



Farm to Fallow: Returning Ag & Crop Land to its Native State

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Plateau Land & Wildlife Management**



- Private company, est. 1997
- Founders helped establish WMV law
- Central Texas Based
- Serving Texas Landowners
- Staff Wildlife Biologists
- Trained, dedicated field technicians
- Registered Property Tax Consultants

BRAUN & GRESHAM

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Advocates for you and your land.

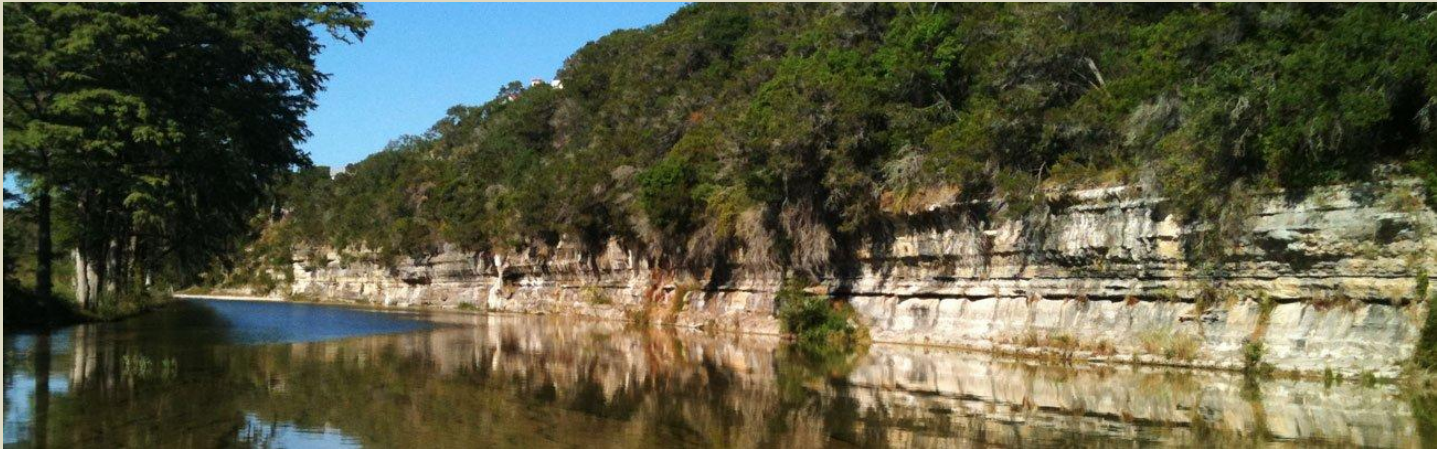


- Property Tax
- Powerline Routing
- Conservation Real Estate
- Risk Management
- Estate Planning
- Conservation Easement
- Water Rights
- Condemnation



*Rural Land.
Real Knowledge.
Real Value.*

- Rural Real Estate Specialists
- Knowledge of land, income and sales tax advantages
- Work with buyers and sellers



What do you mean by intensive production?

- History of long-term heavy grazing and/or overgrazing
- History of cropping
- Establishment of domesticated forage grasses



What do these have in common?



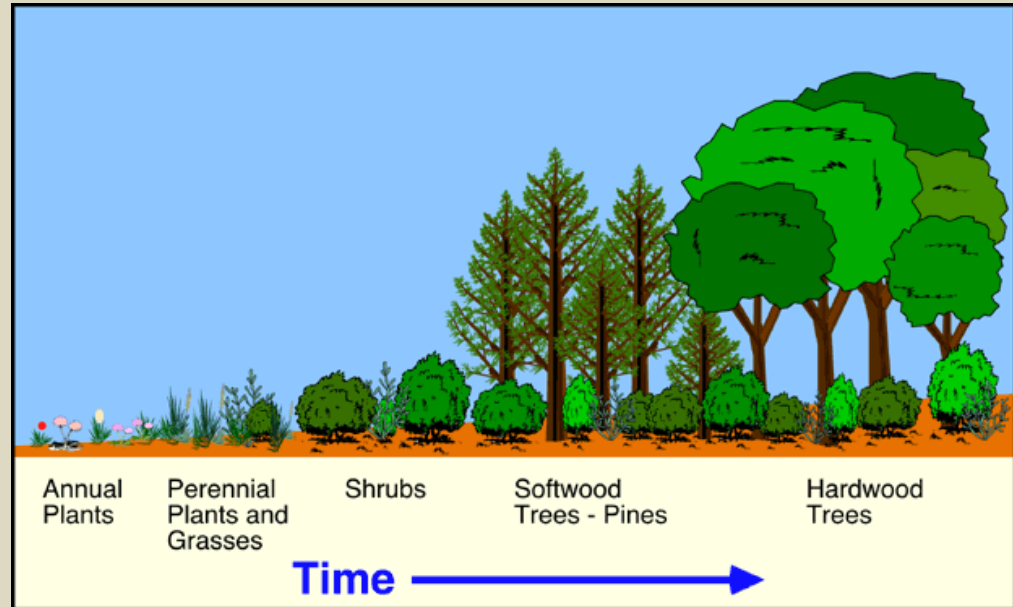
- Drastic changes to plant communities and wildlife habitat
- Over 1/3 of Texas's native grasslands have been lost to crops, non-native pasture, and urbanization
- What's left is often degraded, which results in brush and exotic grass encroachment

So can these properties qualify for wildlife management?

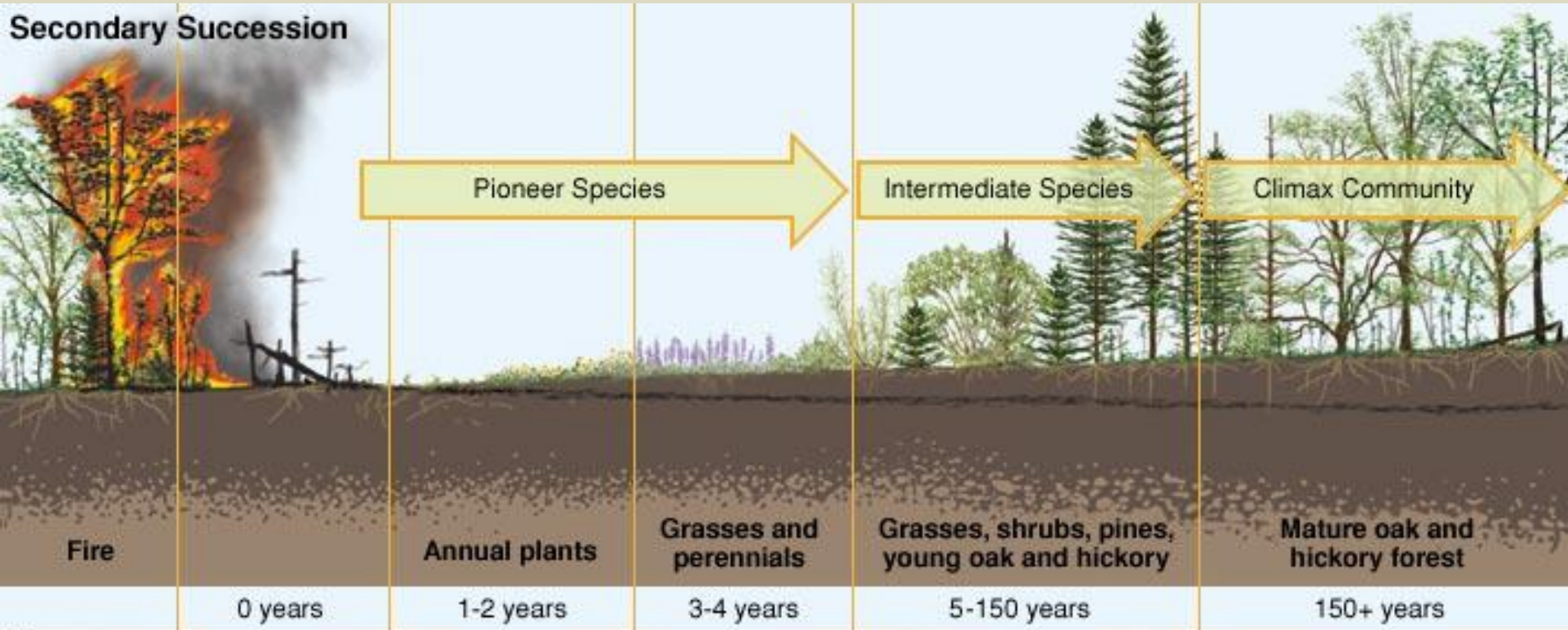
- Eligibility is not based on the quality of the habitat – only on the land use history and planned management practices
- Management options range from intensive restoration to slow guidance back to health and function

Ecological Succession

- The observed process of change in the species composition or structure of an ecological community.
- Initiated by some form of disturbance (e.g. wildfire, plowing), succession involves a continuous replacement of plant species, until a climax of growth is reached.



Secondary Succession



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What species can you target for management?

- Anything that fits the habitat and area:
 - Grassland Birds – (1/3 of species are in steep decline)
 - Northern Bobwhite
 - Raptors
 - Doves
 - Rabbits and other small mammals



Limiting Factors

These lands often lack:

- Shelter
- Plant diversity
 - Food and cover



Barriers to Recovery

- Eroded, compacted, depleted soils
- Dominance/presence of non-native plants
- Time or ability to rest
- Drought



Management Options

- Rest – no credit for doing nothing but still important
- Restoration – jump start recovery with intensive reseeding and planting
 - weed control, seed bed prep, seed/plant selection, rest
- Restful Readjustment
 - Use what succession gives you and manipulate the natural process along the way

Before
June 2011



After
August 2013



Rest

- Allow succession to take its course
 - Weedy species will dominate, followed by lower-quality grasses and encroaching brush
 - Non-native, invasive species can take hold
 - Slow process



Restoration

- Speed up early parts of succession
- Manage weeds – chemical and/or mechanical
- Plant diverse mix of grasses and forbs
 - Need early and late successional species
- Plant trees with associated shrubs in desired pattern



Restful Readjustment

- Old fields are a blank slate
 - Selective retention of encroaching brush
 - Half-cutting larger mesquite or huisache
- Strip mowing and discing to manipulate succession
- Selective planting of native grasses and forbs
 - “Colonial” method
 - Strip planting



Other Activities

- Supplemental shelter
 - Nest boxes
 - Brush piles
 - Fence-line Management



Other Activities - Continued

- Controlling exotic and problematic species
 - Macartney Rose – Prescribed Control of Species
 - *Baccharis* spp. – Brush Management
 - Imported Red Fire Ants – Predator Control



Summary

- Even the most heavily utilized lands can provide important wildlife habitat
 - Time (and management)



Questions?



Thank You!

Plateau Land & Wildlife Management

*Working with **you** to protect and enhance
your land!*

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