

Planning for Wildlife

Forests of all types and ages provide important habitat for wildlife. If wildlife habitat for hunting or other personal enjoyment is one of your objectives, there are many things you can do. Your choice of harvest and regeneration options will influence the type of game and non-game wildlife in your forest. Here are some simple ways to enhance wildlife habitat:



- **Provide wildlife corridors** or buffers to give wildlife safe refuge across your property.
- **Grow plants** or mast-producing trees that provide food for wildlife.
- **Maintain SMZs** to protect fish and other aquatic species.
- **Create edge habitat** and food supply for wildlife by keeping individual forest stands of the same age relatively small.
- **Leave den trees** for mammals and cavity-dwelling birds as well as snags for birds of prey.

Species of Special Concern

As a landowner, it's important to be aware of plant and animal species and ecological communities that are designated as "imperiled or critically imperiled, threatened, or endangered" and how forest management activities on your land may affect these species and communities. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (www.tpwd.state.tx.us) can provide information on species of concern in your area. The Nature Conservancy (www.nature.org) and NatureServe (www.natureserve.org) have additional information on species and communities of concern.



Protection of Special Sites

The Sustainable Forestry Initiative encourages landowners to protect special sites on their property. Special sites are areas that are ecologically, geologically or culturally important. Unique areas of ecological importance may include natural springs, old growth bottomland hardwood areas and prairies. Special geologic features may include river bluffs, cliffs, limestone outcroppings or large ravines to name a few. That strange mound on your property may be a Native American burial mound or perhaps there is an old historic cemetery existing on your land. Information about ecological special sites can be found in the Species and Communities of Concern in Texas insert. Additional information on geological special sites can be found at www.geology.sfasu.edu/. Contact your County Historical Commission www.thc.state.tx.us/cty_commissions/CountyContacts.aspx for more information on local sites of cultural significance.

Invasive Species

Invasive species are species that have been brought to this country and either purposely or inadvertently released. They establish themselves within small forest openings and forest road rights-of-way and have the ability to spread rapidly and colonize new habitats. They are introduced into these areas through ornamental plantings, movement of contaminated farm machinery and inadvertent livestock escape. Without control measures, invasive species have the potential to negatively affect forest productivity.

Some examples of invasive species in Texas include Chinese tallow tree, Japanese climbing fern, Cogongrass and Privet (pictured). More information on these species and other common invasive plants and animals found in Texas can be found at www.texasinvasives.org



Working for Texas Forests

Since 1995, the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI)[®] program has existed to promote the perpetual growing and harvesting of trees in a way that is compatible with the protection of wildlife, plants, and soil and water quality.

In Texas and all across North America, SFI program participants adhere to a set of principles that address how they operate on their own lands and how they conduct procurement practices across all ownerships. Collectively and individually, SFI members promote the practice of sustainable forestry on all lands by funding logger and forester education and encouraging landowners to manage their forests sustainably.



Want More Information?

For more information or to request a comprehensive SFI Landowner Information Packet, call Texas Forestry Association at 1-866-TXTREES, email tfa@texasforestry.org or visit the TFA website at www.texasforestry.org. Additional resources are available through the Texas Forest Service website at <http://txforestservice.tamu.edu> or by calling the local Texas Forest Service office in your area.



Growing Your Assets

A Forest Planning Guide for Landowners



Private landowners like you own more than 65 percent of Texas forests. Decisions you make affect the value of your property, but also have many positive benefits for the economy and the quality of life in Texas. The SFI Implementation Committee of Texas understands and values the contributions of family forest owners and wants to provide you with resources that will help you sustain your forests today and for the future.

Start With a Plan

You plan for your vacation, your investments, your retirement, but have you taken time to develop a plan for your forest?

1. **Consider your objectives.** Are you interested in immediate and sustained income, wildlife habitat, recreation, retirement or even savings for college for a child or grandchild?
2. **Get help.** Get planning help from a professional forester or qualified resource professional and ask for a Texas Pro Logger when ready to harvest. They can help you plan for regeneration and harvesting and ensure that your plan complies with voluntary guidelines and state and federal regulations.
3. **Develop a plan.** Proper management helps your forestland gain value over time. Protect the value of your land with a plan that provides for reforestation, responsible harvesting and Best Management Practices (BMPs) to protect water and soil quality. Once you develop a plan, be sure to stick with it!

Tree farmers who manage lands in much the same fashion as other farmers – replanting, applying management principles, and with stewardship – will be rewarded with forests that are valuable and productive in the long run.



Plan for Regeneration First

A regeneration plan should come first in planning. If you wait until after harvest to plan regeneration, you could incur additional and unnecessary expense or have less than desirable results. Your options include:

Harvest Methods

Seed Tree

Good for regenerating pine and hardwood when the seed trees are of good form. Leave 10 to 20 evenly distributed seed trees per acre. Seed trees are typically removed after successful regeneration.

Shelterwood

Even-aged stands regenerate beneath the shade provided by mature trees from the previous stand. Good for naturally regenerating certain softwoods and hardwoods, such as southern pines or oaks.

Clearcutting

Recommended when you want to upgrade stand quality, such as planting genetically improved pine or naturally regenerating hardwood species like oak. Generates the highest one-time income.

Single-tree selection

Also known as selective harvesting or uneven-age management, this method relies on natural regeneration and is used to manage both pine and hardwood. Although visually more attractive, harvest income per acre is usually less.

Thinning

This practice removes some of the lower-value

trees in a stand to promote growth of the remaining healthy and vigorous trees. Thinning generates early income, promotes stand health, reduces wildfire risk and enhances wildlife browse.

Aesthetic Considerations

When harvesting, consider visual impact. You can often make a timber harvest more aesthetically pleasing by considering the size, shape and placement in your plan. When clearcutting, a strip of trees can be left as a visual buffer along the highway. All trash, oil and lubricant containers must be properly stored and removed following harvest.

Get advice from a professional forester or qualified resource professional BEFORE making decisions about harvesting or regeneration and choose a Texas Pro Logger when you're ready to harvest.



BMPs Can Protect Your Land

Any land-disturbing activity, from construction to timber harvesting, has the potential to negatively impact soil and water quality. Texas BMPs for forestry are designed to prevent or minimize the impacts of forestry activities on your land. Some of the most critical BMP guidelines address streams and road construction. They include:

- **Streamside management zones** (SMZs) or buffer strips of trees left along streams, lakes and wetlands are designed to filter runoff and maintain shade along waterbodies.
- **Erosion control measures** for roads and skid trails, such as water bars, wing ditches, and grass cover can reduce washouts.
- **Proper stream crossings** including the placement and installation of bridges, culverts, or fords to minimize environmental impacts to streams.
- **Waste disposal** recommendations for discarding oil and trash when servicing heavy equipment in the woods.



All of these and more are addressed in detail in the Texas BMP Manual for Forestry. To request a copy call the Texas Forestry Association at 1-866-TX-TREES.