

LAND & Wildlife Management Resources

State and Federal Agency Resources

Getting different points of view before making a large land management decision is smart. The links below will take you to their website where you click on your county to drill down to the person to contact. Each agency has experts that will visit your property, answer questions, and provide valuable land management advice.

- **Texas Parks & Wildlife Department Wildlife Biologists Assigned by County - [LINK](#)**
- **Land Management Guidance from Texas Parks & Wildlife - [LINK](#)**
- **Texas Forest Service Specialists by County – [LINK](#)**
- **Texas Forest Service Oak Wilt Specialists - [LINK](#)**
- **Texas A&M AgriLife County Agriculture & Natural Resources Agent by County - [LINK](#)**
- **USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Services by County - [LINK](#)**

Texas Hill Country Nature, Wildlife, and Native Plant Organizations

The Texas Hill Country is home to a rich diversity of landscapes, wildlife, and native plants found nowhere else in the world. A variety of local nonprofit organizations work to conserve these natural resources through research, land stewardship, education, and community outreach. These groups provide valuable guidance for landowners and the public on habitat management, native plant restoration, water conservation, and wildlife protection—helping ensure the Hill Country’s natural heritage remains healthy and resilient for future generations.

- **Wildlife Management Associations and Co-ops - [PDF](#)**
- **Native Plant Society of Texas—Kerrville - [LINK](#)**
- **Native Plant Society of Texas—Fredericksburg - [LINK](#)**
- **Native Plant Society of Texas—Boerne - [LINK](#)**
- **Friends of the Fredericksburg Nature Center - [LINK](#)**
- **Cibolo Center for Conservation - [LINK](#)**
- **Kerrville Riverside Nature Center - [LINK](#)**

Land Stewardship

Land stewardship is the responsible management and care of natural resources to ensure the health and sustainability of the land for future generations. It involves practices that promote biodiversity, conserve soil and water, restore native habitats, and support wildlife. Whether you own a small plot or vast acreage, thoughtful stewardship can enhance the ecological balance of your property while preserving its natural beauty and productivity. By implementing sustainable land management techniques, property owners play a vital role in maintaining the environmental integrity of the Texas Hill Country.

- **Common Land Stewardship Myths and Misperceptions - [PDF](#)**
- **A place in the Country. Guide for new landowners - [PDF](#)**
- **Land Management Tips for Small Ranches in Texas - [PDF](#)**
- **Conservation Easements and Working with Land Trusts - [PDF](#)**

Owning Your Piece of Texas, Texas A&M AgriLife – Laws & Regulations

From ownership of water beneath the land to potential liability if a person is injured on the property to the best practices for negotiating a pipeline easement, several legal issues face agricultural landowners daily in the Lone Star State. This handbook is designed to offer a basic overview of several of the legal issues facing Texas landowners. Choose downloadable or PDF copy.

[Free downloadable copy link](#)
[PDF Copy](#)

Riparian Land Management

Properly managing the land alongside Hill Country rivers and creeks is vital for supporting wildlife and protecting the environment. These areas require unique management and restoration strategies. The resources below offer a helpful introduction. For tailored guidance, reach out to your County TPWD Biologist to request an on-site consultation.

- **Riparian Zone Management - [VIDEO](#)**
- **Strategies for Riparian Plant Restoration - [VIDEO](#)**
- **Your Remarkable Riparian Texas Field Guide/Owner's Manual Set (the Texas riparian bible)**

[View Online PDF](#)

[Purchase Printed Copy](#)

- **Grow Zones: Cultivating Texan Rivers and Creeksides in your own Backyard - [VIDEO](#)**
- **Riparian Management, Hill Country Alliance - [PDF](#)**
- **Riparian Planting and Materials Resource Guide - [PDF](#)**

- **Healthy Riparian Areas** - [PDF](#)
- **Streamside Planting Guide** - [PDF](#)
- **Common Riparian Plants in Central Texas** - [PDF](#)
- **Streamside Management in the Hill Country** - [PDF](#)

Hill Country Trees

Restoring Native Trees in the Hill Country

Many native trees are disappearing from the Hill Country landscape due to a combination of old age, disease, drought, and decades of overbrowsing by cattle, goats, and deer. As a result, few young trees are surviving to replace the aging canopy on most properties.

Trees play a vital role in the ecosystem. They provide food, shelter, and protection for wildlife, while their deep roots enhance water infiltration and help build healthy soil beneath their branches.

With just a few simple steps, you can help restore native tree populations and support the long-term health of the Hill Country ecosystem.

- **Managing Hill Country Woodlands** - [VIDEO](#)
- **Native Plants for Edwards Plateau Landscapes** - [PDF](#)
- **Trees for Central Texas** - [PDF](#)
- **Know Your Hill Country Oaks** - [PDF](#)

Three Methods of Tree Restoration

The Texas Hill Country is gradually losing trees to old age, drought stress, and disease. Supporting the establishment of new trees—especially in the face of heavy browsing pressure from deer, exotic wildlife, goats, and cattle—is essential to maintaining a healthy ecological balance. These efforts will benefit both the land and native wildlife for generations to come. The following options can help encourage successful tree regeneration.

Create Brush Pile Nurseries

Building brush piles near desirable mature trees can significantly improve natural regeneration. You may be surprised by how many seedlings emerge through the brush, protected from deer browsing.



Over time, the brush will decompose naturally or can be removed as the young trees mature. If brush is removed, temporary fencing or cages may be needed to protect young trunks from bark damage caused by browsing or bucks rubbing antlers. Brush piles also provide excellent nesting and shelter habitat for birds and small wildlife. Cedar slash and wood from removed dead oak trees are especially effective materials.

Cage Naturally Emerging Seedlings

In early spring, identify and cage promising native tree seedlings before deer and exotic animals find them. A 4-foot-tall wire cage approximately 30 inches in diameter is relatively inexpensive and



can protect a seedling for several years. As trees grow and show promise, an additional 2 feet of wire can be added. These naturally established trees typically require no supplemental watering and will mature quickly with this simple protection.

Plant Additional Native Trees and Shrubs

Native trees and shrubs purchased from reputable nurseries can also enhance long-term regeneration. Planted trees will require regular watering—especially during hot summer months—for one to two years, depending on rainfall. Once established, native species are generally low maintenance and well adapted to Hill Country conditions.

Plants for Texas Hill Country Landscaping

Landscaping in the Texas Hill Country is most successful when it works with nature rather than against it. Choosing native and well-adapted plants suited to the region's thin soils, rocky terrain, heat, and periodic drought creates landscapes that are both resilient and sustainable. These plants require less supplemental water, fertilizer, and pesticides, while providing vital food and habitat for native wildlife and pollinators. Thoughtful plant selection results in attractive, low-maintenance landscapes that conserve water and reflect the natural beauty of the Hill Country.

- **Native & Adapted Landscape Plants, Texas AgriLife Extension - [PDF](#)**
- **Texas Master Gardener Demo Garden - [LINK](#)**
- **Native Plant Society of Texas, Kerrville Chapter - [LINK](#)**
- **Native Plant Society of Texas, Native Plant Database - [LINK](#)**

Ashe Juniper (AKA Cedar, Mountain Cedar) Management

Ashe juniper—often called mountain cedar—is a native and iconic tree of the Texas Hill Country. Well adapted to rocky soils, steep slopes, and drought, it plays an important role in building and stabilizing soils, reducing erosion, and supporting wildlife. Its dense canopy provides critical shelter and nesting habitat for many species, including the endangered golden-cheeked warbler. While often overabundant in some areas, Ashe juniper remains an important part of a healthy Hill Country ecosystem when managed thoughtfully. Learn more about this plant and its role in the Hill Country ecosystem before removing or thinning cedar on your property.

- **Managing Ashe Juniper (Cedar) - [VIDEO](#)**
- **Wanted Mountain Cedars Dead and Alive Book Overview - [PDF](#)**
- **Mountain Cedars & Karst Country - [VIDEO](#)**
- **Ash Juniper, Spring Creek Outdoors - [VIDEO](#)**
- **Ashe Juniper is native to central Texas, Austin Water Wildland Conservation - [VIDEO](#)**
- **Mountain Cedar, Untold Story - [VIDEO](#)**

Erosion Control

Erosion is a significant challenge in the Texas Hill Country, where thin soils, steep slopes, and periodic heavy rains can lead to soil loss and landscape degradation. Effective erosion control is essential for preserving soil health, maintaining water quality, and protecting native vegetation. Landowners can mitigate erosion by implementing strategies such as native plant restoration, terracing, contouring, and the use of rock or brush barriers. By taking proactive measures, we can help stabilize the land, reduce runoff, and promote a healthier, more resilient landscape for future generations.

- **Hillside Stewardship, Reducing Erosion, Establishing Vegetation - [PDF](#)**
- **Hillside Stewardship Guide - [PDF](#)**

Brush Control

Over browsing or soil disturbance can lead to the rapid spread of trees, brush, and forbs, which may need to be selectively removed to support healthy land, wildlife, and agricultural operations. Brush species—such as cedar—can be valuable in the right locations and amounts, offering important habitat and environmental benefits. Before undertaking significant brush removal, consult your County AgriLife Extension Agent or County Wildlife Biologist for guidance. When using herbicides, always carefully follow label directions.

- **The Chemical Weed & Brush Control Reference Guide published by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is the go-to reference. - [PDF](#)**
- **Quick Reference Guide for Common Rangeland and Pasture Herbicides – [PDF](#)**
- **Brush Busters is a cooperative program of the Texas AgriLife Research and Extension Service to expedite the adoption of Tactical Brush Management Systems technology - [PDF](#)**
- **Cut Stump Demonstration, Equipment and Herbicide Video, Texas A&M AgriLife - [VIDEO](#)**
- **How to control Prickly Pear and other cacti. Texas A&M AgriLife - [PDF](#)**
- **Prickly Pear Management - [VIDEO](#)**
- **How to Beat Mesquite, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension - [PDF](#)**
- **How to Master Cedar (Red and Blueberry Juniper), Texas A&M AgriLife - [PDF](#)**

Grazing Management

The Texas landscape was historically shaped by the intense, periodic grazing of bison herds. Today, properly managed livestock can mimic this natural process, enhancing wildlife habitat by boosting plant diversity, disturbing soil in beneficial ways, and clearing out overgrown vegetation. For help developing a sustainable stocking rate and rotational grazing plan, consult your County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Agent.

- **Grazing on Small Acreages, Integrating Cattle and Wildlife, Texas A&M AgriLife - [VIDEO](#)**

Invasive Plants

Invasive plants are non-native species that spread aggressively and disrupt the natural balance of the Texas Hill Country. Free from the insects and diseases that keep them in check in their home ranges, these plants often outcompete native grasses, wildflowers, and trees for water, sunlight, and soil nutrients. Over time, invasives can reduce wildlife habitat, increase erosion, and alter the character of creeks, rangeland, and woodlands. Early identification and thoughtful management are key to protecting the Hill Country's diverse native plant communities and the land and water they support.

Management protocols, including removal, for each invasive plant variety commonly found in Texas are on this [TexasInvasives.org](https://www.texasinvasives.org) website. A partnership between TPWD, Texas A&M AgriLife, and Texas Forest Service. Click on the link below.

[Texas Invasives](https://www.texasinvasives.org)

Invasive Animals

Invasive animals are non-native species that have been introduced—intentionally or accidentally—into the Texas Hill Country and cause harm to native wildlife, habitats, and land use. Lacking natural predators or controls, these species can spread rapidly, competing with native animals for food and space, preying on native species, and damaging soils, vegetation, and waterways. Their impacts often extend to agriculture, water quality, and ecosystem health, making early detection, public awareness, and active management essential to protecting the Hill Country's natural balance.

Axis Deer

- **Texas Tech University Axis Deer Research - [VIDEO](#)**
- **Axis Deer in the Texas Hill Country - [VIDEO](#)**

Feral Hogs

- **Coping with Feral Hogs, AgriLife Extension - [LINK](#)**
- **Managing Feral Hog Damage, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension - [PDF](#)**
- **Feral Hogs In Texas, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension - [PDF](#)**

- Wild Pigs, TPWD - [LINK](#)

Fire Ants

- Fire Ant Control, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension - [PDF](#)
- Fire Ant Control Products, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension - [PDF](#)
- Fire Ant Frequently Asked Questions - [LINK](#)

Wildlife Valuation

Wildlife Management Valuation: A Smart Option for Landowners

For property owners with an existing agricultural (1-D-1) valuation, transitioning to a wildlife management valuation can offer the same property tax savings—while supporting conservation efforts. As of 2016, over 5 million acres across Texas were under wildlife management valuation, and interest continues to grow.

However, simply having wildlife on your property doesn't automatically qualify you. To be eligible, land must:

1. **Currently be appraised as 1-D-1 open-space land** for agricultural, timber, or ecological use.
2. **Be primarily used to manage native wildlife.**
3. **Implement at least three approved wildlife management practices** annually, in line with the intensity standards set by the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD) and the Texas Comptroller.

*Importantly, landowners should begin implementing their wildlife management plan on **January 1 of the application year**—without waiting for formal approval. These practices take the place of traditional agricultural activities like livestock grazing or hay production.*

*There are **seven categories of approved practices**, totaling over 50 individual activities. These include:*

- Supplemental water
- Supplemental food
- Supplemental shelter
- Habitat control
- Erosion control
- Predator control
- Census counts

To remain in compliance, landowners must document **at least three** of these activities each calendar year. The County Appraisal District (CAD) may require an **annual report**, which should include:

- Photos and maps of the work
- Dates and descriptions of activities
- Receipts, if applicable

Site visits may also be requested to verify compliance.

For details on applying or reporting requirements in your county, be sure to visit your **local property tax assessor's office** or county appraisal district. Below are various resources to give you a good overview.

- What is Wildlife Tax Valuation? Texas Parks & Wildlife Department - [VIDEO](#)
- Wildlife Management and Property Tax Valuation in Texas, Texas A&M AgriLife - [PDF](#)
- Agriculture Property Tax Conversion for Wildlife Management, TPWD - [LINK](#)
- Management FAQ, TPWD - [LINK](#)
- Agricultural Tax Appraisal Based on Wildlife Management:
- Wildlife valuation report used by most counties that is filed yearly. Check with yours - [PDF](#)
- Wildlife Valuation Workshop Videos by Jessica Alderson, Wildlife Biologist TPWD - [VIDEO](#)
- Webcast about Wildlife Tax Valuation TPWD - [VIDEO](#)
- Wildlife Management Practices and Activities, Edwards Plateau, TPWD - [PDF](#)
- Native Pollinators - [LINK](#)

Oak Wilt

When pruning oak trees, **immediately seal all cuts with any type of spray paint** to reduce the risk of oak wilt infection—a serious and often fatal disease for oaks. Prompt sealing helps prevent beetles from spreading the fungus that causes oak wilt.

If you suspect oak wilt on your property, **contact the Texas A&M Forest Service**. Their experts can assess your trees, confirm infection, and provide guidance on effective management and prevention strategies.

- Eight Step Program to Oak Wilt Management, Texas A&M AgriLife - [LINK](#)
- Oak Wilt Management, Texas A&M Forest Service - [LINK](#)
- Oak Wilt In Texas with Pruning Calendar, Texas A&M Forest Service - [PDF](#)
- Oak Wilt Pruning Guidelines, Texas A&M AgriLife - [LINK](#)

Native Grass and Wildflower Seed Sources & Planting

Below are Texas based seed companies that specialize in native grass and wildflower seeds including a wide selection seed mixes for the Texas Hill Country. Each company has its own niche and off-the-shelf blends; and will guide you in the planting process.

- **Native American Seed – [LINK](#)**
- **Turner Seed Co. – [LINK](#)**
- **Bamert Seed Co. – [LINK](#)**
- **Douglas King Seeds – [LINK](#)**

Planting Information:

- **How to sow your seed, Hill Country Conservancy - [LINK](#)**
- **Growing wildflowers from seed, Texas Master Gardeners - [PDF](#)**
- **Restoring Native Grasslands, Texas A&M AgriLife - [LINK](#)**

White-Tailed Deer

*White-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) are one of the most iconic and visible wildlife species in the Texas Hill Country. Well adapted to the region's rugged terrain and variable climate, they thrive in oak-juniper woodlands, savannas, and riparian corridors where a mix of browse, forbs, mast, and cover is available.*

Hill Country deer are generally smaller-bodied than their counterparts in East Texas or the Midwest due to thinner soils, lower rainfall, and limited forage quality. Their diet shifts seasonally—relying heavily on forbs and browse in spring and summer, acorns and soft mast in fall, and woody plants during drought or winter stress periods.

Because natural predators are limited, deer populations are largely controlled by habitat quality, weather patterns, and human management. Overabundance is common and can lead to overbrowsing, reduced plant diversity, poor deer health, and suppressed regeneration of oaks and other native woody species. For this reason, balanced harvest, habitat management, and protection of young trees are essential tools for maintaining healthy deer herds and resilient Hill Country landscapes.

- **White-Tailed Deer Browse Preferences for Edwards Plateau - [LINK](#)**
- **White-Tailed Deer Management, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department – [PDF](#)**
- **White-Tailed Deer Management in the Texas Hill Country, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department - [PDF](#)**

- **Brush Management for White-Tailed Deer, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department - [PDF](#)**
- **Food Plots for Deer in Central Texas, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department - [PDF](#)**
- **Deer Control Methods, TPWD - [LINK](#)**

Song Birds

Songbirds are an essential and diverse part of the Texas Hill Country ecosystem. The region's mix of oak-juniper woodlands, grasslands, riparian corridors, and brushy slopes provide nesting habitat, food, and migratory stopover sites for both resident and seasonal species.

Common Hill Country songbirds include Northern Cardinal, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Bewick's Wren, Black-crested Titmouse, and Painted Bunting, along with many warblers and vireos during spring and fall migration. These birds play a critical role in insect control, seed dispersal, and overall ecosystem health.

Healthy songbird populations depend on native plant diversity, layered vegetation (grasses, shrubs, and trees), and intact riparian areas. Loss of habitat, overgrazing, and heavy browsing pressure can reduce nesting success, making land stewardship and native habitat restoration especially important for sustaining Hill Country songbirds.

- **Songbird Management, TPWD - [VIDEO](#)**
- **Bird and Nest Box Information**
- **DIY guide for Feeders, Houses, and Plants, TPWD - [PDF](#)**
- **All About Birdhouses - [LINK](#)**
- **Bird City Texas, TPWD - [LINK](#)**

Cowbirds

- **Brown-headed Cowbirds - [LINK](#)**

Dove & Quail Management

Dove and quail management in the Texas Hill Country focuses on providing the right mix of habitat components these birds need year-round: food, cover, and water. Healthy native grasslands with scattered brush, seed-producing forbs, and bare ground are especially important for quail, while doves benefit from open areas with native seeds, nearby roosting sites, and access to surface water. Thoughtful land stewardship—such as selective brush management, prescribed grazing, invasive species control, and protection of native plants—can significantly improve habitat quality, supporting sustainable populations of both game birds while enhancing overall ecosystem health.

- **Dove Management in Texas - [PDF](#)**
- **Dove Identification - [LINK](#)**
- **Quail in Texas - [LINK](#)**
- **Reversing the Quail Decline with habitat management - [VIDEO](#)**

- **Quail Management Recommendations, TPWD - [PDF](#)**

Wild Turkey Management

The Rio Grande wild turkey is a vital part of Texas' natural landscape, playing a key role in the ecosystem and providing opportunities for wildlife enthusiasts and hunters alike. Effective management of this species focuses on maintaining healthy populations through habitat conservation, responsible hunting practices, and predator control. Proper land stewardship, including the preservation of roosting sites, availability of food sources, and water access, is essential for sustaining strong turkey populations. By implementing strategic management practices, landowners can support the long-term health and stability of Rio Grande wild turkey populations on their property.

- **Rio Grande Wild Turkey in Texas, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department - [PDF](#)**
- **Rio Grande Wild Turkeys, AgriLife Extension - [PDF](#)**
- **Rio Grande Turkey Habitat Management, Texas Parks & Wildlife - [PDF](#)**
- **Learn About Turkey including feeders, Texas Parks and Wildlife - [PDF](#)**
- **Texas Turkey Talk, Texas Parks and Wildlife - [PDF](#)**
- **Turkey Feeders - [PDF](#)**



Firewise Landscaping

Firewise landscaping in the Texas Hill Country focuses on reducing wildfire risk while maintaining the region's natural beauty. By using native, drought-tolerant plants, managing vegetation density, and creating defensible space around homes, landowners can slow fire spread and improve firefighter safety. Practices such as removing excessive cedar and brush, spacing trees and shrubs,

keeping grasses mowed, and maintaining clean areas near structures help limit available fuel. When thoughtfully applied, Firewise principles protect homes and lives while supporting healthy, resilient Hill Country landscapes.

- **Ready, Set, Go. Your personal wildfire protection plan, Texas Forest Service - [PDF](#)**
- **Home Ignition Zones and Defensible Space, Texas Forest Service - [LINK](#)**
- **Firewise Landscaping in Texas, Texas Forest Service - [PDF](#)**
- **Firewise Landscaping, The Texas Gardener - [VIDEO](#)**
- **Wildfire – Preparing the Ranch. Texas A&M AgriLife Free Download - [PDF](#)**

Prescribed Burning

Fire was a natural ecological factor on most Texas rangelands before European settlement. Native vegetation is adapted to frequent burning. Fire serves to regenerate the land by returning nutrients to the soil, suppressing woody plants, and increasing grass and forb production. Not for every landowner or situation, but a tool for some. Be sure to contact your County Texas Parks & Wildlife Biologist to consult and guide you before conducting a prescribed fire on your property.

- **Wildland Fire Management, Texas Parks & Wildlife - [LINK](#)**
- **Prescribed burn associations in Texas - [LINK](#)**

Wildlife Supplemental Water

In the Texas Hill Country, extended droughts, shallow soils, and flashy rainfall often limit reliable natural water sources for wildlife. Supplemental water—such as small guzzlers, troughs, or wildlife-friendly ponds—can help sustain native birds, mammals, and pollinators during dry periods. Thoughtful placement, escape ramps, and regular cleaning are essential to ensure supplemental water benefits the Hill Country’s diverse wildlife while protecting overall ecosystem health.

Stock Tank Escape Ramps - [PDF](#)

Harvesting Rainwater for Wildlife - [PDF](#)

Harvesting Rainwater for Wildlife - [PDF](#)

Examples of ready-made drinkers and troughs - [LINK](#)

Examples of do-it-yourself drinkers and troughs - [PDF](#)

Mapping Services

Texas Forest Service – Map My Property

The Texas Forest Service – Map My Property is a free, easy-to-use online tool that allows Texas landowners to create detailed maps of their property. Using aerial imagery and GIS data, users can

outline property boundaries, measure acreage and distances, mark roads, water features, fences, and management areas, and add notes or labels.

It enables the display of a variety of basemaps, aerial imagery, and thematic layers such as contours, parcels, flood zones, and more. You can interactively compare two different imagery layers, and view and identify soils, vegetation, and geology. It's especially useful for land management planning, wildfire preparedness, wildlife habitat work, and sharing clear maps with family, neighbors, or natural resource professionals. Maps can be saved as PDF or PNG files.

Texas Forest Service – Map My Property Website - [LINK](#)

National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Web Soil Survey

Web Soil Survey (WSS) provides soil data and information produced by the National Cooperative Soil Survey. It is operated by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and provides access to the largest natural resource information system in the world. NRCS has soil maps and data available online for more than 95 percent of the nation's counties and anticipates having 100 percent soon. The site is updated and maintained online as the single authoritative source of soil survey information. Use to determine the suitability of the soils for a particular use. Maps and Reports can be saved and printed.

Web Soil Survey Website - [LINK](#)

Plant ID Apps

The smartphone apps below can help you identify plants on your property by simply taking a photo with your phone's camera. Identification results are generally most accurate when plants are in bloom, but keep in mind that app-based IDs are not always correct. When in doubt, confirm your results using the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center's plant database by entering the plant name on their search page: [LINK](#)

Recommended apps:

- **PictureThis**
- **iNaturalist**
- **Seek by iNaturalist**