



## **TEXAS STATE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION BOARD**

### **Policy on Funding Technical Assistance for Brush Control through Soil and Water Conservation Districts for the Water Supply Enhancement Program**

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Being designated as the lead agency for administering a Water Supply Enhancement Program (WSEP) to increase available surface and ground water supplies through selective control of brush species that are detrimental to water conservation (Texas Agriculture Code §203.002 and §203.011), it is the policy of the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) to provide agency grant funds to soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs) in order to provide technical assistance to landowners for brush control and to administer the water supply enhancement cost-share program in a manner consistent with agency rules (31 Texas Administrative Code Chapter 517, Subchapter B) and the following policy provisions.

This policy describes the options SWCDs have for providing technical assistance to landowners for brush control and administering the water supply enhancement cost-share program. The provisions detailed in this policy are consistent with the *Policy on Allocation of Grant Funds for the WSEP* approved by the TSSWCB on March 6, 2013 and revised on July 18, 2013 and May 15, 2014.

In order to maximize the effective and efficient use of WSEP grant funds, an SWCD participating in a water supply enhancement project must choose one of two options to provide technical assistance to landowners for brush control and to administer the water supply enhancement cost-share program.

This policy provides a foundation for the TSSWCB in considering the administrative capacities of an entity that will manage a water supply enhancement project, as required by Texas Agriculture Code §203.053(d)(8) when prioritizing proposed projects.

#### **OPTION A – COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT FOR REGIONAL CONSERVATION TECHNICIAN**

The participating SWCD agrees to allow a regional conservation technician, funded by the TSSWCB through a different SWCD, to perform all duties and responsibilities associated with implementing a water supply enhancement project within the jurisdiction of the participating SWCD on behalf of the participating SWCD. The participating SWCD will cooperate with the regional conservation technician and TSSWCB staff to implement the water supply enhancement project. The participating SWCD will not be eligible for reimbursement of any costs associated with implementing the water supply enhancement project within the jurisdiction of the participating SWCD.

#### **OPTION B – PARTICIPATING SWCD PROVIDES FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

If a participating SWCD chooses to administer the WSEP within the jurisdiction of that SWCD, as provided for by Texas Agriculture Code §203.101, then the participating SWCD agrees to employ a district conservation technician to perform all duties and responsibilities necessary to provide technical assistance and to administer the cost-share program within the jurisdiction of the participating SWCD. TSSWCB staff and regional conservation technicians will not perform any duties and responsibilities

associated with the provision of technical assistance or administering the cost-share program, but will provide guidance and direction to the participating SWCD on WSEP rules, policies, and procedures.

The participating SWCD may be reimbursed by the TSSWCB for actual costs incurred associated with implementing the WSEP, up to 15% of the cost-share allocation for that water supply enhancement project.

Duties and responsibilities related to providing technical assistance and administering the cost-share program include, but are not limited to:

- Soliciting landowners to participate in a water supply enhancement project
- Developing water supply enhancement plans for participating landowners
- Writing cost-share contracts for participating landowners
- Conducting performance certifications of brush control work completed
- Communicating with TSSWCB staff and regional conservation technicians on progress to implement the water supply enhancement project

Costs incurred associated with administrative functions of implementing a water supply enhancement project and performed by an employee of the participating SWCD are also eligible for reimbursement.

Administrative functions include, but are not limited to:

- Drafting payroll checks for employees performing WSEP responsibilities
- Generating timesheets describing tasks performed to implement the WSEP
- Preparing payroll and income tax reports for the IRS
- Submitting Requests for Reimbursement to the TSSWCB for costs incurred by the SWCD
- Paying bills for costs incurred associated with implementing the WSEP
- Preparing WSEP reports for the TSSWCB
- Preparing SWCD accounting and financial records to ensure compliance with State requirements