



Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board Programs for Agriculture Producers in the Double Bayou Watershed

Double Bayou Watershed Partnership
Ag, Wildlife, and Feral Hogs
Workgroup
Anahuac, Tx
February 18, 2014



Water Quality Management Plans (WQMPs)



- Site-specific plan for land improvement measures developed through SWCD for agricultural lands
- Provides farmers and ranchers a voluntary opportunity to achieve a level of pollution prevention or abatement consistent with state water quality standards
- Includes appropriate and essential land treatment practices, production practices, management measures, or technologies applicable to the planned land use
- Best available management and technology as described in NRCS Field Office Technical Guide



WQMP statutory authority

- Created by the 73rd Texas Legislature in 1993 through Senate Bill 503 (often referred to as 503 Program, or 503 plans, or 503 cost-share)
- Voluntary enrollment in WQMP Program for farmers and ranchers,
 - Exception- The 77th Texas Legislature in 2001 (Senate Bill 1339) said poultry operations **MUST** obtain a WQMP



WQMPs

- Site specific plans with a combination of best management practices (BMPs) for the treatment of identified resource concerns
- Based on:
 - Soil types
 - Planned land use/production goals
 - Known/potential water quality/natural resource problems (SWAPA)
 - Other site specific factors (topography, etc.)



WQMPs

- Cover the entire farm or ranch
- Specifically designed to achieve pollution prevention/abatement
- Texas Water Code §26.121



Technical Criteria for WQMPs

NRCS Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG)

To view all approved practices for selected county:

- http://efotg.nrcs.usda.gov/efotg_locator.aspx?map=TX
- Select region
- Select county
- Select Section IV
- Select A. Conservation Practices



FOTG “essential practices” for each land use:

- Cropland
 - Conservation crop rotation
 - Residue mgmt.
- Pastureland
 - Prescribed grazing
 - Livestock water
- Rangeland
 - Prescribed grazing
 - Livestock water
- Wildlife
 - Wildlife mgmt.
- Forestland
 - Forest mgmt.



WQMPs also include:

- Nutrient management
- Pest management
- Animal waste management system
- Waste utilization
- Irrigation water management



WQMPs also include:

- Erosion control measures to bring soil loss to acceptable levels (T)
- Erosion control to treat other forms of erosion (i.e. gullies) according to FOTG quality criteria
- Other practices to meet site specific concerns



Why have a WQMP?

- Abate/prevent erosion and promote conservation
- A strategic “management” plan for your operation
- “Assurance” policy – state-certified proof that you aren’t just sitting around doing nothing
- Demonstrate that voluntary conservation programs promote agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible goals
- Demonstrate that agriculture is doing our part to protect water quality
- Resolve water quality complaints through voluntary process with SWCD and TSSWCB



WQMPs


What Does A Plan Contain?

- District-Cooperator Agreement
- Request for Planning Assistance
- Soils Map & Interpretations
- Conservation Plan Map
- Narrative Record of decisions (practices) needed to implement WQMP
- Implementation schedule indicating years practices are to be applied
- Worksheets used during the inventory and planning process of developing WQMP
- NRCS Practice Standards and engineering designs
- Signature sheet to verify individual's privacy



How to get a WQMP?


- An individual requests planning assistance through their local SWCD
- The WQMP is usually developed by the SWCD Technician with NRCS and TSSWCB assistance
- The WQMP is approved by the landowner, the SWCD and NRCS and then certified by the TSSWCB
- Producer implements the WQMP on their land
- Annual status reviews are conducted to ensure that the landowner implements BMPs as agreed to in the implementation schedule



Financial Assistance

State (TSSWCB) or Federal (NRCS) assistance is obtainable for certain conservation practices

- TSSWCB
 - SB503 WQMP Financial Assistance
- NRCS
 - Farm Bill Programs



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