



**USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
State Technical Committee
Meeting Agenda
September 24, 2025
9:00 – 12:00**

**USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Grassland Soil and Water Research Laboratory
808 E. Blackland Road, Temple, Texas**

9:00-9:15	Registration	
9:15-9:35	Welcome – Announcements – Overview of Meeting-Introductions	Charles Kneuper
9:35-9:40	Agency Updates	Kristy Oates
9:40-9:45	Natural Resources Conservation Service, State Conservationist	Dan Hunter
9:45-9:50	Farm Service Agency	James Redfield
	Rural Development, State Director	
9:50-10:05	Farm Bill Updates	Stacy Riley
10:05-10:20	NRCS	Jeff Dudensing
	FSA	
10:20-10:30	Break	
10:30-10:50	Subcommittee Reports	Committee Representatives
	AFO/CAFO	Darren Turley
	Easement	Stephen Rockwood
	Forestry	Jason Raines
	Grazing	Dr. Jeff Goodwin
	Water Resources	Tina Hendon
	Wildlife	Cyndee Watson
10:50-11:50	Open Discussion	
	Comments and open discussion	All
11:50-12:00	Closing comments/Adjourn	Kristy Oates

**** Written agenda item comments are encouraged.**

Agenda is subject to minor adjustments.

Charles Kneuper, State Resource Conservationist, called the State Technical Committee (STC) to order at 9:15 a.m. on September 24, 2025, in Temple, Texas.

Present for the meeting were 43 STC members and 17 Texas NRCS staff.

Agency Updates:

Kristy Oates, State Conservationist Texas NRCS:

- Provided update of current Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) activities and successes.
 - Locally-led voluntary based conservation will continue
 - Natural disaster recovery efforts Hill Country Flood event July 4 impacting 30 counties
 - Watershed operation, rehabilitation, Emergency Watershed Protection update
 - FY26 positive changes for reducing complexity and administrative workload for farmers to get conservation on the ground quicker
 - Promoted Conservation Stewardship Program opportunities
 - Importance of partnerships
 - New technologies will be incorporated

Dan Hunter, State Director, Farm Service Agency (FSA):

- Supplemental Disaster Relief Program (SDRP) - 38000+ applications filed; \$503 Million
 - SDRP sign up target starts October 2025
 - Webpage: fsa.usda.gov/sdrp
- Emergency Commodity Assistance Program (ECAP) - 34000+ applications filed, \$713 million
 - Expanding eligibility
 - Notify producers by email or postcard
 - September 30th deadline to submit an application.
- Emergency Livestock Relief Program (ELRP)
 - Eligible counties with 2023 and 2024 flood and wildfire losses
 - 128 counties with flood losses
 - 17 counties with wildfire losses
 - Deadline to apply Oct 31st, 2025
- Farm Loan Program

James Redfield, State Director, Rural Development (RD):

- Provided update of staffing currently has 61 employees.
- \$14 billion dollars invested in Texas \$2.8 B in FY 25
- Funding dates have closed

Farm Bill updates:

Jeff Dudensing, FSA

- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) updates:
 - Sign-ups
 - General sign-up 64 – 12,201 acres
 - Continuous sign-up 63 – 46,720 acres
 - Grasslands sign-up 207 – 47,084 acres
 - Active Enrollment
 - General: 8,965 contracts; 1.3 million acres; \$50.1 million
 - Continuous: 2,851 contracts; 304,000 acres; \$13.1 million
 - Grasslands: 1,413 contracts; 457,000 acres; \$7.8 million
 - Haying and Grazing – Livestock owners affected by flooding. Available until March 1, 2026
- Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) Updates – 21 disaster sign-ups across 64 counties.

Stacy Riley, NRCS

- RCPP update:
 - Currently have 13 active projects in Texas (2 of these are Alternative Funding

- Arrangements)
 - Expect National Funding Opportunity for new proposals in FY 2026
 - FY 2025 Accomplishments
 - \$323,116 payments for LMR Contracts
 - Entity Held Easements closed covering 11,341 acres
- FY25 Financial Assistance Accomplishments
 - EQIP- 2753 new contracts
 - CSP- 174 new contracts
 - WRE/WREP
 - Closed 11 Parcels covering 4686.49 acres
 - Entity Held Easements
 - Closed 12 Parcels covering 20,846.88 acres
 - Issued Over \$656 million in Farm Bill 2018 payments directly to farmers, ranchers, and forest stewards.
- Discussed Priority Practices for FY26
- Provided proposed FY26 sign-up deadlines
 - ☆ **Question:** *Are priority practices shared/communicated with LWG??*
 - ☆ **Answer:** *Provided to local staff and posted on website and posted on payment schedule. Clarification that High priority practices are statewide and not with individual LWG.*
 - ☆ **Question:** *For RCPP FY25, will rescinded proposals receive preference?*
 - ☆ **Answer:** *At this time we do not know.*
 - ☆ **Question:** *Regarding timeline for early Notice of Funding Opportunity (NFO) for RCPP?*
 - ☆ **Answer:** *Will be part of the announcement, typically there are national potential partner meetings after NFO comes out. Contact John Adams.*

Subcommittee Updates:

Easement – Stephen Rockwood

- Reviewed and provided comments on wetland restoration guidelines to Lori Olsen and William Blackwell. Lots of comments with eligibility criteria, and allowable practices.

Forestry – Jason Raines

- Recommendations:
 - Change payment scenarios to include mobilization fees vendors are charging.
 - Regarding forest stand improvements, pulp wood prices have not risen in 15 years. Landowners having to pay to remove wood, recommend conservation practices forest stand improvement and woody residue treatment to be added as high priority practices.

Grazing Land – Joseph Johnson

- Small landowners are struggling to find prescribed burn contractors.
 - Recommend small acreage scenario for prescribed burning.
- Contracting TSPs
 - Recommend reducing number of modifications needed to utilize TSPs
- Grazing practices should support multi species
 - Recommend maximizing flexibilities with grazing practice on grazing operations.
- Issues with New World Screwworm.
 - Recommend NRCS being proactive with management practices.

Water Resources – Tina Hendon

- Recommendations:
 - Continue with priority areas with Source Water Protection
 - Prescribed Grazing and Restoration of Rare and Declining Natural Communities be high priority practices.

Wildlife – Cyndee Watson

- Developing guidance for priority species list.
- Technical guidance for Golden-cheeked warbler and Houston toad.
- Technical guidance on grazing for WRE.
- Request High Priority Practices: 338, 643, 645, 646, 383, 394, 666, 649, 384, 390, 391.

Open Discussion

Made committee aware of National Agriculture Statistics Service is surveying 23,000 farmers, looking at conservation activities on cropland.

Kyle Wright: Discussed wetland on-site and off-site methods. Working through process of updating, no recommended changes to on-site method but recommending changes to off-site method. Still asking for comments from state technical committee.

Question: *What other subcommittees?*

Answer: *AFO/CAFO, agronomy, irrigation, urban. These did not have report.*

Question: *How many DRP and how does it affect historic levels for NRCS?*

Answer: *Some gaps in field office staffing, but number wise not low as we have been. NRCS is covering vacant offices with staff from neighboring or zone offices. FSA has been able to bring in some temp employees but working through the process to meet the needs.*

Question: *Any positive news about getting into FY26 and asked about furlough?*

Answer: *We do not know until we get to FY26. FSA in same situation.*

Question: *Question regarding payment scenarios?*

Answer: *Still a lot of unknowns. We have not seen any payment schedules. Still in the region with Oklahoma. May reduce some scenarios. Looking to be faster, better, quicker to get conservation out the door. No idea on the timeline. Streamlining will happen this FY26.*

Question: *Are there areas that state technical committee members can assist local staff?*

Answer: *Sharing information on program opportunities and providing education within your networks. Supporting local workgroup meetings.*

Kristy provided closing comments.

Meeting adjourned – 10:57 a.m.



Farm Service Agency
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



FSA Program Updates

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FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
FSA | NRCS | RMA | Business Center

Supplemental Disaster Relief Program (SDRP) Stage One

- 38,000+ applications filed
- \$503 million
 - Cotton: \$320.6 million
 - Corn: \$45.9 million
 - Wheat: \$36.3 million
 - Grain Sorghum: \$24.7 million
 - Annual Forage: \$23.7 million



Supplemental Disaster Relief Program (SDRP) Stage Two

- Signup start targeted for October 2025
- Assistance for:
 - Uncovered losses
 - Non-indemnified shallow losses
 - Quality losses
- SDRP Webpage
 - fsa.usda.gov/sdrp

Emergency Commodity Assistance Program (ECAP)

- 34,000+ applications filed
- \$713 million disbursed
 - Cotton: \$414.2 million
 - Corn: \$70.5 million
 - Wheat (Multi-Use): \$63.0 million
 - Sorghum: \$53.3 million
 - Wheat: \$51.8 million



Emergency Commodity Assistance Program (ECAP)

- Expanding eligibility to subsequent acres
- Eligible producers notified by email or postcard
- September 30 deadline to submit application

Emergency Livestock Relief Program (ELRP)

- FSA has determined eligible counties with 2023 and 2024 flood and wildfire losses
 - 128 counties eligible for flood losses
 - 17 counties eligible for wildfire losses
- Payments up to 60% of calculated feed cost for:
 - one month for a qualifying wildfire;
 - three months for a qualifying flood
- Livestock producers can receive assistance for one or both years and for multiple qualifying disaster events.
- Deadline to apply: Oct. 31, 2025

Farm Loan Program Portfolio

Direct Loans

- Total Borrowers: 3,698
- Operating: \$151.5 million; 3,505 loans
- Ownership: \$543.0 million; 2,550 loans

Guaranteed Loans

- Total Borrowers: 730
- Operating: \$115.5 million; 541 loans
- Ownership: \$249.9 million; 441 loans





Farm Service Agency
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Program Updates



FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
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Conservation Reserve Program Sign-Up (SU) Results



General SU 64: 12,201 acres



Continuous SU 63: 46,720 acres



Grasslands SU 207: 47,084 acres

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

Active Enrollment*

General CRP

- Contracts: 8,965
- Acres: 1.3 million
- Annual Rent: \$50.1 million

Grassland CRP

- Contracts: 1,413
- Acres: 457,000
- Annual Rent: \$7.8 million

Continuous CRP

- Contracts: 2,851
- Acres: 304,000
- Annual Rent: \$13.1 million

*Estimated; as of Sept. 18, 2025

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Haying and Grazing

Eligibility

Livestock owners affected by flooding:

- Complete form CCC-576 part A and B; or
- Provide a written statement on how operation was impacted by flooding

CRP participants:

- May provide haying and grazing rights to affected producers statewide
- Regardless of active haying or grazing provisions
- All CP12 and CP38 acreage (except acreage with grazing prohibitions)
- Acreage also eligible for non-emergency haying and grazing

Available until March 1, 2026.

Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)



21 disaster sign-ups across 64 counties

Hurricane: 1

Tornado: 4

Wildfire: 4

Flood: 6

Severe Storm: 6



Total Assistance: \$20 million+

Hurricane: \$291,000

Tornado: \$1.3 million

Wildfire: \$16.6 million

Flood: ~\$1.5 million

Severe Storm: ~\$900,000

Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)

County	Payments
Hemphill County	\$5.9 million
Roberts County	\$4.7 million
Hutchinson County	\$3.2 million
Red River County	\$1.4 million
Gray County	\$975,000
Wheeler County	\$961,000
Lampasas County	\$917,000
Cooke County	\$825,000

County	Payments
Lamar County	\$712,000
Potter County	\$600,000
Denton County	\$434,000
Gillespie County	\$426,000
Matagorda County	\$185,000
Carson County	\$178,000
Kaufman County	\$169,000
Ochiltree County	\$151,000

County	Payments
Bell County	\$426,000
Limestone County	\$315,000
Runnels County	\$282,000
Williamson County	\$223,000
Lipscomb County	\$185,000
Palo Pinto County	\$178,000
Clay County	\$106,000

Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)

Texas Hill Country Flooding

- Sign-up ongoing in 20 counties

Burnet	Coke	Concho	Gillespie	Kendall
Kerr	Kimble	Lampasas	Llano	Mason
Maverick	McCulloch	Menard	San Saba	Schleicher
Sutton	Real	Tom Green	Travis	Williamson

- Application deadline extended to Oct. 31, 2025

Disaster Designations

Presidential Disaster Designations

- 16 primary counties
- 40 contiguous counties

Secretarial Disaster Designations

- 115 primary counties
- 78 contiguous counties



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Questions?



FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
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Natural Resources Conservation Service
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Texas NRCS Programs Update For State Technical Committee September 2025

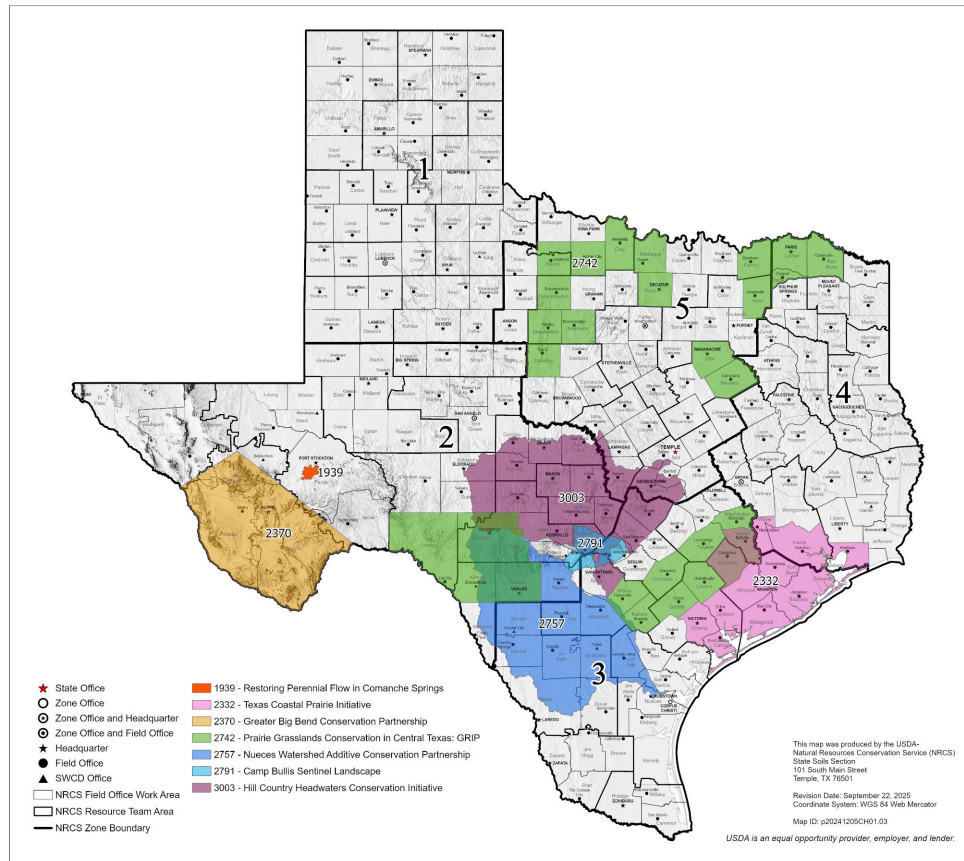
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RCPP Update

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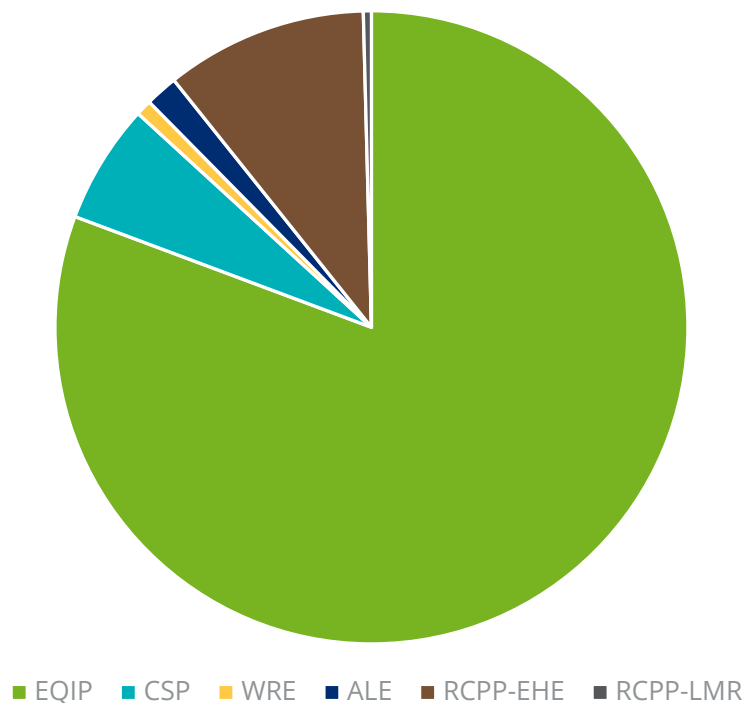


NRCS Texas RCPP



FY 2025 Farm Bill Financial Assistance & Easements 9/23/2025

Financial Assistance Dollars

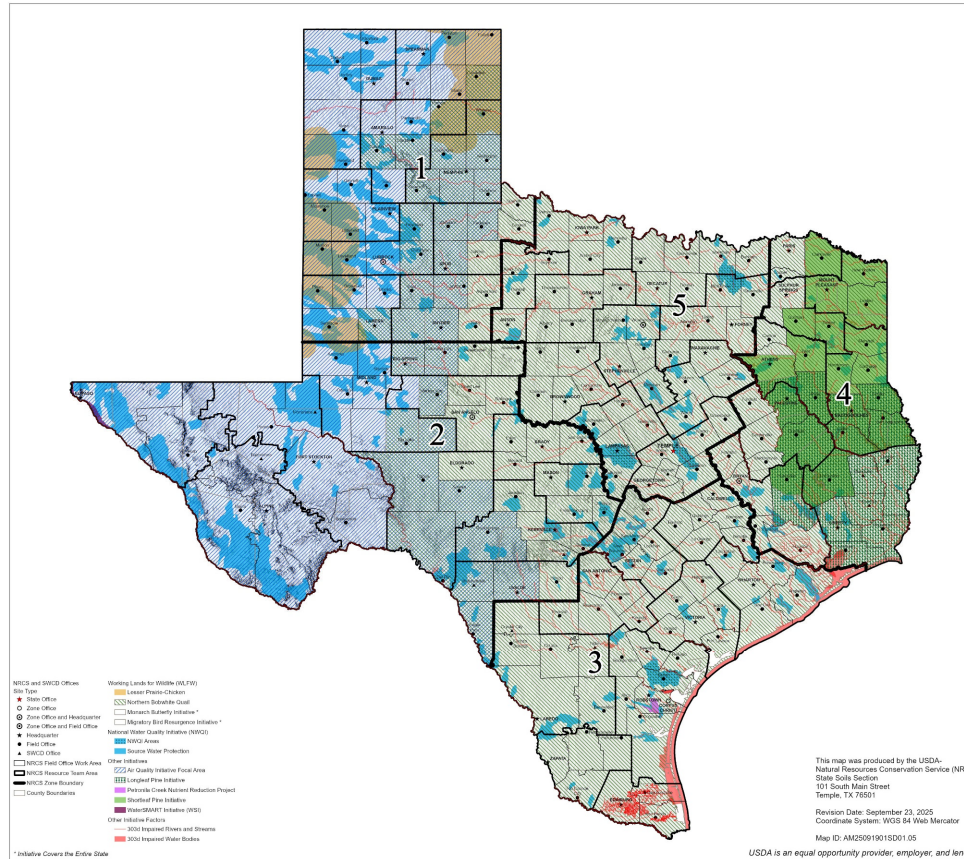


FY25 Financial Assistance Accomplishments

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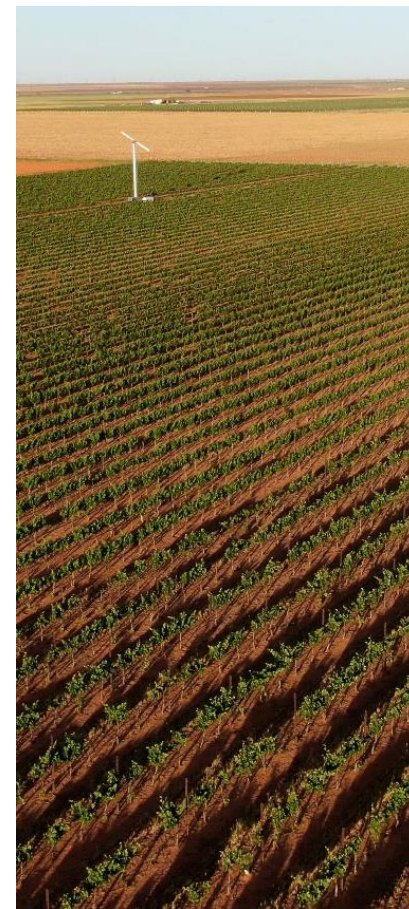


NRCS Texas Conservation Initiatives



Priority Practices FY 2026

- Address specific causes of ground or surface water impairment
- Address the conservation of water and declining aquifers and mitigate drought
- Meet other environmental priorities
- Practices that have high potential for conservation benefit but underutilized
- Practices with an underutilized practice purpose



FY 2026 Proposed Sign up Deadlines

- EQIP: November 7, 2025
- CSP: November 7, 2025
- ACEP Farm Bill: December 5, 2025
 - ALE (General and GSS), WRE, WREP
- RCPP: to be determined by Lead Partners



Questions?

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Water Resources Subcommittee

Report to the Texas State
Technical Advisory Committee

September 24, 2025



Source Water Protection

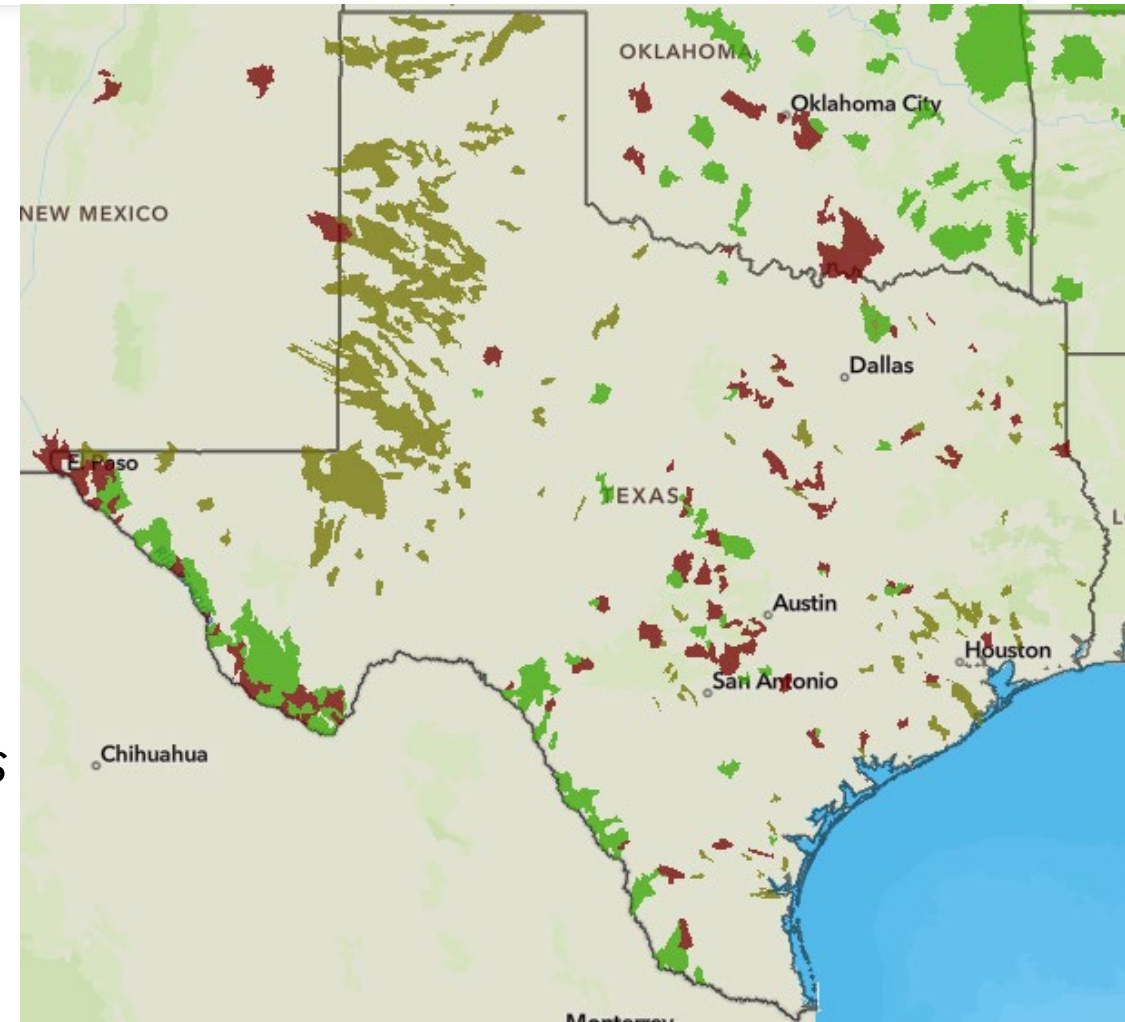
- Subcommittee met on July 2nd
- Recommendations for the FY26 proposal for Source Water Protection Areas (SWPA).

Source Water Protection

Resource Concerns

- 💧 Water Quality
- 💧 Water Quantity
- 💧 Both

*Water Resources Subcommittee
recommends continuation of efforts
in these areas.*



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High Priority Practices

Support for

- CP 528 Prescribed Grazing
- Wildlife Subcommittee's recommendation that CP 643 *Restoration of Rare and Declining Natural Communities* be added to the Priority Practices list

A vertical strip on the left side of the slide featuring a close-up, high-speed photograph of blue water with white foam and ripples, creating a dynamic, textured appearance.

Questions?

Fish and Wildlife Subcommittee Update

**Cyndee Watson
NRCS STC Fish and Wildlife
Subcommittee Chair**

**State Coordinator for Texas
Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program
cyndee_watson@fws.gov**

Fish and Wildlife Subcommittee

- Role – we serve in an advisory capacity to provide information regarding pressing wildlife concerns in Texas to the State Conservationist for her consideration.
- The subcommittee met in-person on September 11, 2025 at TPWD HQ. In total, 20 people were in attendance and several noted that they appreciated the quality of in-person conversation and interaction.

Subcommittee Discussion

During our meeting, we had several discussions resulting in the following tasks:

- CSP Enhancement 646 C&D technical guidance
- CSP Enhancement 644A – priority locations
- Priority species lists
- Technical guidance for Golden-cheeked warbler and Houston toad
- Technical guidance on grazing as a management tool for WRE with lessons learned from CRP

Formal Requests

Based on our discussions, we respectfully request consideration of the following CPs for inclusion in the High Priority Practice List because they are important to wildlife:

338 - Prescribed Fire (maintains grasslands and forest systems)

643 - Restoration of Declining Communities

645 - Upland Wildlife Habitat Management

646 - Shallow Water Development (important for waterfowl)

383 – Fuel Break (supporting practice for 338)

394 - Fire Break (can serve as early successional habitat)

666 - Forest Stand Improvement (improves habitat quality)

649 - Structures for Wildlife

384 - Woody Residue Treatment (part of habitat restoration process)

We also consider CP 390 and 391 to be important to wildlife because they

- restore riparian habitats.

Thanks on behalf of the Fish and Wildlife Subcommittee

