

THE TEXAS WATER SOURCE

UPDATING FRANKLIN, TITUS, MORRIS, & CAMP CO. FOREST LANDOWNERS ON FORESTRY AND WATER ISSUES

What is a Wetland?

"Wetland" is a general term used to describe a variety of wet environments, such as marshes, wet meadows, bogs, bottomland hardwood forests and wooded swamps, which are transitional zones between open water and dry land. These areas provide many benefits, including:

- Filtering sediment and other pollutants
- Food and habitat for fish and wildlife
- Erosion control
- Floodwater storage
- Control of saltwater intrusion
- Timber production
- Recreational opportunities

Federal regulations define wetlands

as "those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions."

Wetlands possess three essential characteristics: (1) vegetation that will only grow in a wet environment; (2) soils formed under conditions of saturation and develop anaerobic conditions during the growing season; and (3) water is present either at or near the surface of the soil all year or for varying periods of time during the year, including the growing season (hydrology).

For more information:

- <http://texasforestservice.tamu.edu/BMP>
- <http://www.epa.gov/Wetlands/>

BMPs for Forested Wetlands

Forested wetlands are environmentally sensitive areas. Special attention to the proper use of Texas Forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs) is essential if water quality is to be protected while working in these areas.

Careful planning is an essential first step. Planning will assist in identifying sensitive areas to avoid, help minimize stream crossings, and identify the best locations for roads, skid trails and log sets. Planning will allow operations to be scheduled during dry periods to minimize adverse impact on soils and water.

Streamside Management Zones

(SMZs) - buffers of specially managed forest along the banks of water bodies - are particularly important in wetland areas. Timber may be logged carefully and selectively from within these areas.

Federal mandatory BMPs for road construction must be followed in jurisdictional wetlands.

The Texas Forest Service BMP Project has spent many years informing landowners, loggers and the general public about the use of forestry BMPs during forestry operations. These efforts have paid off as BMP implementation has increased across all ownership types.

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*Agency Spotlight***River Authorities in Texas****For more information:**

- <http://www.sulphurr.org>
- <http://www.sulphurriverbasinauthority.org/index.cfm>
- <http://www.sulphurriverbasinauthority.org/Regionalplanning/index.cfm>
- http://www.twdb.state.tx.us/mapping/maps/pdf/rasld_34x34.pdf

River authorities in Texas are agencies established by the State Legislature. They are created as conservation and reclamation districts with responsibilities to control, store, protect, and distribute the waters in their jurisdiction for useful purposes.

River authorities prepare and maintain a basin wide inventory and assessment of the available water resources to meet present and long-range water use planning, management, and protection needs for the public. They provide administrative and technical assistance to public entities in the areas of development, operation, and maintenance to meet the water resource needs to support economic growth of communities within the basin.

River authorities are governed by a Board of Directors, with some members being appointed by the Governor. Texas has 17 River Authorities.

The Sulphur River Basin Authority (SRBA) was established by the Texas Legislature in June of 1985. The Board of Directors held its first meeting in November of 1985 at the Mt. Pleasant

Chamber of Commerce. Since then, the Board has met regularly to conduct the business of the Authority. In July of 2002, the Authority opened its first permanent offices in Wake Village.

Under the Texas Water Development Board, Regional Water Planning Groups prepare regional water plans for their respective areas. The Sulphur River Basin is in the Region D / Northeast Texas Regional Water Planning Area. SRBA works in cooperation with the Red River, Sabine and Neches River Authorities in developing your regional water plan.

The Sulphur River basin includes all or part of Fannin, Hunt, Lamar, Hopkins, Red River, Franklin, Titus, Morris, Bowie, Cass and Delta counties. The headwater streams are the North and South Sulphur Rivers. These rivers originate in Fannin County. The Middle Sulphur converges with the South Sulphur at Cooper Lake. These rivers all converge and flow eastward into Wright Patman Lake and exit Texas south of the city of Texarkana. The Sulphur River Basin drainage area is approximately 3,558 square miles.

Clean Rivers Program**For more information:**

- <http://www.sulphurr.org/crpprogram.htm>
- <http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/nav/eq/textcleanriver.html>

In 1991, the Texas Legislature passed the Texas Clean Rivers Act. This legislation requires that water quality assessments be conducted for each river basin in Texas.

The Texas Clean Rivers Program (CRP) was implemented to maintain and improve the quality of surface water resources within each river basin in Texas. Using a watershed management approach, CRP partner agencies (generally the River Authorities) work with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to identify and evaluate surface water quality is-

sues and to establish priorities for corrective action.

The water quality assessments include a review of wastewater discharges; accumulation of nitrogen, phosphorus and toxic materials; biological health of aquatic life; aquatic life habitat assessment; pH and oxygen levels; sedimentation; water flow; and other factors that affect water quality within the watershed.

The Sulphur River Basin Authority has contracted with the TCEQ to be the CRP partner agency for the Sulphur River Basin.

Wetlands Reserve Program

Wetlands provide habitat for fish and wildlife, including threatened and endangered species; improve water quality by filtering sediments and chemicals; reduce flooding; recharge groundwater; protect biological diversity; and provide opportunities for educational, scientific, and limited recreational activities.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is accepting applications from landowners interested in wetlands restoration through the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP).

WRP is a voluntary program that provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners and Tribes to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands in exchange for retiring eligible land from agriculture.

“While Texas landowners have restored thousands of wetland acres through the program, changes made in the 2008 Farm Bill make WRP an even better investment,” said Don Gohmert, NRCS state conservationist for Texas. “The new program rules make it easier for landowners to enroll acres and provide a better system for assessing the value of the land enrolled.”

The 2008 Farm Bill changes the process for determining the easement value, directing NRCS to pay the lowest of:

- the fair market value of the land according to the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practices or an area-wide market analysis;
- the geographic area rate cap as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture; or
- the landowner’s offer.

WRP offers three enrollment options:

1. Restoration Cost-Share Agreement.

This is an agreement for a minimum of 10 years in duration to re-establish degraded or lost wetland habitat. NRCS pays 75 percent of the cost of the restoration activity. This does not place an easement on the property. The landowner provides the restoration site without reimbursement.

2. 30-Year Easement. This is a conservation easement lasting 30 years. Easement payments are 75 percent of what would be paid for a permanent easement. NRCS also pays 75 percent of restoration costs.
3. Permanent Easement. This is a conservation easement in perpetuity. NRCS pays for the easement, as well as 100 percent of the costs of restoring the wetland.

For both permanent and 30-year easements, NRCS pays all costs associated with recording the easement in the local land records office, including recording fees, charges for abstracts, survey and appraisal fees, and title insurance.

NRCS’s natural resources conservation programs help people reduce soil erosion, enhance water supplies, improve water quality, increase wildlife habitat, and reduce damages caused by floods and other natural disasters. Public benefits include enhanced natural resources that help sustain agricultural productivity and environmental quality while supporting continued economic development, recreation, and scenic beauty.

For more information about WRP or other NRCS programs, contact your local NRCS office:

Mt. Pleasant Service Center
1809 W. Ferguson Rd.
Mt. Pleasant, TX 75455-2957
(903) 572-5411

For more information:

- http://www.tsswcb.state.tx.us/files/docs/infoed/Con_News/2010WRPnewsrelease.pdf
- <http://www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/wrp/>
- <http://www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/>

Did you know...

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has many other cost-share programs for landowners? Check out future issues of *The Texas Water Source*.

Updating Franklin, Titus, Morris, & Camp Co. Forest
Landowners on Forestry and Water Issues

*Texas Forest Service offices
serving Franklin, Titus,
Morris, & Camp Counties:*

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(903) 856-7181
bpope@tfs.tamu.edu

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Distribution of *The Texas Water Source* is provided free of charge to forest landowners of Franklin, Titus, Morris, and Camp Counties. Funding has been provided through cooperation of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) and Texas Forest Service (TFS). PLEASE ADVISE US IF YOU WISH FOR YOUR NAME TO BE REMOVED FROM OUR MAILING LIST.

The Texas Forest Service is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer committed to Excellence Through Diversity.

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Contact Information

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Wake Village, Texas 75501

Phone: (903) 223-7887 Fax: (903) 223-7988

E-mail: nrsrba@cableone.net www.sulphurr.org

Northeast Texas Municipal Water District (Morris, Camp)

4180 FM 250 P. O. Box 955

Hughes Springs, TX 75656

Phone: (903) 639 - 7538 Fax: (903) 639 - 2208

E-mail: netmwd@aol.com www.netmwd.com

Franklin Co. Water District

112 N. Houston St. P. O. Box 559

Mount Vernon, TX 75457

Phone: (903) 537-4536 Fax: (903) 537-4538

www.fcwd.com/index.html

Titus Co. Fresh Water Supply District #1

P. O. Box 650

Mt Pleasant, TX 75456-0650

Phone: (903) 572-1844 Fax: (903) 572-0164

www.titushistory.com/govt_tcfwsd1_01.html



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