off U.S. Hwy 84.

<http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/poultry>.

TEXAS NONPOINT SOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The federal Clean Water Act (CWA) requires states to develop a program to protect the quality of water resources from the adverse effects of nonpoint source (NPS) water pollution. The *Texas NPS Management Program* is the State's comprehensive strategy for addressing NPS pollution. The program publication is updated every five years. The most recent revision was submitted by the Governor in June 2012 and thusly approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The *Texas NPS Management Program* is jointly administered by the TSSWCB and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). Implementation of the *Texas NPS Management Program* involves partnerships among many organizations. With the extent and variety of NPS issues across Texas, cooperation across political boundaries is essential. SWCDs are vital partners in working with landowners to implement best management practices (BMPs) that prevent and abate agricultural and silvicultural NPS water pollution.

More information on the *Texas NPS Management Program*, including the *2011 Annual Report*, is available at <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/managementprogram>.

Nonpoint Source Grant Program

FY2008 – FY2011 CWA §319(h) Grant Status

There are currently 35 on-going §319(h) grant-funded projects addressing a wide array of agricultural and silvicultural NPS issues. Unliquidated federal funds for these 35 on-going projects total approximately \$10.6 million and are primarily being used to implement BMPs to abate

NPS pollution from animal feeding operations, grazing livestock operations and row crop operations; provide technical assistance through SWCDs for the development of WQMPs; provide financial incentives for implementing certain BMPs prescribed in WQMPs; support various targeted educational programs; develop and implement WPPs; and implement the NPS portion of TMDL I-Plans.

FY2013 Request for Proposals

On August 31, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff issued the FY2013 Request for Proposals (RFP) for the NPS Grant Program. The RFP was published in the Texas Register, posted on the TSSWCB website, and all SWCDs and cooperating entities were notified of this funding opportunity. TSSWCB SRM staff identified priority areas and activities for this funding cycle based on the *Texas NPS Management Program* and the *2010 Integrated Report*. The deadline for proposal submission was October 12, 2012.

FY2011 – FY2012 State General Revenue Grant Status

There are currently 11 on-going general revenue-funded projects addressing an array of agricultural and silvicultural NPS issues. Unliquidated state funds for these 11 on-going projects total approximately \$1.88 million and are primarily being used to implement agricultural NPS components of TMDL I-Plans; conduct RUAAs; support increased analytical infrastructure at public bacterial source tracking (BST) laboratories; demonstrate innovative BMPs on animal feeding operations and grazing lands; and collect and analyze water quality data for watersheds with impaired waterbodies.

FY2013 State General Revenue Grant Status

On July 26, 2012, the Board approved an operating budget for FY2013 that allocated \$1.29 million in state general revenue to the NPS Grant Program. SRM staff is in the process of developing workplans and budgets with collaborating entities for various projects.

Texas Groundwater Protection Committee

Established by the Texas Legislature in 1989, the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee

(TGPC) bridges the gap between State groundwater programs, improves coordination between member agencies, and works to protect groundwater as a vital resource; the TSSWCB is a statutorily-authorized member of the TGPC.

Activities of the TGPC and Subcommittees

On September 20, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Jana Lloyd] and Special Projects staff [Loren Warrick] attended a TGPC Public Outreach & Education Subcommittee meeting in Austin. Seven agencies and organizations were represented. An overview of recent and upcoming outreach events were discussed. A presentation on pesticide labels was also given.

More information on the TGPC is available at <http://www.tgpc.state.tx.us/>.

Water Quality Coordination Activities

Fundamentals of Developing a Water Quality Monitoring Plan Workshop

On October 3, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Ashley Alexander, Jana Lloyd, Wesley Gibson, Pamela Casebolt, Brian Koch] attended the two day Fundamentals of Developing a Water Quality Monitoring Plan Workshop at the Red Bud Center in Austin. The workshop, put on by Texas Water Resources Institute, was a comprehensive two day workshop covering a multitude of topics: Data Quality Objectives, Quality Assurance Projects Plans, Selecting a Monitoring Design, Statistical Tools, Data Acquisition, and Uncertainty in Monitoring. Various partners presented these topics including TCEQ, Texas Institute of Applied Environmental Research, and the United States Department of Agriculture- Agricultural Research Service. Over twenty individuals representing state and federal government, local watershed partnerships, and universities from across the state attended the workshop.

Texas Watershed Planning Short Course

Proper training of watershed coordinators and water resource professionals is needed to ensure that WPPs are adequately planned, coordinated and implemented and the results properly assessed and reported. To provide the needed training and promote sustainable proactive approaches to managing water quality throughout the state, the Texas Watershed Planning Short

Course was developed by the Texas Water Resources Institute (TWRI), with CWA §319(h) funding from the TCEQ.

On September 24-28, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Aaron Wendt, Wesley Gibson] attended the sixth offering of the Short Course in Bandera. The Short Course provides participants with guidance on stakeholder coordination, education, and outreach; meeting EPA's nine key elements of a WPP; data collection and analysis; and the tools available for plan development. Over fifteen individuals responsible for watershed protection and restoration participated, including employees with federal, state, regional, and local agencies; universities; consulting firms; and non-governmental organizations.

More information is available at <http://watershedplanning.tamu.edu/>.

Water Quality Planning and Implementation

STATE DISTRICT II

South and North Llano Rivers

Impairment: None
Mechanism: WPP
Lead: TSSWCB
Project: "Development of the Upper Llano River Watershed Protection Plan", Texas Water Resources Institute; Federal \$ 666,167/ External \$447,239

On October 9, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Jana Lloyd, Mitch Conine, Wesley Gibson] and State District 2 Board Member [Marty Graham] attended a public meeting for the Upper Llano River Watershed Protection Plan. Presentations were given over water quality conditions in the North and South Llano Rivers, ecosystem services, and the possible WPP organizational frameworks. Also, group discussion centered on stakeholder decision and representation.

More information is available at <http://southllano.org/>. This project has the potential to affect farming and livestock operations in the South Llano River watershed in

Edwards, Kerr, Kimble, Menard, Real and Sutton Counties

STATE DISTRICT III

Copano Bay and Mission and Aransas Rivers

Impairment: Bacteria
Mechanism: TMDL, UAA
Lead: TCEQ (TMDL), TSSWCB (UAA)
Project: "Recreational Use Attainability Analysis for Aransas Creek", Nueces River Authority; GR \$125,402

On September 19, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Jana Lloyd] attended a Bee SWCD #344 meeting to give an update on the first survey for the Aransas Creek RUAA, as well as go over meeting details for the upcoming public stakeholder meeting in Skidmore.

On September 27, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Jana Lloyd, Mitch Conine] attended a public meeting for the Aransas Creek Recreational Use Attainability Analysis in Skidmore. Discussion centered on findings from the first field survey. Also, the upcoming field survey and future meeting on the final technical report were discussed.

More information on the TMDL is available at <http://www.tceq.texas.gov/waterquality/tmdl/42-copano.html> and on the RUAA at <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/managementprogram/aransaruua>. This TMDL will affect livestock operations in the Copano Bay and Mission and Aransas Rivers watershed in Bee, Goliad, Refugio, Karnes, Aransas and San Patricio Counties.

Cypress Creek

Concerns: Dissolved Oxygen, Bacteria
Mechanism: WPP
Lead: TCEQ

On October 1, 2012, TSSWCB SRM Staff [Brian Koch] attended a stakeholder meeting for the Cypress Creek WPP in Woodcreek. This meeting was held to update stakeholders on the WPP, including the addition of groundwater protection. They are specifically looking at BMPs focused on aquifer recharge areas, as well as how to extend

the geographic scope of the plan to protect the aquifer outside the watershed.

More information is available at <http://www.cypresscreekproject.org/>. This WPP has the potential to affect livestock and farming operations in the Cypress Creek watershed in Hays County.

STATE DISTRICT IV

Cedar Bayou

Impairment: Bacteria
Concerns: Macrobenthic Community, Dissolved Oxygen, Nutrients
Mechanism: WPP
Lead: TSSWCB
Project: "Development, of a Watershed Protection Plan for Cedar Bayou", Houston-Galveston Area Council; Federal \$804,000/ External \$353,876

On September 19, 2012, TSSWCB SRM staff [Ashley Alexander] and field staff [Joel Clark] attended the Lower Trinity SWCD #435 meeting in Moss Hill. An update on the Cedar Bayou WPP was provided to the SWCD. Highlights included providing a water quality status update, recapping the last Cedar Bayou Agriculture, Wildlife and Habitat workgroup meeting, and discussing potential solutions to the watershed's issues and the steps ahead.

More information is available at <http://www.cedarbayouwatershed.com>. This WPP will affect livestock operations in the Cedar Bayou watershed in Harris, Liberty, and Chambers Counties

Upcoming Public Meetings

- November 1, 2012 – Cooperative Conservation in the Trinity River Basin Workshop (Athens)
- November 6, 2012 – Beneficial Use of Dredge Material Workshop (Galveston)
- November 6 – 7, 2012 – Watershed Modeling using LDC and SELECT Training (College Station)
- November 8, 2012 – Plum Creek Watershed Partnership Steering Committee Meeting (Lockhart)
- November 13, 2012 – Lake O' Pines TMDL Public Meeting
- November 13, 2012 – Geronimo and Alligator Creeks Watershed Partnership Meeting (Seguin)
- November 15, 2012 – San Antonio Bay Partnership Meetings (Victoria)
- November 15, 2012 – Texas Forest Service State Stewardship Coordinating Committee Annual Meeting

WATER SUPPLY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

The 81st Legislature continued funding for the Water Supply Enhancement Program by providing \$2,135,413 in General Revenue Funds in FY2012. Staff has begun implementing HB 1808 and the Sunset Commission's recommendations.

Staff Activities

- Updated the TSSWCB website to include new forms, which are available for download
 - The new Water Supply Enhancement Program project application, "Proposal for Water Supply Enhancement Program"

- Explanation page to assist in completing the project application correctly
- FY 2013 Guidelines for WSEP Projects
- Completed FY 2012 Performance Measures
- Compiled data regarding Predicted Water Yield on all FY 2012 projects.
- WSEP staff attended EDYS modeling training provided by Dr. Ken Rainwater and Arcview training provided by Dr. Ernest Fish in order to gather new information and ideas regarding feasibility studies and updated mapping systems.
- WSEP staff has continued to consult with TWDB to gather information on the water need for Texas. Staff also attended meetings with TDA that focused on water yield enhancement.
- WSEP staff consulted with Representative Duncan and Representative Hilderbran in order to communicate and exchange ideas regarding WSEP. WSEP staff attended the Budget Hearing an Agriculture and Livestock Hearing.
- WSEP completed all 2012 project allocations in the following six project areas:
 - Edwards Aquifer
 - 23 Written Contracts
 - 1,600 Acres Under Contract
 - \$317,220 Obligated
 - \$145,567 in Payments
 - Guadalupe River
 - 9 Written Contracts
 - 1,259 Acres Under Contract
 - \$249,690 Obligated
 - \$60,660 in Payments
 - Lake Brownwood
 - 12 Written Contracts
 - 1,190 Acres Under Contract
 - \$249,690 Obligated
 - \$60,660 in Payments
 - Pedernales River
 - 20 Written Contracts
 - 1,879 Acres Under Contract
 - \$312,742 Obligated
 - \$41,335 in Payments
 - Twin Buttes
 - 5 Written Contracts
 - 2,747 Acres under Contract

- \$249,977 Obligated
- \$48,756 in Payments
- Little Wichita River
 - 8 Written Contracts
 - 9,460.8 Acres Under Contract
 - \$198,676.80 Obligated
 - \$137,781 in Payments

Water Yield for Fiscal Year 2012

Project Area	Acres	Increase in Water Yield (gallons)
Twin Buttes	3174	90,199,060
Lake Brownwood	1408	127,971,407
Little Wichita	13,178.40	2,416,692,073.2
Bosque	400	41,384,000
Ft. Phantom Hill	572	59,179,120
Palo Pinto	725	145,600,843
Guadalupe	423	26,896,300
Pedernales	425	247,577,791
Edwards Aquifer	865	137,851,491

Grand Totals:

Acres Treated and Cleared: 21,170.4

Increase in Water Yield (gal): 3,293,352,085.2

Acre ft. Per Year: 10,106.90

FLOOD CONTROL DAM PROGRAMS

Nearly 2,000 floodwater retarding structures, or dams, have been built over the last 60 years within the State of Texas. The primary purpose of the structures is to protect lives and property by reducing the floodwaters, and thereby releasing flows at a safer rate. These are earthen dams that exist on private property, and were designed and constructed by the United States Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS). They were built with the understanding that the private property owner would provide the land, the federal government would provide the technical design expertise and the funding to construct them, and then units of local government would be responsible for maintaining them into the future.

Local sponsors of the dams were required before a federal project was begun. Local sponsors

signed a watershed agreement which outlined the duties and responsibilities of the federal and local sponsors. In general, local sponsors are required to obtain and enforce easements, conduct operation and maintenance (O&M) inspections, maintain the structures, and implement land treatment measures in the watershed. SWCDs are one of the local sponsors in all watershed projects. Other local sponsors include counties, cities, and Water Control and Improvement Districts (WCIDs).

Due to the passage of time and difficulty in raising adequate funds locally, many sponsors approached the Texas Legislature with their concerns over amount of needed O&M and repairs. In recognition that these dams will continue to serve as a critical protection for our state's infrastructure, private property, and lives, the Legislature appropriated \$15 million dollars to the TSSWCB for grants to local SWCDs during the 2010-2011 biennium for O&M and structural repairs.

In response to this appropriation, TSSWCB assembled a representative stakeholder group and began the process of developing programs to deliver the funds to the sponsors of flood control dams during the Summer of 2009. It was determined that the most efficient and effective way to proceed was to develop two separate grant programs, one to address O&M, and the other to address structural repairs, due to their difference in complexity.

O&M Grant Program Update

In FY10, \$2,472,008 was allocated to 84 SWCDs and co-sponsors to conduct O&M activities on flood control dams. All FY10 funds have been utilized.

In FY11, \$2,472,008 was allocated to 84 SWCDs and co-sponsors to conduct O&M activities on flood control dams. Currently, there is a balance of \$72,533 to be utilized by June 28, 2013.

Structural Repair Grant Program Update

In FY10, \$4,055,471 in program funds were obligated to conduct structural repairs on 18 flood control dams. The TSSWCB and local SWCDs partnered and leveraged resources through the

USDA-NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program for disaster recovery and provided funding for structural repair activities on five of these dams. To date, all needed repairs have been completed on all 18 flood control dams.

In FY11, \$2,823,166 in program funds was obligated to conduct structural repairs on six flood control dams. The TSSWCB and local SWCDs continued to partner and leveraged resources through the USDA-NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program for disaster recovery and provided funding for structural repair activities on one of these dams. To date, all needed repairs have been completed on five of the six flood control dams the remaining dam is under construction.

In FY12 the TSSWCB's budget was reduced from \$7.5 million per fiscal year to \$2 million per fiscal year. Due to this reduction in funding the TSSWCB is currently only able to fund two flood control dam repair projects. To date, all needed repairs have been completed on one of the two flood control dams and the remaining dam is under construction. Currently, \$1,364,836 of FY12 program funds has been obligated.

For more information on these programs, please visit the TSSWCB's website at:

<http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/en/floodcontrol>

Monthly Program News and Activities is published by the TSSWCB for use by Texas SWCD Directors. If you have any questions regarding its contents, or have information you would like to see in a future issue, please call (254) 773-2250.



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Established in 1939, the TSSWCB administers Texas' soil and water conservation law and delivers coordinated natural resource conservation programs to agricultural producers through the State's 216 individual SWCDs. The agency is governed by a seven-member State Board composed of two Governor appointees and five individuals elected from across Texas by 1,080 Directors of local SWCDs. The TSSWCB is the lead state agency for planning, implementing, and managing programs for preventing and abating agricultural and silvicultural (forestry) nonpoint sources of water pollution; administers a water supply enhancement program through the targeted control of brush species in areas in need of water conservation; provides operation, maintenance, and structural repair grant funds to local government sponsors of the State's network of 2,000 flood control dams; and facilitates the Texas Invasive Species Coordinating Committee.