

September 21, 2006

Ms. Carolyn Brittin
Texas Water Development Board
Stephen F. Austin Building
P.O. Box 13231
Austin, Texas 78711-3231

Delivered via email

Dear Ms. Brittin:

Thank you very much for allowing the Texas Wildlife Association (TWA) to review the 2007 State Water Plan and make suggestions regarding the inclusion of voluntary land stewardship in the plan. The hard work of you and all the TWDB staff is evident in this document.

TWA respectfully requests that you and the Board consider adding the following language to the "TWDB Policy Recommendations to the Legislature" section, beginning on page 8 of Volume I.

Issue: Voluntary Land Stewardship

The Legislature should support voluntary land stewardship practices and programs as one of Texas' primary water policy tenets. Because voluntary land stewardship affects rainfall where it hits the ground, it allows water managers to focus on supply as well as demand. Making the most of the rain that falls on Texas' vast expanse of rural land by encouraging and enabling a variety of land stewardship practices may be the most cost-efficient water management and supply-enhancement option available. Voluntary land stewardship improves the quantity and quality of Texas' water, complementing every other water management strategy the state might adopt. In addition to improving water quality and quantity, voluntary land stewardship provides a host of other societal benefits including conserving open space land and improving wildlife habitat.

Additionally, we respectfully request that you consider substituting the following language for what currently is found, title and text, beginning on page 275, Section "10.2.7 Strategies Using Land Stewardship," of Volume II.

10.2.7 Strategies Using Voluntary Land Stewardship

Voluntary land stewardship emerged as an effective water management strategy during this round of water supply planning. A direct relationship exists between the condition of a watershed and the quality and quantity of water that percolates into aquifers or runs off to creeks, streams and rivers. In some parts of the state, researchers are demonstrating that improving the condition of the watershed's vegetative cover can help clean, and

increase the amount of, water for our citizens' use and for the environment. Because of this, voluntary land stewardship complements all other water management strategies and allows water managers to consider supply, where rain falls on the land, as well as demand. Land stewardship practices that help control nuisance vegetation, maintain and restore suitable vegetation in riparian areas, reintroduce native plants, help maintain open space land and wildlife habitat, conserve wetlands, and prevent erosion through proper grazing management will improve the health and efficiency of the state's watersheds and should be encouraged. One component of land stewardship that has garnered much attention is brush control, which involves reducing problem vegetation which consumes excessive volumes of water that would otherwise recharge aquifers or flow into rivers and streams. While appropriate brush control can be an effective water management tool in specific areas, it is but one of many voluntary land stewardship practices that can make a positive difference in our state's water supply.

Thank you again for your help and for completing this project that is vital to Texas' future.

Yours for a clean and enjoyable outdoors,

David K. Langford, Vice President Emeritus
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