

MEDINA CENTRAL APPRAISAL DISTRICT

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES



Medina Central Appraisal District

1410 Avenue K

Hondo, Texas 78861

(830) 741-3035

Eligibility Requirements

This is additional information for wildlife management. Please refer to Medina Central Appraisal District Agricultural Guidelines for complete information on qualifying for agricultural and wildlife management use (1-d-1) valuation.

To qualify for agricultural appraisal under wildlife management, the land must currently be under agricultural use valuation. The law requires agriculture to be the primary use of the land. Wildlife management is an agricultural use under the law. Wildlife management must be the primary use of the property – land that is used exclusively for recreation or hunting will not qualify for this special valuation.

The Comptroller of Public Accounts published “Guidelines for Qualification of Agricultural Land in Wildlife Management Use.” The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department published “Wildlife Management Activities and Practices: Comprehensive Wildlife Management Planning Guidelines for the South Texas Plains Ecological Region.” Both are to be followed in Medina County to qualify for wildlife management special appraisal.

All properties under wildlife management must submit a valid application (1-d-1) and a wildlife management plan. The application and plan can be obtained from the MCAD office. The forms are due between January 1 and April 30 of the tax year for which the wildlife management valuation is being sought.

Medina Central Appraisal District requires wildlife management properties to:

- File an application to convert from agriculture to wildlife management
- File a five-year management plan
- File an annual report
- Be available for a field review/inspection when requested

A wildlife management plan should include:

- **Ownership information**
- **Property description and current use**
 - Map with size and location of property
 - Soil map or types of soil
 - Plants and trees located on property
 - Map identifying key locations of feeders, food plots, water, brush piles, prescribed burn area, etc.
- **Landowner’s goals and objectives for the tract of land**
- **Specific indigenous wildlife species targeted for management** (Target animals)
 - Wildlife that is currently there and what you want to accomplish
 - Land usage (grazing, fishing, hunting, etc.)
- **Specific management practices to be implemented** (in support of the specific indigenous wildlife species targeted for management)
- **Landowner’s signature, date and phone number**

We need to understand what is already done, what you plan to do next, and the 5-year goals you plan to accomplish. In summary, a wildlife management plan describes historic and current land use practices, establishes landowner goals and objectives for the property, and describes the specific activities and practices designed to benefit wildlife species of interest and their habitats. This is the landowner’s plan, designed by the landowner, with the possible assistance of a wildlife biologist from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), Texas Agricultural Extension Service, USDA Natural Conservation Service (NRCS), Texas Forest Service, or another qualified wildlife biologist.

When submitting your plan be sure to note the following:

- Attaching additional information to your plan is encouraged. A map of the property showing the locations of certain parts of your management areas, such as food plots, feeders, shelters, brush control areas, etc., is highly recommended. Pictures should be printed on plain paper, more than one may be printed on a page. Please date and label pictures so that we know what it is you want us to see and know about your habitat.
- Do not put your plans and future reports in a binder or book. It will save you money and will make it easier for us to scan your documents if the pages are not bound. If your documents are bound, they could be returned to you for resubmission.
- Sign and date your application and plan otherwise they are not valid. Include your phone number and email address so we may contact you if further information is needed.

Current Use

The following must be met regarding current use of land:

- The primary use of the property must be for wildlife management. Hunting is not wildlife management. Hunting will not disqualify a property from meeting the criteria for wildlife management if it is a secondary use to the land.
- The land must be actively used to generate a sustaining, breeding, migrating, or wintering population of indigenous wild animals. Exotics do not qualify for wildlife management.
- The indigenous wildlife population must be produced for human use, including food, medicine, or recreation.
- The property owner must perform at least three (3) of the seven (7) wildlife management activities specified by law; however, a complete plan will likely include all seven wildlife management activities. The seven wildlife management activities are:
 - 1) **Habitat control** — a wild animal's habitat is its surroundings, including plants, ground cover, shelter, and other animals on the land. Habitat control or management means actively using the land to promote an environment that is beneficial to the wildlife on the land. Removing harmful parts of the environment when necessary to benefit wildlife is also habitat control.
 - Grazing management - Prescribed burning - (If unable to meet prescribed burns due to burn bans, find another method for habitat control. A livestock grazing rotation plan may be a good substitute.)
 - Brush management - Fence modification - Range enhancement
 - 2) **Erosion control** — any active practice that attempts to reduce or keep soil erosion to a minimum for the benefit of the wildlife is erosion control.
 - Pond repair - Gully shaping - Water diversion
 - Plant establishment on erodible areas
 - 3) **Predator control** — this term means practices intended to manage the population of predators to benefit the owner's target wildlife population. Predator control is usually not necessary, unless the number of predators is harmful to the desired wildlife population.
 - Identify what the predator is
 - Describe how the predator is being controlled
 - Keep predator control logs
 - 4) **Supplemental water** — natural water exists in all wildlife environments. An existing stock pond, river, or natural waterway on your property is not providing supplemental water. Building a stock pond does qualify. Repairing a stock pond is handled under erosion control.
 - New well - Trough modification - Windmill overflow - Other wildlife watering facilities
 - 5) **Supplemental food** — most wildlife environments have some natural food. An owner supplements the food by providing food and nutrition in addition to the level naturally produced on the land. Using timed feeders and/or feeding corn are non-qualifying activities. If your plan includes food plots, planting a warm and cool season crop is required.
 - What type of feed - (must be 16% crude protein) - Feed for what animal - Map with feeder locations
 - Number of feeders – How much - How often
 - Food plots – Where – When - Every year - How do you plant - No till
 - Mineral supplements
 - 6) **Supplemental shelter** — this term means actively creating or maintaining vegetation or artificial structures that provide shelter from the weather, for nesting and breeding sites, or providing "escape cover" from enemies. Annual maintenance (clean-out and repair) of nest boxes must be documented and submitted with the annual report.
 - Nest boxes - Brush piles - Half-cutting trees
 - 7) **Census counts to determine population** — census counts are periodic surveys and inventories to measure the number, composition, or other relevant information about the wildlife's population to determine if the current wildlife management practices are serving the targeted species. Typically, to qualify for census, a combination of methods and a minimum of three dates must be used.
 - Spotlight counts, game cameras, aerial counts, harvest data collection and record keeping, browse surveys, roost counts, blind surveys, Hahn (walking) line, call and covey counts, etc.

All wildlife management activities must be consistent with those recommended in the most current Texas Parks and Wildlife Activities and Practices: Comprehensive Wildlife Management Planning Guidelines for South Texas Plains.

Acreege Requirement (TAC RULE §9.2005 - Wildlife Use Requirement)

A tract of land's wildlife use requirement is a number expressed as a percentage and calculated by subtracting one from the total number of acres in the tract of land and dividing the result by the total number of acres in the tract of land. The following formula expresses the calculation, with "x" representing the tract of land's total acreage: $(x-1) \div x = \text{wildlife use requirement}$. (For more information consult the TPWD website.) The Chief Appraiser, with the advice and consent of the Appraisal District Board of Directors, adopted the following requirements:

Individual tract:	50 acres
Wildlife management association tract:	20 acres
Endangered species:	20 acres

If the number of acres in the tract of land is less than the number of acres in the tract of land on January 1 of the preceding tax year, the property is subject to the wildlife management acreage requirement.

Annual Report

Once the wildlife management valuation is approved, the process is as follows:

- **The property owner is required to file an annual report to maintain the wildlife use valuation.** The report is a narrative description of the wildlife management performed the previous year.
- The annual report acts as a yearly update for the open-space valuation.
- The annual report is due by February 28th of each year.
- Failure to submit the report by February 28th may result in the denial of wildlife management.
- The report, PWD 888-W7000 (07/08), can be obtained from our office or from TPWD.

Information to include in your report:

- Copies of receipts (should include expenditures from each quarter)
- Map identifying key locations of activities being practiced
- Documentation of work
 - New projects started
 - Projects that have been completed
 - Projects that are in the planning stage and target completion date
 - Accomplished goals
 - Results seen from wildlife management activities practiced
 - Revaluation and adjustments to plan
- Records on all schooling and courses attended pertaining to wildlife management
- Landowner's signature, date, and contact phone number

A wildlife management property association may file a single annual report, if the report shows how the wildlife management plan was implemented on each tract of land in the wildlife management property association. The report must be signed by each landowner or agent of the landowner. A landowner may file an individual annual report if they desire.

Field Inspections

MCAD performs routine on-site inspections and verification of all land in the open-space valuation program. Any property or portion of property that is found to be not in compliance with the requirements for the valuation will be dealt with in the appropriate manner. This action could range from a request for a new application, removal of the agricultural valuation, or removal of the agricultural valuation AND the initiation of a rollback, if the requirement for rollback is met.

Local Resources for Assistance

The following agencies may be of assistance during your wildlife management transition:

Texas Parks and Wildlife
(830) 876-8229
Matthew.Reidy@tpwd.texas.gov
Wildlife management guidance
Census assistance
General wildlife questions

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
(Ag Extension Office)
(830) 741-6180
Predator control
Brush management
Prescribed burning

Natural Resource Conservation Service
(NRCS) – (830)-426-2521 ext. 3
Pond erosion
Brush management
Wildlife management assistance

Texas Forest Service
(830) 777-9066
Erosion control
Cedar management
Land management