Developing Your Wildlife Management Plan

Heidi K. Bailey
Regulatory Wildlife Biologist
TPWD
STEP 1: DOCUMENT VITAL STATS

- Name of property (e.g. Dry Creek Ranch, Bailey Tract, etc.)
- County the property is located in
- Owner(s) name(s)
- Address
- Phone numbers (work, home, cell, fax)
- Land manager contact information (if applicable)
Proposition 11
Wildlife Management PLAN

Where do I want to go with my property?
Proposition 11
Wildlife Management PLAN

Where do I want to go with my property?

How am I going to get there?
Proposition 11
Wildlife Management PLAN

Where do I want to go with my property?

How am I going to get there?

STEP 2: ESTABLISH GOALS & OBJECTIVES
STEP 2: ESTABLISH GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Maintain agricultural property tax valuation!
- What wildlife/habitats/vegetative communities am I interested in managing for?
Deer?

Big Bucks?
Wild Turkey?

Dove?

Quail?
Songbirds?
Native Prairie?

Hardwood Forest?
Greatest Diversity?

Karl H. Switak

Tim Zurowski
Feral Hogs?
Feral Hogs?

NOT!!!
STEP 2: ESTABLISH GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Maintain agricultural property tax valuation!
- What wildlife/habitats/vegetative community am I interested in managing for?
- Do I have multiple goals or objectives?
Multi-purpose or multi-species management?
What other plans/interests do you have?
REALITY CHECK

What you have to work with to begin with (acreage, habitat types, soil types, time, $$$, etc.) will largely help you to determine what goals and priorities are realistic.
For example, 15 acres of
So….establish a detailed and REALISTIC goal/set of goals.

Example: “To manage native habitats to improve the quality and quantity of white-tailed deer for lease-hunting”

- Increase deer food and cover to increase deer utilization.
- Manage deer population to increase production of mature bucks.
- Harvest of only mature (4.5 years+) bucks
- Maintain buck/roe ratio of 1:3 or better
- Maintain carrying capacity of 1 deer: 20 acres
...and a nongame example might be:

“To improve recreational bird watching opportunities by creating and maintaining nesting, feeding, and breeding habitat suitable for native bird populations, with special emphasis on grassland species.”

- Improve vegetative diversity throughout the property.
- Reintroduce native warm season grasses to pastures.
…and yet another example:

“To improve and enhance the habitat for white-tailed deer, wild turkey, bobwhite quail, and other game and nongame wildlife in conjunction with running a successful cow-calf operation.”
Plan Development

- Back to the Computer!
- Research the “Wildlife Tax Valuation Informational CD”
- Print off a blank WMP form PWD 885-W7000
STEP 3: PROPERTY INFORMATION

- How many total acres is the property?
- What types of vegetative communities/habitat types are on the property?
  - Divide the total acreage out into estimated amounts of each habitat type.
  - Example: 40% upland pine/hardwood forest, 35% Bermudagrass pasture, 15% native pasture, and 10% water (lake and ponds).
  - OR, if possible, give actual acreage amounts of each habitat type.
SOME EXAMPLES OF HABITAT TYPES

- Improved Grassland (Tame Pasture)
- Unimproved Grassland (Native Pasture)
- Bottomland Hardwood Forest
- Pine Plantation
- Upland Mixed Pine/Hardwood Forest
- Oak Woods
- Riparian Zone
- Wetland/Marsh
- Cultivation (Ag. Crops, Food Plots)
STEP 3: PROPERTY INFORMATION

- How many total acres is the property?
- What types of vegetative communities/habitat types are on the property?
- Species targeted for management?
- Is the property high fenced?
STEP 3: PROPERTY INFORMATION

- How many total acres is the property?
- What types of vegetative communities/habitat types are on the property?
- Species targeted for management?
- Is the property high fenced?
- Is the property leased for hunting?
STEP 3: PROPERTY INFORMATION

- How many total acres is the property?
- What types of vegetative communities/habitat types are on the property?
- Species targeted for management?
- Is the property high fenced?
- Is the property leased for hunting?
- Property location.
  - Be as detailed as possible. (e.g. “In central Henderson County, 6 miles NW of Athens on the north side of CR 3913)
  - Provide a surveyor’s plat or a map, if available.
STEP 4: CURRENT HABITAT DESCRIPTION

- Where in the county is the property?
STEP 4: CURRENT HABITAT DESCRIPTION

- Where in the county is the property?
- What ecoregion is the property in? (e.g. Blackland Prairie, Post Oak Savannah, Pineywoods, etc.)
STEP 4: CURRENT HABITAT DESCRIPTION

- Where in the county is the property?
- What ecoregion is the property in? (e.g. Blackland Prairie, Post Oak Savannah, Pineywoods, etc.)
- What vegetation is associated with the various habitat types on your property?
  - Do-it-yourself vegetative inventory
  - County soil map from NRCS (old SCS)
What’s in a soil map?

- Soil types
- Detailed description of each soil
  - acidity
  - permeability
  - erosion hazard
  - available water capacity
  - wildlife habitat potential
  - general land management recommendations
What’s in a soil map?

- Soil types
- Detailed description of each soil
- Common native vegetation for each soil type
- Farming and planting recommendations
- Information on the best places (soil types) to plant food plots, create ponds/wetlands, etc.
STEP 4: CURRENT HABITAT DESCRIPTION

- Where in the county is the property?
- What ecoregion is the property in? (e.g. Blackland Prairie, Post Oak Savannah, Pineywoods, etc.)
- What vegetation is associated with the various habitat types on your property?
- What are the predominant soil types on your property?
STEP 4: CURRENT HABITAT DESCRIPTION

- Where in the county is the property?
- What ecoregion is the property in? (e.g. Blackland Prairie, Post Oak Savannah, Pineywoods, etc.)
- What vegetation is associated with the various habitat types on the property?
- What are the predominant soil types on the property?
- What water features (if any) are there on the property?
STEP 5: PAST HISTORY OF LAND USE

- How long has the property been under current ownership?
- What had the land been used for previously?
  - Farming
  - Grazing
    - Cows, horses, goats, exotics?
    - How many head?
  - Timber production
  - Hunting
    - How heavy was past hunting pressure?
STEP 6: PLANNED USE

“Wildlife management for recreational use; to be valued under 1-d-1(w) wildlife management use appraisal.”
STEP 7: PLANNED MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES AND PRACTICES

- Habitat Control
- Erosion Control
- Predator Control
- Providing Supplemental Water
- Providing Supplemental Food
- Providing Supplemental Shelter
- Census Counts to Determine Populations
STEP 7: PLANNED MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES AND PRACTICES

- HABITAT CONTROL
  - Grazing Management
  - Prescribed Burning
  - Range Enhancement
  - Brush and Timber Management
  - Riparian Management and Enhancement
  - Prescribed Control of Species
  - Wildlife Restoration
STEP 7: PLANNED MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES AND PRACTICES

- EROSION CONTROL
  - Pond Construction
  - Gully Shaping
  - Streamside, Pond, Wetland Restoration
  - Native Plant Establishment on Erodible Areas
  - Dike/Levee Construction/Management
  - Establish Water Diversion
STEP 7: PLANNED MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES AND PRACTICES

- PREDATOR CONTROL
  - Predator Management
  - Feral Hog Control
  - Imported Red Fire Ant Control
  - Control of Brown-headed Cowbirds
  - Grackle/Starling Control
STEP 7: PLANNED MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES AND PRACTICES

- PROVIDING SUPPLEMENTAL WATER
  - Mash/Wetland Restoration or Development
  - Well/Trough/Windmill Overflow
  - Spring Development or Enhancement
  - Wildlife Water Guzzlers
STEP 7: PLANNED MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES AND PRACTICES

- PROVIDING SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD
  - Grazing Management
  - Prescribed Burning
  - Range Enhancement
  - Food Plots
  - Feeders and Mineral Supplementation
  - Managing Improved Pastures, Fields, Croplands
  - Transition Mgmt. of Tame Grass Pastures
STEP 7: PLANNED MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES AND PRACTICES

- PROVIDING SUPPLEMENTAL SHELTER
  - Nest Boxes/Bat Boxes
  - Brush Piles
  - Fence Line Management
  - Hay Meadow, Pasture, and Cropland Mgmt. for Wildlife
  - Half-cutting Trees or Shrubs
  - Woody Plant/Shrub Estab.
  - Natural Cavity/Snag Development
STEP 7: PLANNED MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES AND PRACTICES

- CENSUS COUNTS TO DETERMINE POPULATIONS
  - Spotlight Counts
  - Daylight Wildlife Counts
  - Harvest Data Collection and Record-Keeping
  - Browse Utilization Surveys
  - Song Bird Transects and Counts
  - Point Counts
  - Track Counts
In order for a landowner to qualify for the 1-d-1(w) wildlife management use appraisal they must implement and complete a minimum of one management practice from at least three of the seven wildlife management activities each year.
STEP 8: SPECIFIC HABITAT MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

- Flesh out what exactly you plan on doing.
  - Which management practices under which of the seven management activities are planned.
  - Timeline?

- List target indigenous species.

- Be detailed.
STEP 9: DOCUMENT EVERYTHING

- Turn in new Wildlife Management Plan annually or whenever changes are made.
- If required, turn in Prop 11 Activity Reporting Form to tax office every year.
- Save receipts.
- Take pictures.
- Make maps of planned project areas.
STEP 10: HAVE FUN WITH IT!