

ECOLOGICAL REGIONS OF TEXAS



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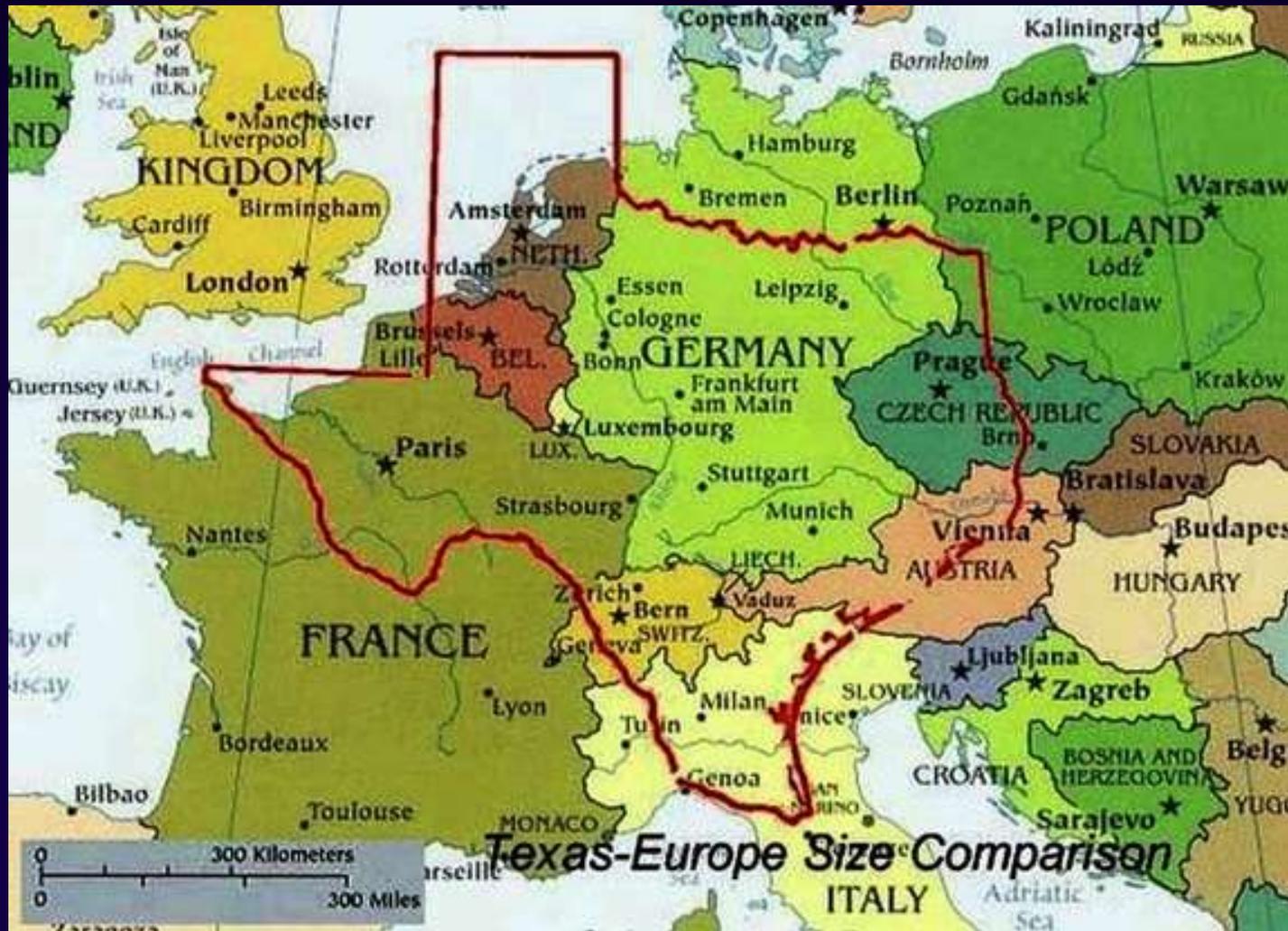
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Typically an area comprised of similar soils and vegetation types that occurs within a consistent weather regime (temperatures, precipitation, etc.)

TEXAS



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Texas is a big state!



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266,807 square miles

~15 hours to drive east-west and/or north-south



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Wide Range of Vegetative Growing Conditions



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growing season from ~145 days in the north to ~334 days in the south

8 inches of rain west, 56 inches to the east

tremendous habitat diversity



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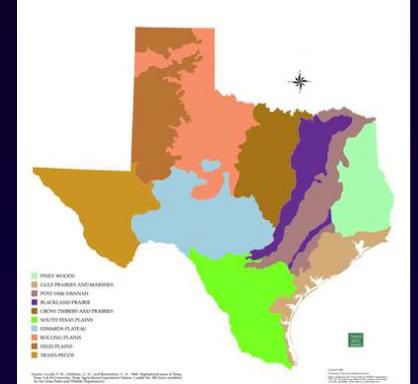
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Habitat Diversity Leads to Wildlife Diversity



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> 540 species of birds (3/4 of all species found in the US)

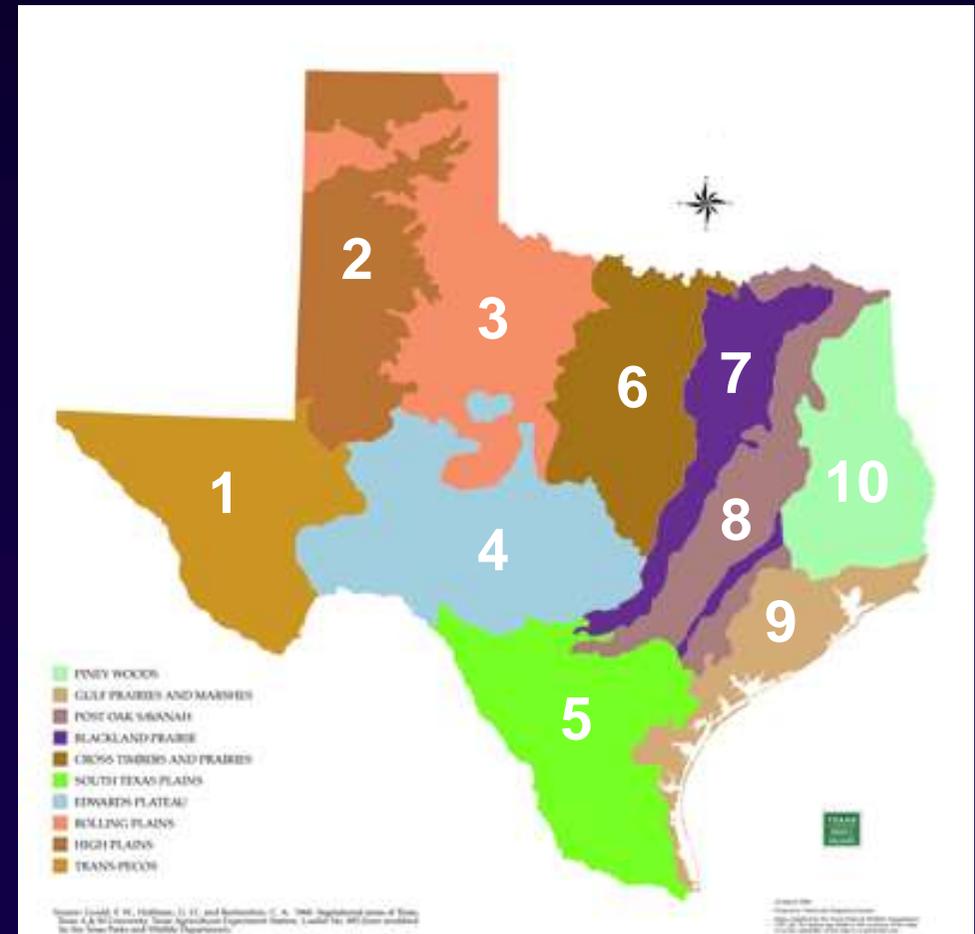
> 180 species of mammals

> 100 species/subspecies of snakes

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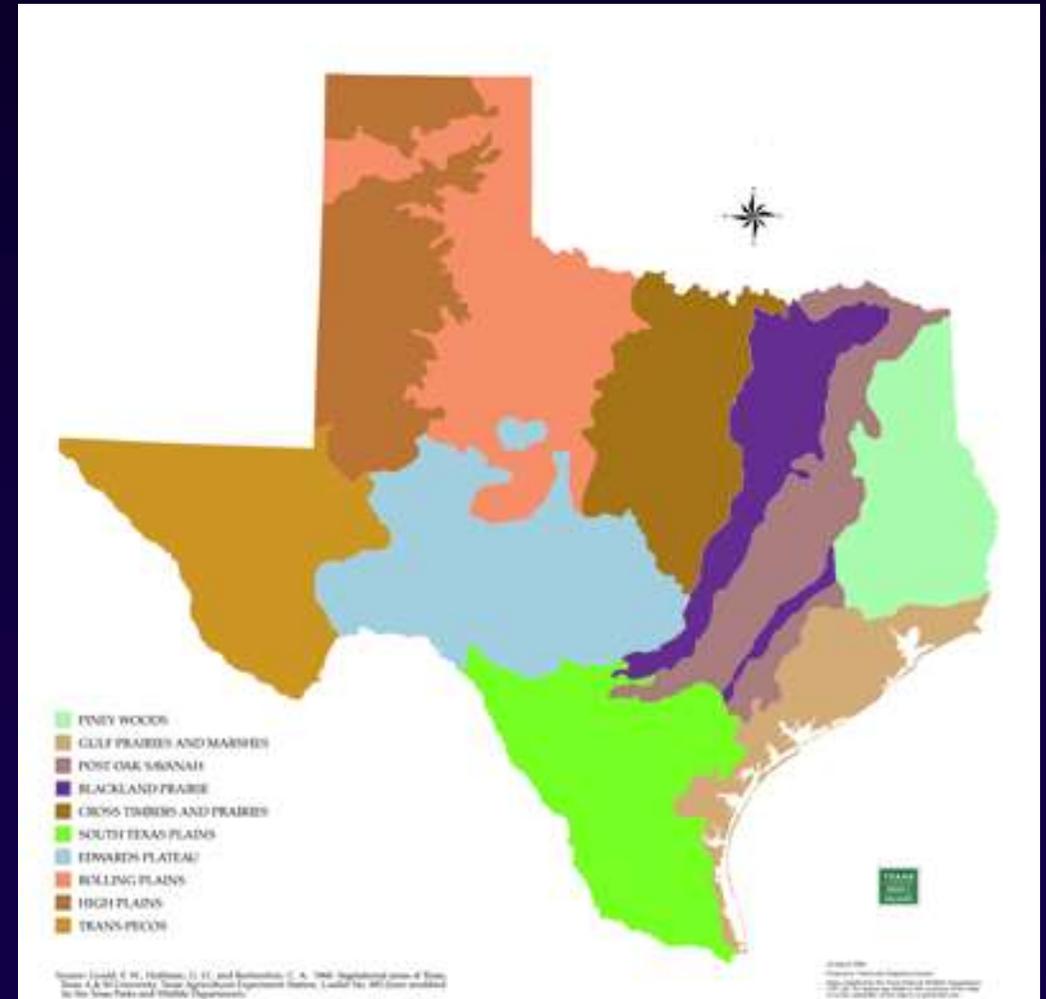
For the most part, Texas can be broken down into 10 different and distinct ecological regions

1. Trans-Pecos
2. High Plains
3. Rolling Plains
4. Edwards Plateau
5. South Texas Plains
6. Crosstimbers and Prairies
7. Blackland Prairies
8. Post Oak Savannah
9. Gulf Prairies and Marshes
10. Pineywoods



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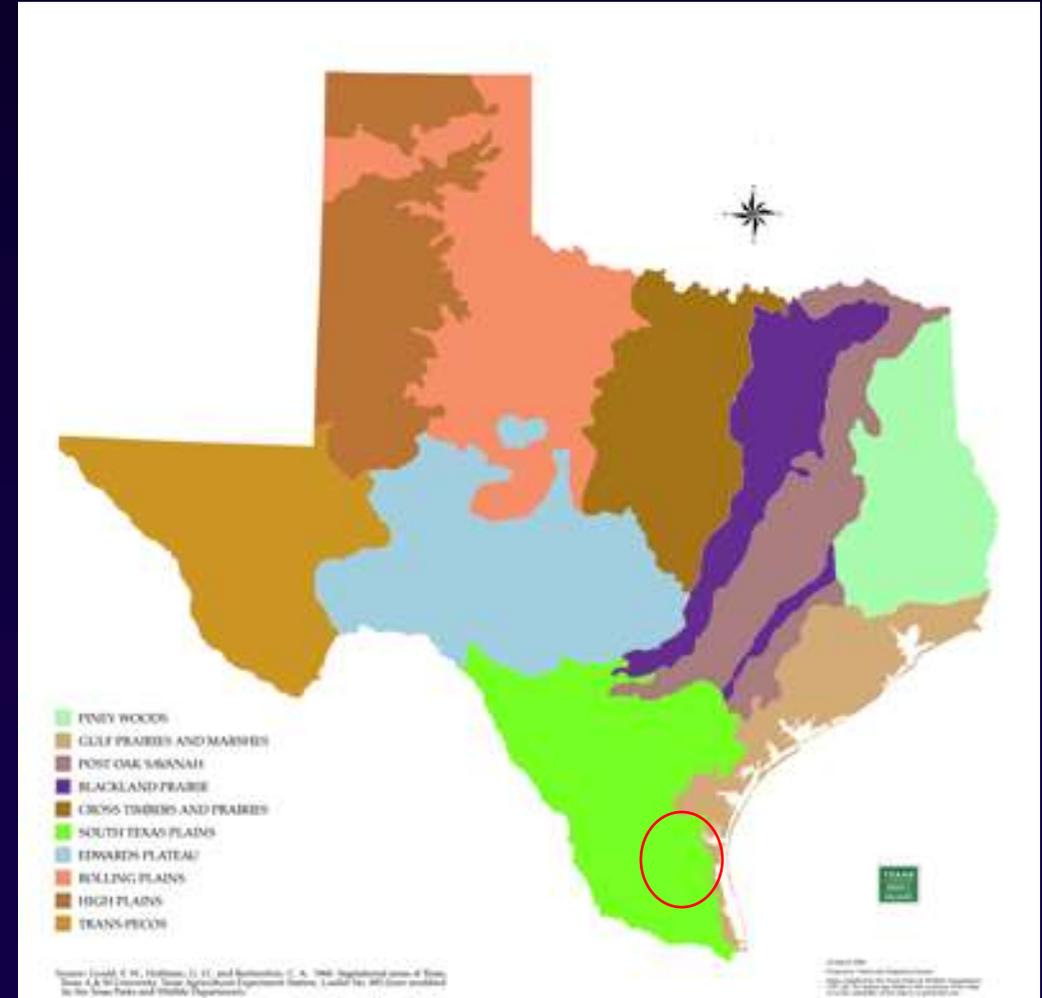
Several of these can be further subdivided based on geologic, soil, or vegetative features



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Coastal Sand Plain



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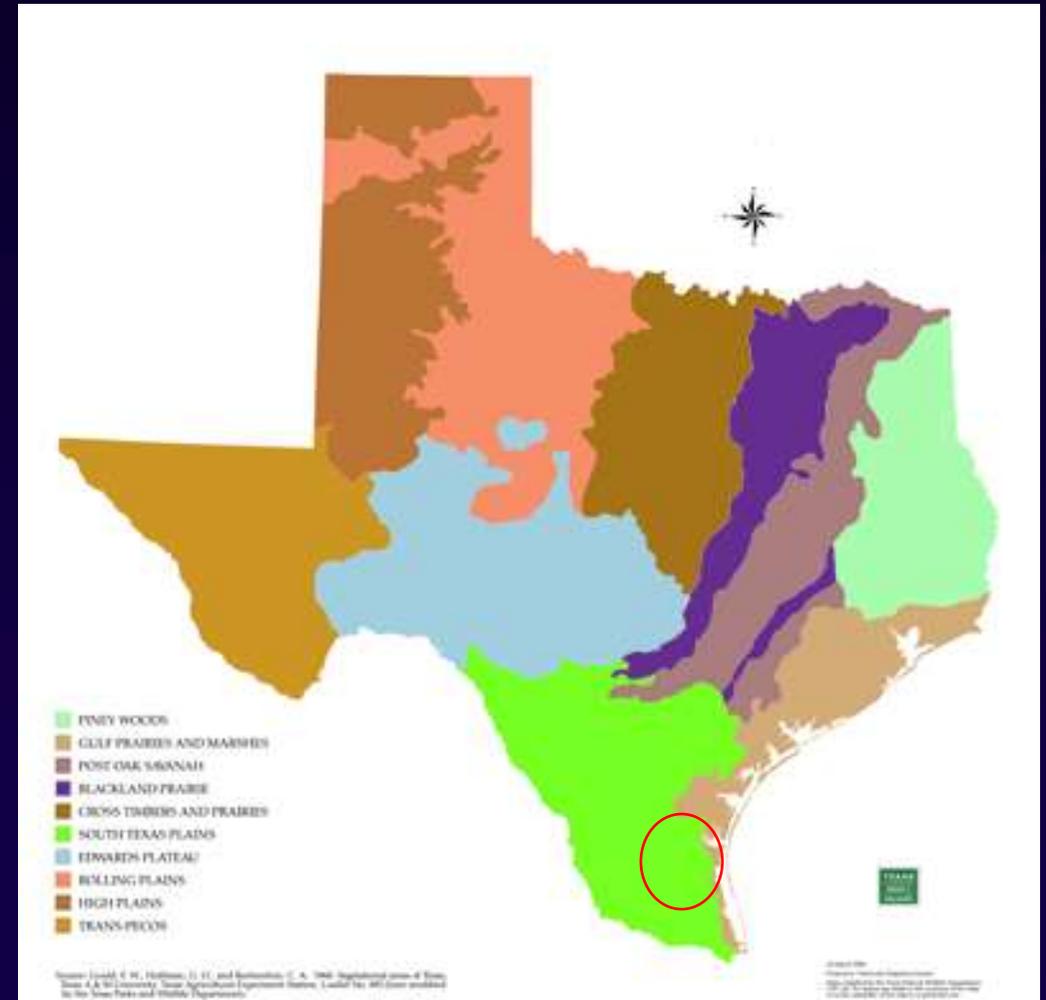
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Coastal Sand Plain

King Ranch

Grassland system interspersed with oak mottes

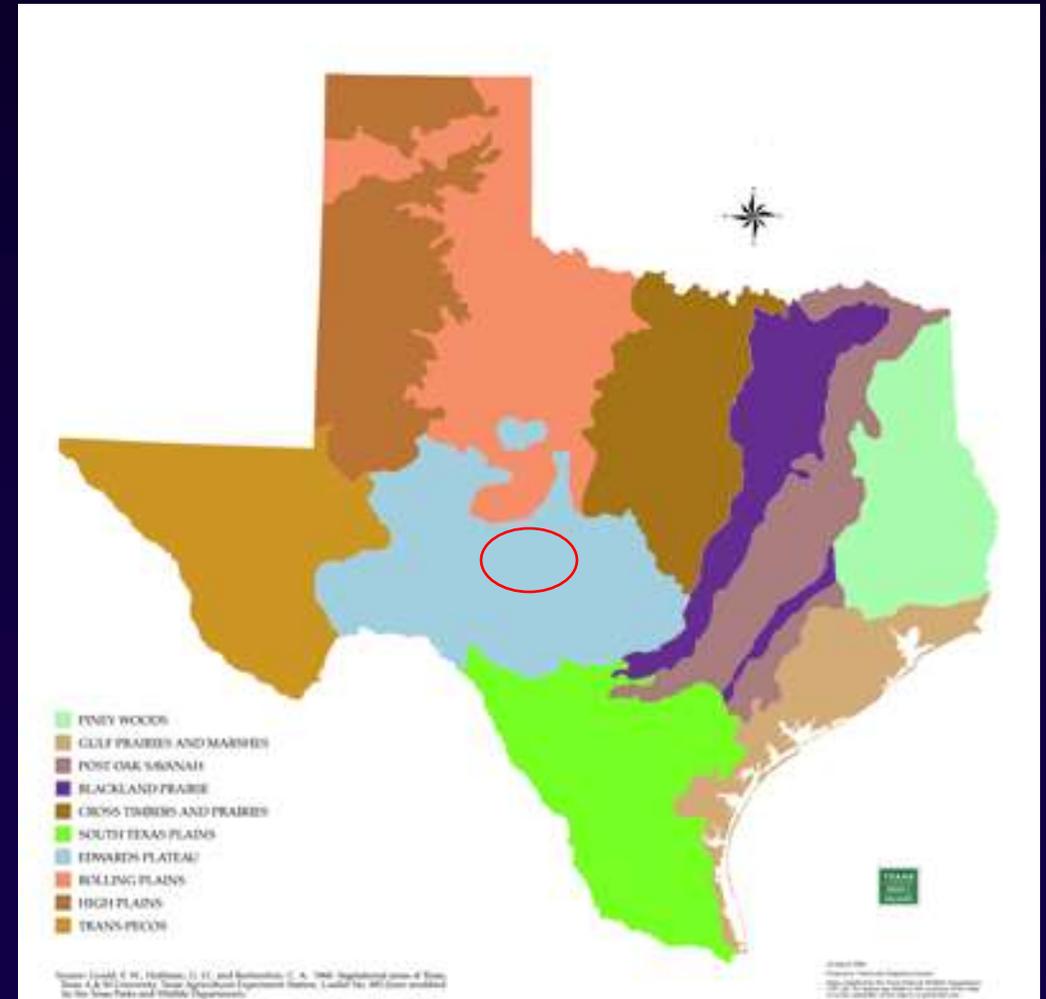
Only 1 of 3 coastal hyper-saline lagoons in the world



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Llano Uplift



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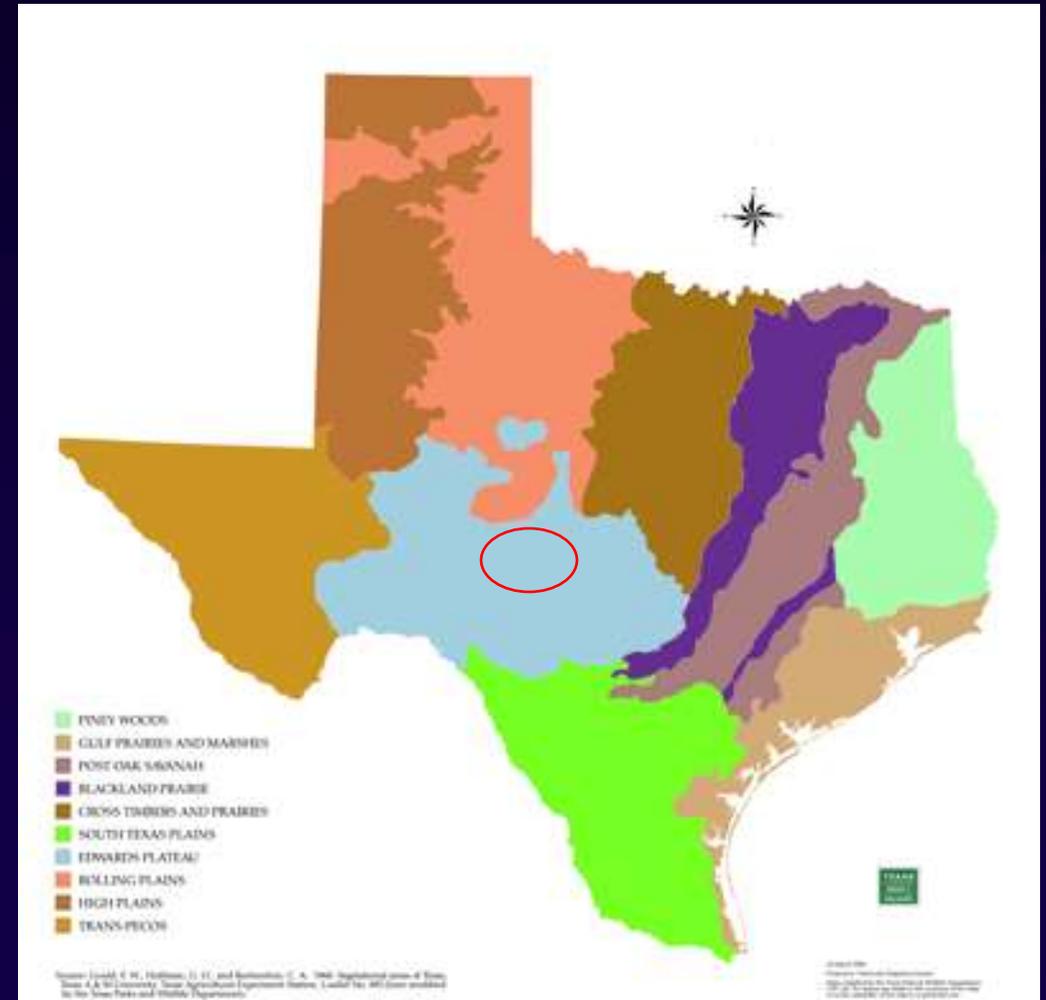
Llano Uplift

Geologic formation

Granite mass with unique minerals and features

Oak savannah with juniper encroachment

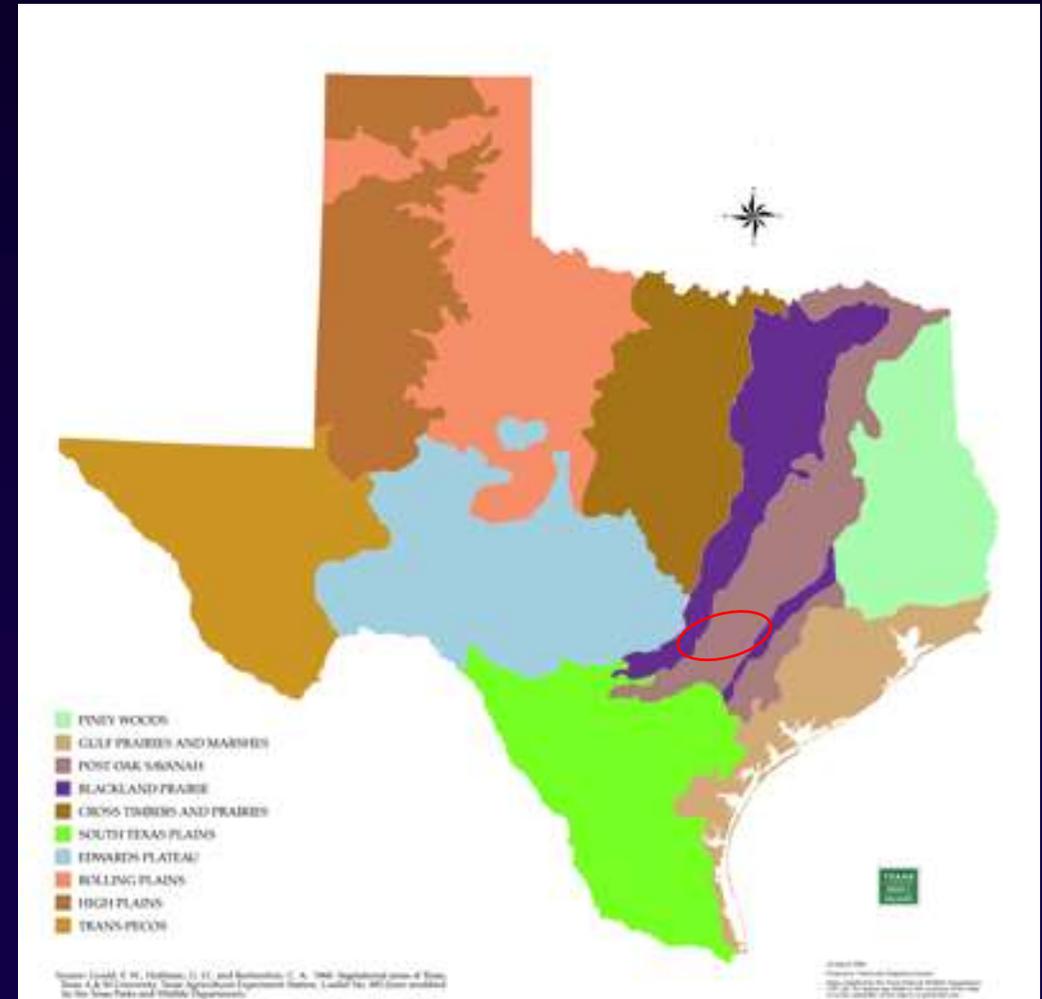
Highest deer densities in the state



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Lost Pines



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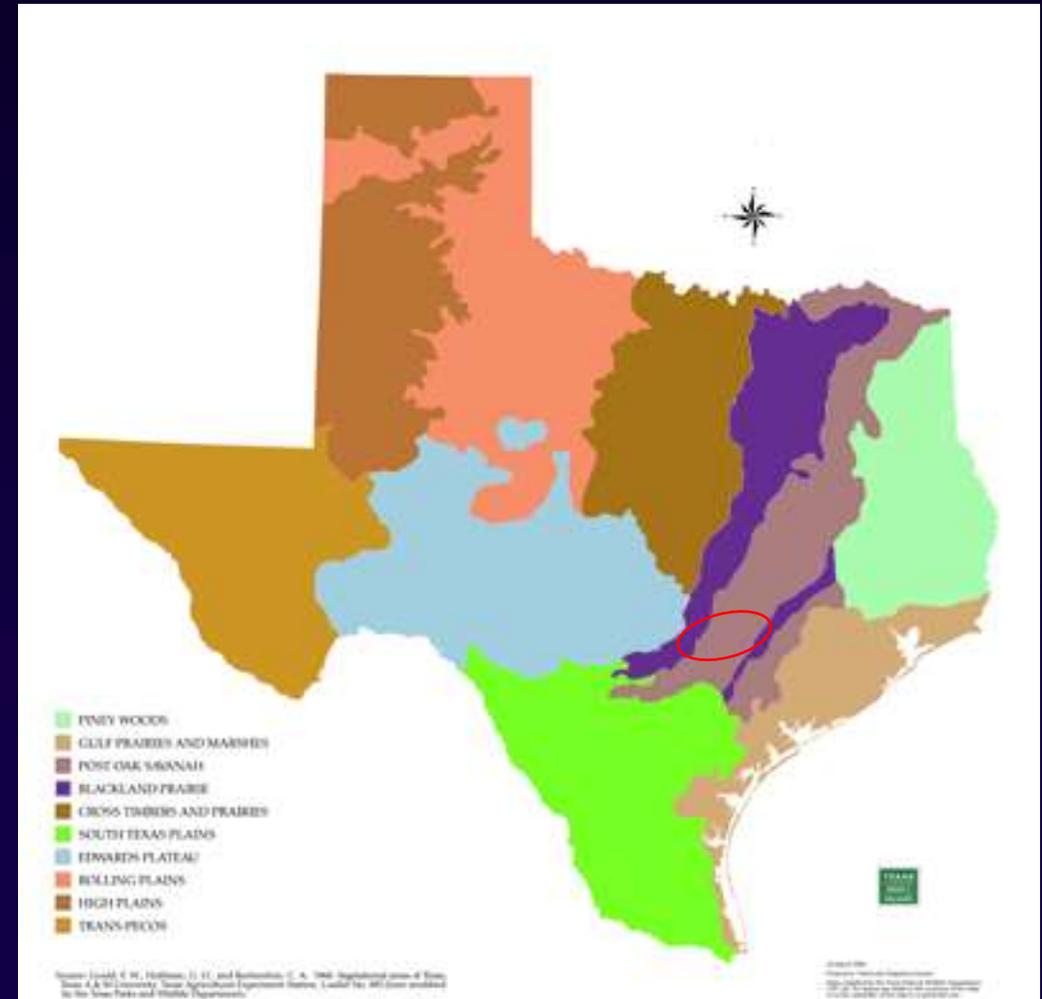
Lost Pines

Belt of loblolly pines

Disjunct, >100 miles from genetically-related Pineywoods

Extensively logged in the 1800's but still largely intact today

Houston toad



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Llano Estacado



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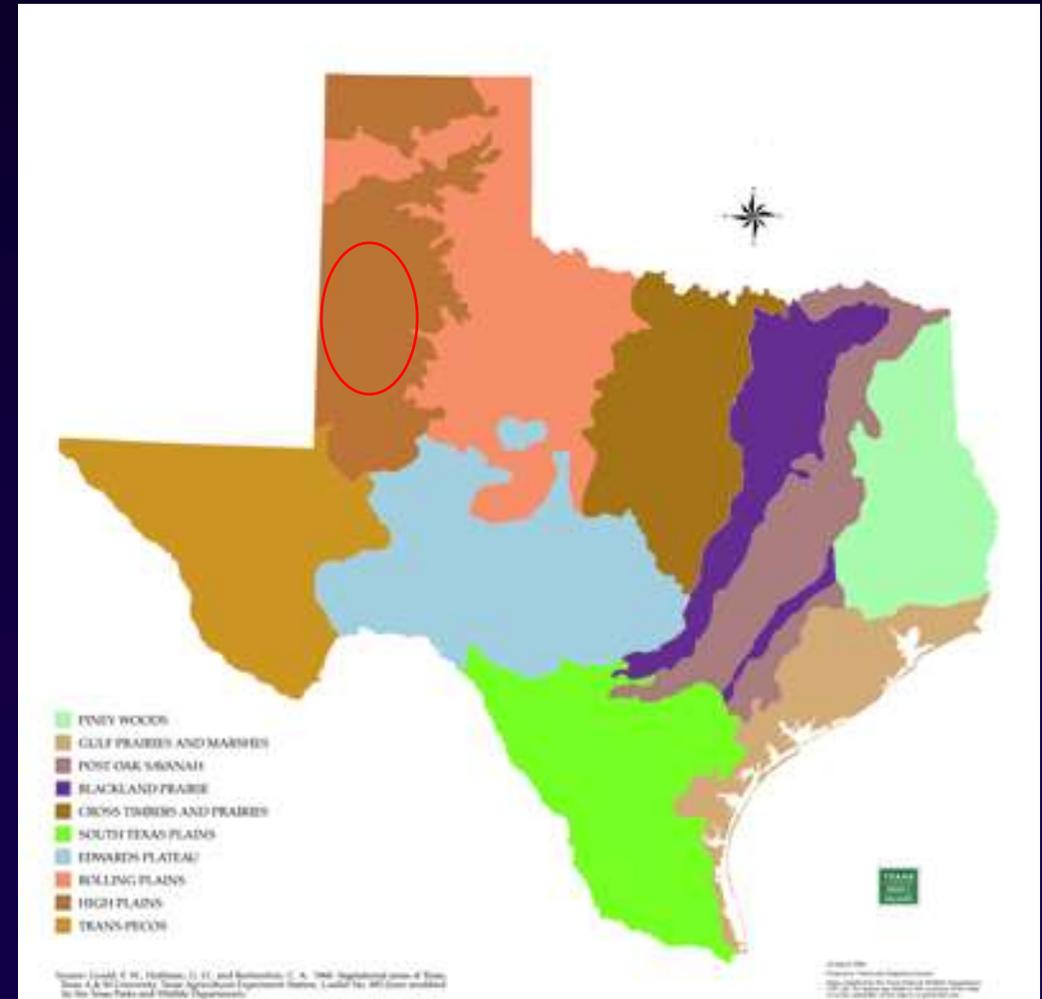
Llano Estacado

One of the largest mesas in North America

Uniformly sloped at 10 feet per mile

Dotted with playa lakes, important wintering habitat for waterfowl shorebird species

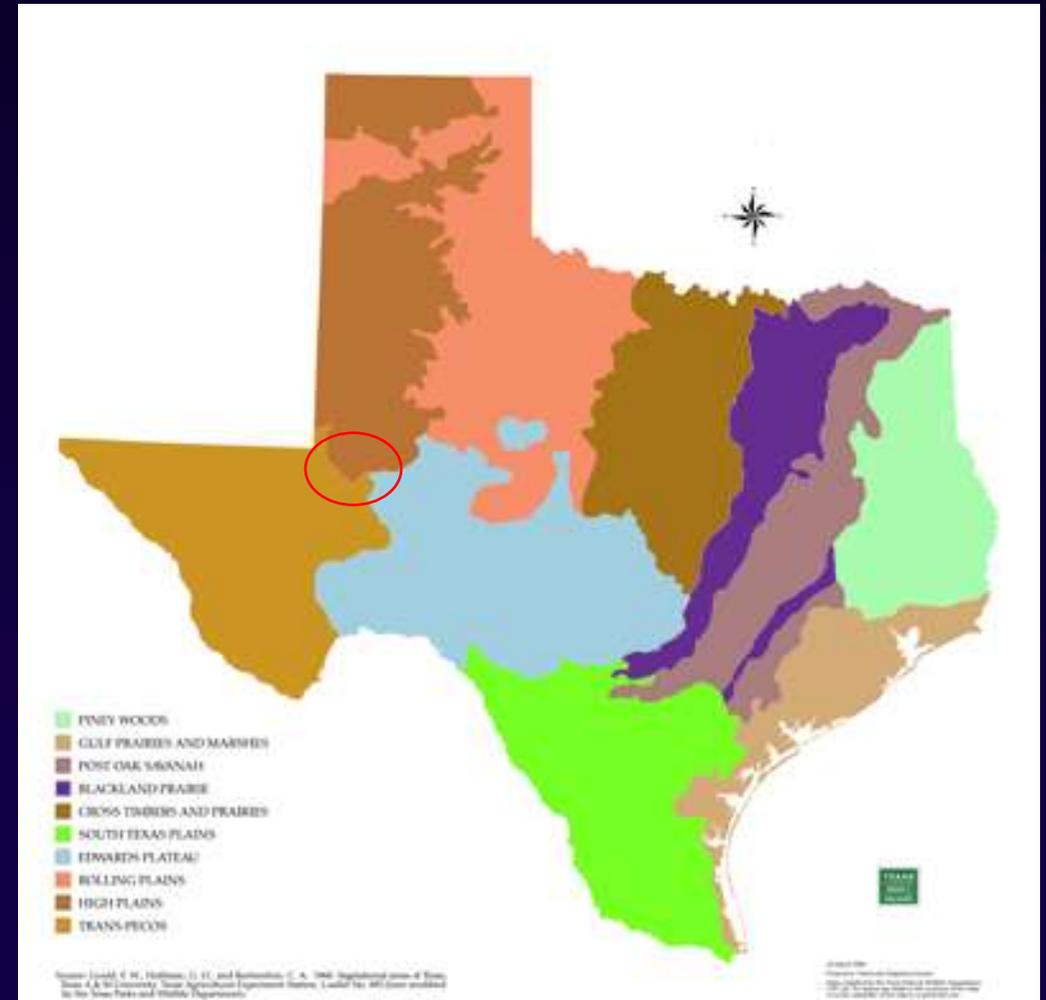
Intensively farmed



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Permian Basin



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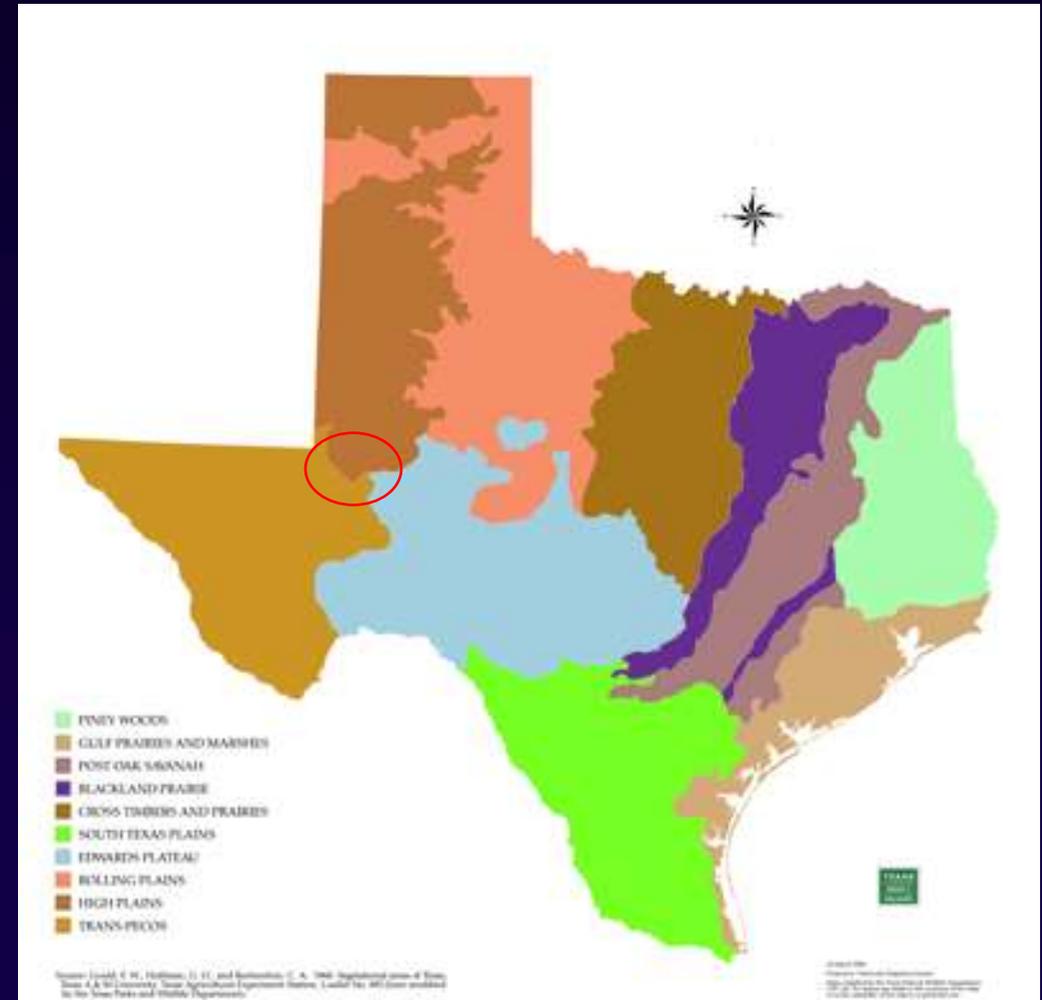
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Permian Basin

Sedimentary basin

One of the world's thickest deposits of rocks from the Permian geologic period

Large oil- and natural gas-producing area



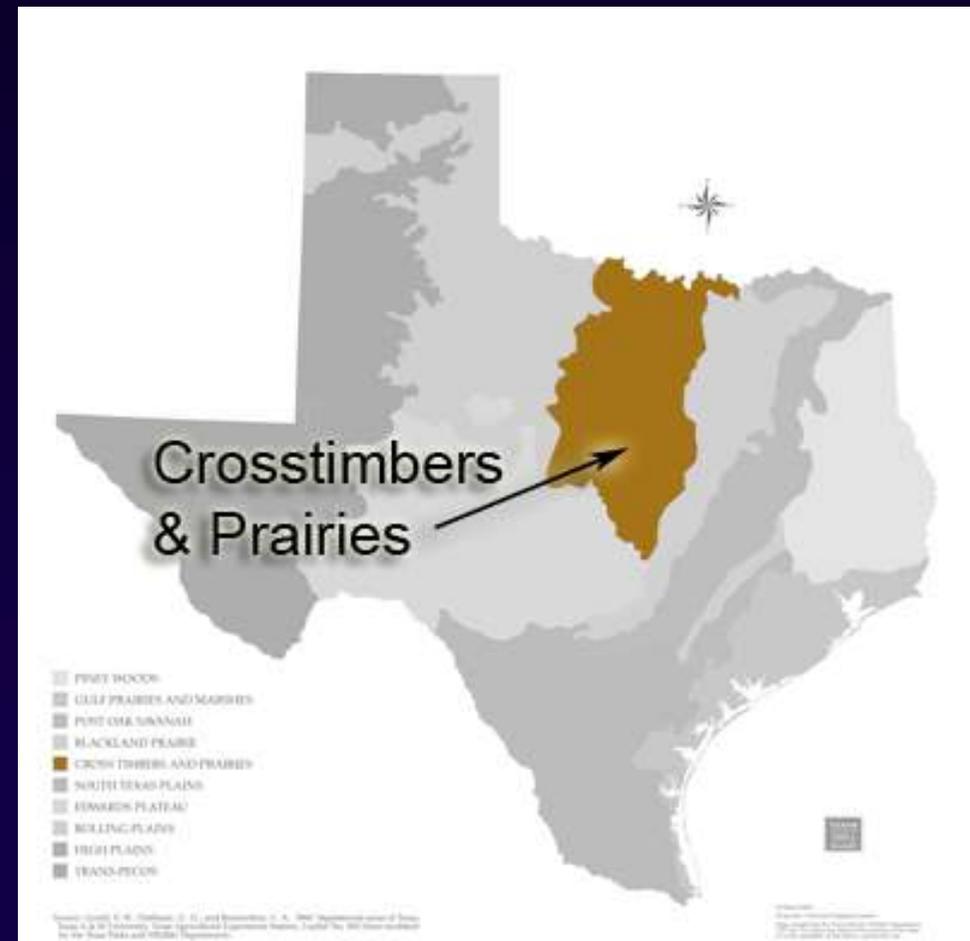
CROSSTIMBERS AND PRAIRIES

26,000 square mile area located in north-central Texas extending into Oklahoma and Kansas

Will often see it described as Oak Woods and Prairies, combining the Blackland Prairie and Post Oak Savannah regions to the east

From west to east, the beginning of a transition zone from prairies to Pineywoods

Many explorers described repeated crossing of timbered areas that were difficult to navigate



CROSSTIMBERS AND PRAIRIES

Varying topography and terrain features from mostly flat to limestone and sandstone mesas

Plant communities can change dramatically over a short distance depending on soils

Historically comprised of vast tallgrass prairies maintained by fire

Where fire was limited, woody species thrived, including post oak, blackjack oak, elm, hickory, osage orange, mesquite, bumelia, and cedar.

Historically supported “buffalo, bear, deer, antelope, wild boars, partridges, and turkeys”



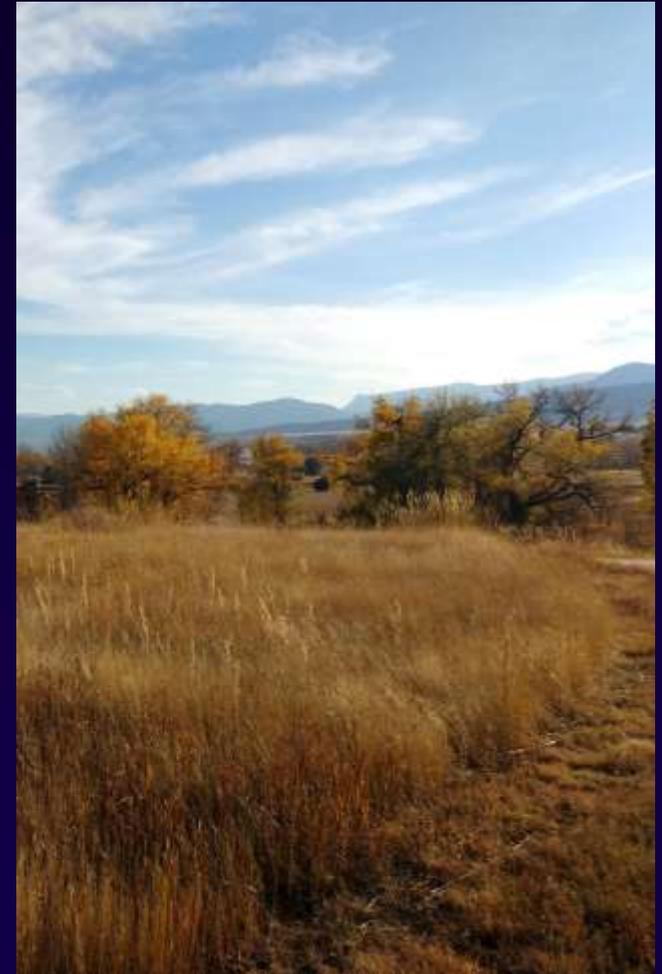
CROSSTIMBERS AND PRAIRIES

As with much of Texas, little of the native habitat remains

Tallgrass prairies have been converted to tame grass monocultures, row crops, or are over-grazed

Woody habitats have been cleared for agriculture or have been 'thicketized' due to fire suppression

Considerable urban sprawl and fragmentation



POST OAK SAVANNAH

Closely associated with Blackland Prairie ecosystem

Prairie habitat interspersed with scattered clumps of hardwood trees

Soils primarily consist of clay or clay loam in bottoms and sand or sandy loam in uplands with a dense clay layer underlying

Habitat maintained through frequent fires and bison grazing

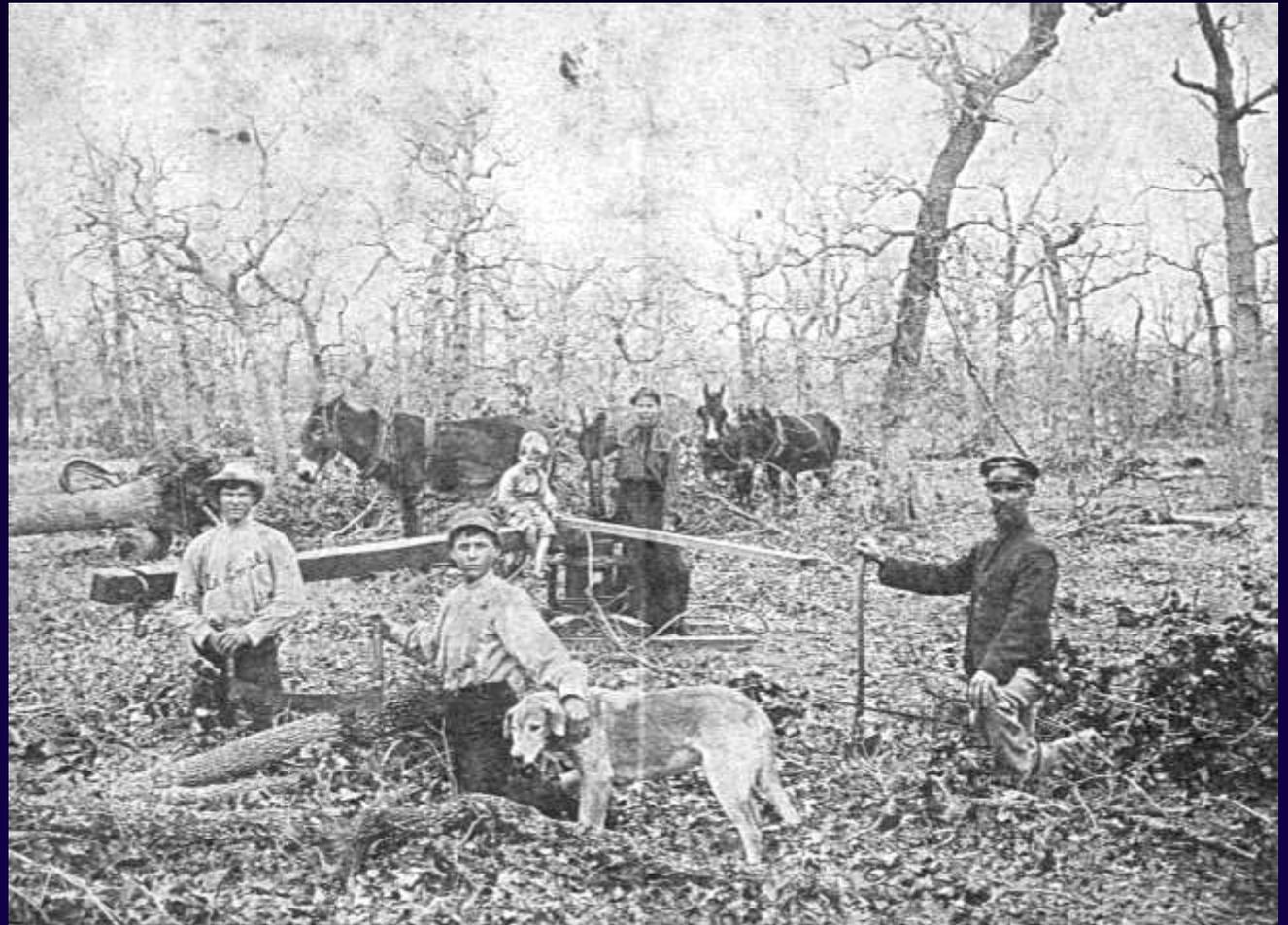
Forested area restricted to bottomland habitats due to a lack of fire



POST OAK SAVANNAH

Photo taken ~ 1900

Note the lack of
underbrush (yaupon
and cedar)



POST OAK SAVANNAH

