



Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board

Quarterly Program Update: Spring 2019



Brandenberger Honored for 50 Years of Service to TSSWCB

In 1968, Don Brandenberger embarked upon what will go down in Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) history books as the longest serving employee since its establishment in 1938.

During his tenure he has witnessed the relocation of all 4 TSSWCB Headquarter Offices in Temple, 10 out of the 11 Executive Directors, the funding of 3 new agency programs and has seen the creation or re-establishment of 63 soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs). Don works as a Field Representative traveling throughout Central Texas serving as a resource to 21 SWCDs covering 25 counties.

Brandenberger is well known across the state of Texas for his hard work, dedication, giving heart and his love for making others laugh.

He is a husband of 53 years to his wife Alice, father to Mark and Mary Ann and “Big” to his grand-kids Dacey, Mason and Makail. His family sings his praise and says he has instilled in them the importance of giving selflessly and loving others. Don is their #1 fan and never misses a football, volleyball, baseball game, dance recital or stock show.

He was a Tarleton Texan and a Texas Tech Red Raider graduating with a degree in Animal Husbandry. Before joining TSSWCB, he was a County Extension Agent. Don also served our country in the Army for 2 years in Korea.

Brandenberger has made a true impact on TSSWCB as well as many conservationists across Texas.

Program Updates

• BUDGET & ACCOUNTING

BOARD MEMBER ELECTIONS

April 1st is the deadline for submitting Board Member Election Delegate and Alternate Form TSSWCB-43. Areas 1, III, and V for odd number years and Areas II and IV for even number years. Areas I, III, and V are to be submitted for Fiscal Year 2019.

MATCHING FUNDS

May 15th is the deadline for claiming two thirds of Fiscal Year 2019 allocation.

• COMMUNICATIONS

2019 ANNUAL MEETING OF SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT DIRECTORS

The 2019 Annual Meeting will be held October 28-30, 2019 at the Hyatt Regency Hill Country Resort in San Antonio. Details about pre-registration and the room block will be emailed to the SWCD email address in the coming months.

• PUBLIC INFORMATION & EDUCATION

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

The 2019 Leadership Development Workshop was a huge success with 105 attendees. We appreciate your support of this program!

WILDLIFE ALLIANCE FOR YOUTH (WAY) CONTEST

- Region 1 - April 8th, near Matador
- Region 2 - April 15th in San Angelo
- Region 3 - April 14th in Kingsville
- Region 4 - Held in the Fall of 2018
- Region 5 - April 8th near Eastland
- State Contest- April 23rd in Region III

• FLOOD CONTROL PROGRAM

The State Board approved \$5,460,430 for flood control grants for Fiscal Year 2019, including \$1,000,000 for dam operation and maintenance (O&M) grants. On January 17, 2019 the board approved an additional \$2,000,000 for O&M grants. The total O&M grants available for fiscal year 2019 is now \$3,000,000.00 (\$2,850,000.00 O&M, \$150,000.00 admin). The current balance remaining is about \$1,566,000 and is available to all sponsors on a first-come-first-serve basis. Proposals for O&M work will be accepted until April 30, 2019, or until funds are exhausted. All work must be completed by July 31, 2019. Agreements have been signed with sponsors for three state funded dam repairs and these projects are currently in the bidding process. Approximately \$2.7 million is being allocated for construction and engineering services on these projects in fiscal year 2019. Designs are underway on additional repair projects, which will be funded later in the fiscal year. The remaining Fiscal Year 2019 funds will be used to assist sponsors in matching federal funds received for Watershed Rehabilitation Program projects. Currently, \$67 million is needed to repair 190 flood control program dams in Texas, and \$1.5 Billion is needed to upgrade and rehabilitate about 500 high hazard dams where downstream urban development has resulted in public safety issues.

• WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN PROGRAM

With the enactment of Senate Bill 503 (73rd Regular Session - Sims / Counts) in 1993, the Texas Legislature designated the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) the lead agency in the state for the abatement, management, and prevention of nonpoint source pollution from agricultural or silvicultural sources. Additionally, the Legislature authorized the agency to administer a certified water quality management plan (WQMP) program, complete with a cost-share program to incentivize participation and offset the cost of implementing soil and water land improvement measures, for lands within the state. For FY2019 as of March 22, 133 WQMPs have been certified on 47,418 total acres.

• WATER SUPPLY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

TSSWCB staff has been in contact with Soil and Water Conservation Districts who have existing WSEP projects to determine their funding needs if additional funds become available.

Program Updates Continued

• CARRIZO CANE ERADICATION PROGRAM

The 85th Legislature approved funding in the amount of \$3 million across the 2018-2019 biennium (\$1.5 million per fiscal year) to implement the RGCCEP. A need for dedicated funding to implement the RGCCEP is identified in the TSSWCB's Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2017 to 2021. Funding will allow the TSSWCB to improve the ecosystem health of the Rio Grande and water user groups in south Texas while reducing the Carrizo cane canopy and density, which will improve border access for law enforcement officers and improve visibility to allow better detection of illegal activities. TSSWCB staff and district employees are continuing outreach with landowners in Val Verde, Kinney, Maverick, Cameron, Hidalgo, and Starr counties. 58.3 acres of Carrizo cane treatment by water craft was certified in Starr County. To date, approximately 127 river miles of Carrizo cane have been treated. Approximately 6,599.3 acres of Carrizo cane has been treated to date.

• NONPOINT SOURCE GRANT PROGRAM

FY2019 RFP/Grant Application

On August 17, 2018, staff issued the FY2019 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 the funding opportunity. TSSWCB Staff identified priority areas and activities for this funding cycle based on the Texas NPS Management Program and the 2014 Integrated Report. The RFP closed on September 28, 2018. The TSSWCB received 24 proposals from various entities across the state, requesting approximately \$6 million in federal funding. Staff is currently preparing the grant application for submission to EPA in April. The FY2019 grant application consists of 12 projects requesting \$3,767,000 in federal funds, matched with \$2,511,334 in non-federal funds.

• HUMAN RESOURCES

TSSWCB currently has two positions open, a Natural Resources Specialist III in Mt. Pleasant and a Natural Resources Specialist III in Gonzales. For more information visit:
www.tsswcb.texas.gov/contact-us/employment

News

Governor Abbott Reappoints Polk to Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board



Governor Greg Abbott has reappointed Carl Ray Polk, Jr. to the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) for a term set to expire on February 1, 2021. Polk joined the TSSWCB in May of 2017. Polk is a resident of Lufkin and a partner at Corner Capitol Advisors, LLC. He is also an owner and operator of Polk Land & Cattle Co. in Angelina and Houston Counties. He is a board member of Texas Food and Fuel Association and chairman of the board of CHI St. Luke's Memorial Hospital Lufkin. He is a board member and serves on the executive committee of Texas Southwest Cattle Raisers Association and Texas Wildlife Association. He is the Chairman of Angelina County Expo Center, board member of Angelina County Fair and a committee member of the Private Landowners Advisory Committee at Texas Parks and Wildlife. Polk attended Kilgore College and The University of Texas at Austin and completed the Mergers and Acquisition Program from the Anderson School of Business at UCLA in Los Angeles, CA. Polk's appointment by Governor Abbott is subject to confirmation by the Senate.