

PREPARING A DETAILED WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The detailed WMP is intended to accompany & elaborate on the 1-D-1 Open Space Agricultural Valuation Wildlife Management Plan. It should include six (6) major sections.

1. **Description of the Property & Habitat Description**

Go to the County Appraisal District and collect a legal description of the property containing plat number, abstract number, and survey. Describe the location by giving direction, road name or number, and mileage from the nearest town. Describe the property in detail: vegetation association or type (e.g., Post Oak Woods, Forest and Grassland Mosaic; Post Oak Woods/Forest or Water Oak –Elm –Hackberry Bottomland Forest; Elm-Hackberry Parks/Woodside, Mesquite; Corps; Native or Introduced Grasses, etc). The description can include soil types and vegetation associated with the various soil types (can be obtained from soil survey at the Natural Resource Conservation Service or NRCS). Describe livestock and wildlife water sources (e.g., permanent or seasonal streams, springs, stock tanks, water troughs) that are present. Documentation may include any NRCS, TPWD, or other plan, map or aerial photo that may exist for the tract to identify soils, vegetation and water sources. The plan list can include a list of major species for woody plants, grasses, and forbs improved pastures, cultivated land, and acreage for each. Also include topography description and water distribution when possible.

2. **Past History of Land Use and Wildlife**

Discuss the past land use practices that have been implemented such as prescribed burns, range or pasture reseeding, timber management, etc. Describe past history of timber management, cropping, livestock, and wildlife management (census, harvest, etc.). Also indicate presence of feral hogs or other exotic that compete with native wildlife. Discuss current land uses: livestock, hunting, recreation, etc.

3. **Goals and Objectives**

A discussion and outline of landowner (also family if desired) goals and objectives for the property is necessary to define direction and to realistically assess the set of activities and practices that should be incorporated to integrate wildlife and habitat enhancement. Describe in detail what you want to do with the property. Is it for hunting, bird watching, preserving nature, etc.? Be specific with regards to what species or group of species you want to target and why, and how will your management impact those populations.

(Select one or more to guide the wildlife and habitat planning process, or create your own)

- Improve habitat for native game species (as designated in the Texas Hunting Guide)
- Improve habitat for native nongame species (those species not listed as game species, e.g., songbirds)
- Manage for habitat and wildlife diversity
- Restore, maintain or improve native habitats for wildlife diversity
- Generate revenue from native wildlife resources
- Improve habitat for rare native species
- Protect sensitive habitats or critical species

4. **Management Practices**

This is one of the most important sections of a WMP and the largest part of the paper. List and discuss each management practice you want to implement. For each practice that you choose, address intensity levels (discussed above) and the following question:

- a. What species are you targeting or impacting with the practice (songbirds, deer, etc)?
- b. How will the practice benefit the target species (improve habitat, increase population, etc)?
- c. How will the practice be conducted or performed (procedure)?
- d. When will the practice be conducted or performed (Time Schedule)?
- e. How often will the practice be conducted or performed (Time Schedule)?
- f. How much of the practice will be implemented (intensity), or acreage affected?
- g. Where, specifically on the property, will the practice be conducted or performed (Map)?

5. **Time Schedule**

Make out a general, tentative time schedule to give yourself some deadlines to work under. It's not practical to try and set an exact day or even week. Think in terms of months and seasons (spring, summer, fall, winter). Many of the management practices are most affective when performed during the proper time of the year (disking during the fall and winter). For each practice, list the season/month and year in which they are to be executed.

6. **Record Keeping**

In addition to the biological records that you are required to keep for the various management practices, also keep records on all the activities that you perform. Put in the plan that you will be collecting receipts (contract labor, leasing equipment, seed, etc). Keep all these records on file for future reference so that you can have documentation for possible site inspections by the appraiser. Take photographs of any habitat practices that you do prior to, during, and after implementation, or for any other type of practice that might alter the landscape (food plots). Mark on your map where these photos will be taken from and set a post at the site so that you can take the picture from the same point over time. Cameras that print the date on the photo would be beneficial.

7. **Map of the Property**

At the end of you plan, include a map of the property that shows the major vegetation types, the areas you intend to implement management practices, and what those practices are. Label or number the practices so that they correspond back to your Time Schedule. This will assist the appraiser in knowing when, where, and what management practices are being conducted. The map can be an aerial photo, topographic map, prepared on a computer, or hand drawn. Try to make it as neat and professional as possible given your available resources.

Don't be concerned that the WMP you are preparing is too long. It's important to fully analyze, organize, deliberate, and describe in detail what you want to do with your land and how you are going to do it. This thorough preparation will greatly assist you in carrying out your goals and objectives and give the appraiser confidence in approving your property for 1-D-1 Wildlife Management Property Tax Valuation.