

Guidelines for Wildlife Management

Updated **3-23-20** also available on comanchecad.org

Wildlife Management is the exact - same tax break as agricultural valuation. However, instead of producing food or fiber as a prudent farmer or rancher, you would focus on wildlife management.

The land size has to meet the qualifications outlined below and has to have the prior five year history of use in agriculture to convert to wildlife management. **You cannot use wildlife management to qualify for agricultural appraisal but** Wildlife Management is an agricultural practice, so if you decide to go back to agricultural valuation, contact the Appraisal district office for the necessary forms to change the use.

It sounds very easy, but it is not. First you have to look at your property and develop a wildlife management plan that would show what you are doing now and you will identify the elements you will add to your plan for the next 6 years. **The appraisal staff in this office cannot help you fill out the applications or write your management plans. We encourage you to seek assistance from a biologist at the TPWD.**

Wildlife Contacts

Name	Title	Address	Phone
James Edwards James.Edwards@tpwd.texas.gov	Private Lands Biologist	DeLeon, TX	(254) 979-6010
Dean Marquardt dean.marquardt@tpwd.texas.gov	Technical Guidance Biologist	Granbury, TX	(254) 654-0255
Nathan Rains Nathan.Rains@tpwd.texas.gov	Wildlife Diversity Biologist	917 Hemphill Dr. Cleburne, TX	(817) 641-3367
Kevin Mote Kevin.Mote@tpwd.texas.gov	District Leader	PO Box 113 May, TX	(254) 842-5917

http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/landwater/land/habitats/cross_timbers/regulatory/?county=comanche

You may still hunt on your property and graze livestock. The property's agricultural value remains the same as that of traditional ag value and your tax liability will not change due to wildlife management.

Landowners who purchased property that is currently appraised for agricultural use and the current size of the tract January 1 of the preceding tax year hasn't changed may switch to wildlife management without minimum acreage or wildlife use requirement applied to property.

Landowners who have purchased property that has reduced in size since January 1 of preceding tax year are subject to the wildlife use requirement to qualify for wildlife.

Comanche falls within the Cross Timbers and Prairies Region. The Comanche Central Appraisal District wildlife management use requirements for an individual tract is 95%, a tract located within a wildlife management property association is 92% and a tract located within an area designated by TPWD as habitat is 92%. The formula for calculation of the wildlife use requirement expressed as a percentage is subtract 1 from the total acres in the tract and divide the result by the total number of acres in the tract $(x-1) / x =$ wildlife use requirement.

Visit our website, call or come by the Appraisal District to obtain an application for 1-d-1, Open Space Agricultural Appraisal. **Indicate wildlife management as the primary use of the land and submit this form with a comprehensive plan (we recommend a 6-year plan) between January 1 and May 1 of the tax year.**

If the plan is filed by a management association or by 1 owner of an undivided interest property 1 owner must sign the plan if an agent is not designated and detail management activities on each tract.

Based on your property, you identify target animals (deer, turkey, quail, dove, song birds, ducks, etc.). Once you have your primary species, you identify at least three of seven qualifying items to do for primary species. Owner must be engaging in 3 of the 7 wildlife management activities to qualify:

1. Habitat Control (Management)
2. Erosion
3. Predator Control (Management)
4. Providing Supplemental Supplies of Water
5. Providing Supplemental Supplies of Food
6. Providing Shelter
7. Making Census Counts to Determine Population(Yearly)

Comprehensive Wildlife Management Planning Guidelines for our ecoregion is provided at the TPWD website. http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/landwater/land/private/agricultural_land/epxt2010/

A Wildlife Management Plan will include:

Property Description

Map with size & location

Soil map or types of soil

Plants & Trees already located on this specific property

Map [identifying key locations of feeders, food plots, water, path, brush piles, prescribed burn areas (with years identified), etc.]

Target Animals

Wildlife currently there and what you want to accomplish

Land usage [grazing, fishing, hunting, etc. described]

Detailed description of the following (if they apply to goals or current use)

Supplemental food

What feed? Feed for what animal? Map with feeder locations.

How many feeders? All year? How much? How often?

Food plots? Where? When? Every year?

How do you plant? (no till)?

Mineral supplements? Grazing management?

Supplemental shelter

Nest boxes, bird houses, brush piles, half-cutting trees??

Supplemental water

New pond being built? Marsh development or enhancement?

Other types of watering methods?

Habitat control

Grazing management, prescribed burning, range enhancement (re-seeding),

Brush management, fence modification, etc.

Erosion control

Pond repair, gully shaping, dike, water diversion

Plant establishment on erodible areas

Predator control

Identify who the predator is

Describe how you are controlling this predator

Keep records on the kills and include in annual report

Census counts

Helps to gauge management's success. Describe how you will conduct your census each year (spotlight counts, game cameras, aerial counts, harvest data collection & record keeping, browse surveys, roost counts, time/area counts, call and covey counts).

We need to understand what is already done, what you plan to do next year, and the 4 year (long term) goals you plan to accomplish.

Signature, Date and Phone Number for contact**TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE--WILDLIFE PLAN LINK:**

http://tpwd.texas.gov/publications/pwdforms/media/pwd_885_w7000_open_space_agric_valuation_wildlife_mgmt_plan.pdf

APPLICATION VERIFICATION

After the initial application for this special valuation and new plan submission the Deputy Chief will verify both forms are signed by owner or by 1 owner of undivided interest property if no agent is designated. Deputy Chief will verify 3 activities are selected for primary species, send NEW Wildlife letter certified, scan to property & code all property in the plan to have an appraiser from the CCAD inspect the property the next year to verify activity in 3 of the 7 uses listed above. The appraiser will send a Wildlife Inspection Letter by certified mail to inspect properties to verify activity in 3 of the 7 uses listed above. During the inspection the following year the appraiser will fill out the "Wildlife Management Field Inspection Check List" and verify 3 management practices have been completed. **If 3 practices have not been completed then the special valuation will be denied and the property will be supplemented and valued at market value for the year that was erroneously allowed the special evaluation.**

All properties will be inspected during the routine drive out at least once every 3 years. The appraiser will send a Wildlife Inspection Letter by certified mail to inspect properties to verify activity in 3 of the 7 uses listed above. If owner fails to schedule appointment or if 3 practices have not been completed then the special valuation will be denied.

Comanche CAD prefers the owner or manager is present for this inspection. The appraiser will fill out the “Wildlife Management Field Inspection Check List” and take a few photos for verification. The law allows the Appraisal District to request additional information if necessary to determine qualification.

If the application is approved it will be coded with a property group code WLM (year) and the general land type will be changed to WLM. This will not affect the market or productivity type.

Every year during the plan it is a requirement to submit an annual report detailing actions taken to implement wildlife management throughout the year. If the report is filed by a management association all members in the association must sign the report. If report is filed by 1 owner of an undivided interest property and an agent is not designated 1 owner must sign the report. **If the annual report is not filed by April 30th productivity appraisal will be denied and notification will be sent by certified mail. If it is filed before appraisal roll is certified and approved it will be subject to a penalty of 10% of the difference between the amount of tax imposed on property at ag value and amount that would have been imposed if taxed at market value PTC 23.541(a & b).**

TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE ANNUAL REPORT LINK:

http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/landwater/land/private/agricultural_land/

The chief appraiser must gather and consider all the surrounding facts to determine whether the land is primarily used to manage wildlife. Some relevant questions include:

- Is the owner implementing an active, written wildlife management plan that shows the owner is engaging in all the activities necessary to preserve a sustaining breeding population on the land?
- Do the owner's management practices emphasize managing the population to ensure its continued existence over another use of the land? For example, does the owner refrain from allowing visitors on the land in years when the habitat is sensitive?
- Has the owner engaged in the wildlife management practices necessary to sustain and encourage growth of the population? In some cases, an owner must control predators and supply water when water is not adequate, supply shelter and food when natural food production is not adequate, and establish vegetation to control erosion. In other cases, less active management may maintain and encourage the growth of wildlife.
- Are there improvements — appropriate fencing for example — necessary to control or sustain the wildlife population? The owner may use land for purposes that are secondary to the primary use of wildlife management if the secondary use is compatible with the primary use. General principles of primary and secondary use are discussed in the *Manual for the Appraisal of Agricultural Land*.
- Is fencing typical in the area for managing the target population, and what is the typical population size.
- How many of the following activities are typical in the area (or are typical for the area during some parts of the year): habitat management, predator management, erosion control, providing supplemental supplies of food or water, providing shelter, and engaging in census counts. Because wildlife management activities are elements of the degree of intensity determination, the owner must be engaging in three of seven principles of the degree of intensity test are discussed in the *Manual for the Appraisal of Agricultural Land*.

**Adopted by the Comanche Central Appraisal
District Board of Directors, March 26, 2020.**