



**Plateau**

Land & Wildlife  
Management

# Managing Small Acreage Properties for Wildlife

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# Agenda

- Land Trends & Fragmentation
- Wildlife Management
- How to Get Started
- Management Activities



The background is a dark olive green with a complex topographic map pattern of light-colored contour lines. A faint grid of thin white lines is overlaid, with small white crosshair markers at the intersections. Scattered throughout the background are several clusters of small, light-colored squares and dots, some of which are arranged in small, irregular patterns.

# Land Trends & Fragmentation

# Texas Land Usage & Fragmentation

- Urban expansion/population growth

(TXlandtrends.org)

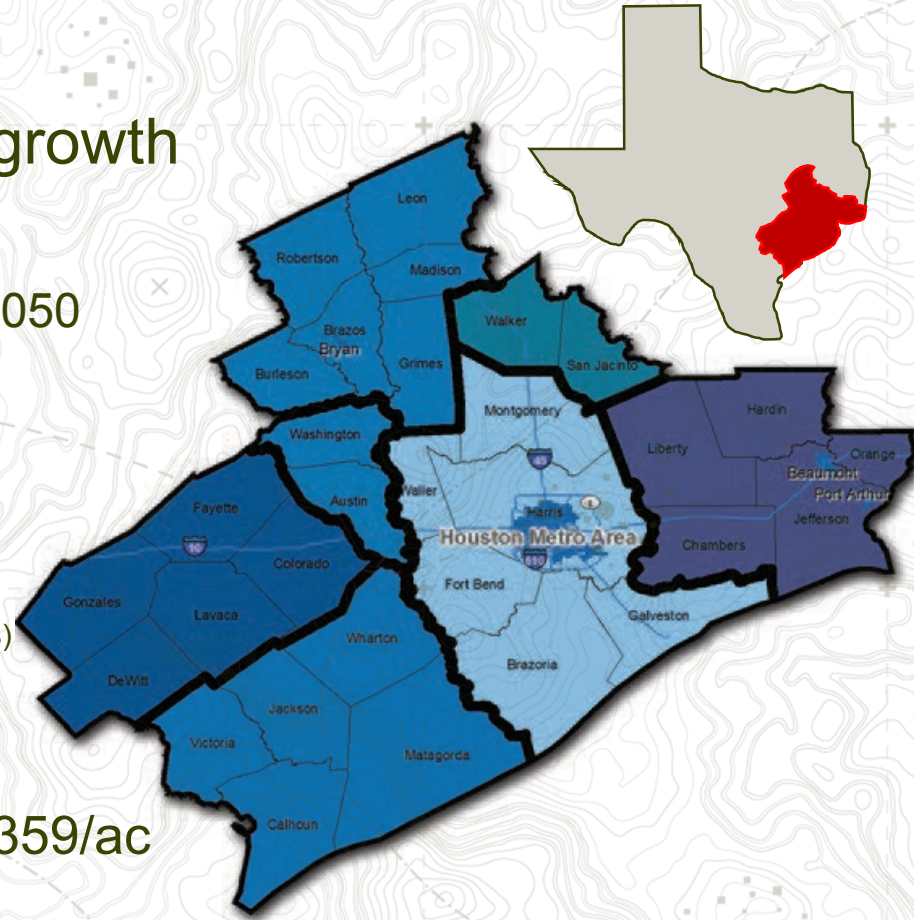
- 142 million acres privately owned
- Projected growth to 45 million by 2050

- Ownership fragmentation ≠ habitat fragmentation

- 2019 Property values

(TX Chapter American Society of Farm Managers & Rural Appraisers)

- Statewide average - \$2,972/ac  
(\$2,091/ac in 2010)
- Gulf Coast/Brazos Bottom- \$6,359/ac  
(\$4000/ac in 2010)



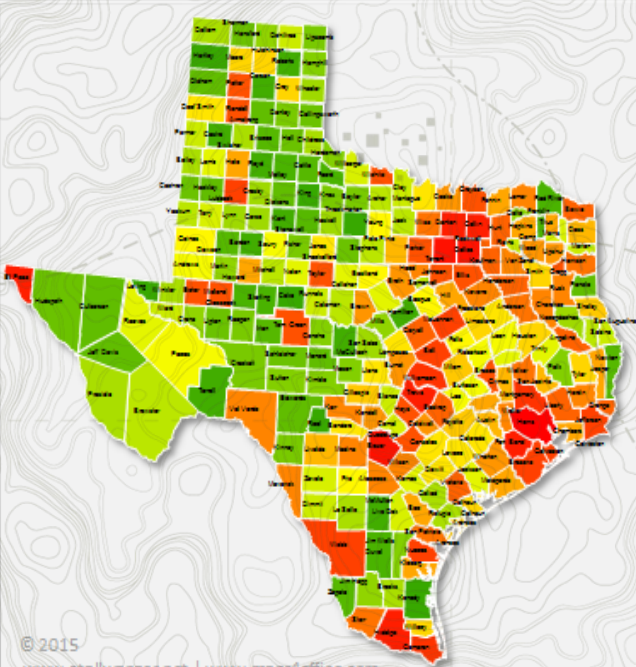


# Texas Population Maps

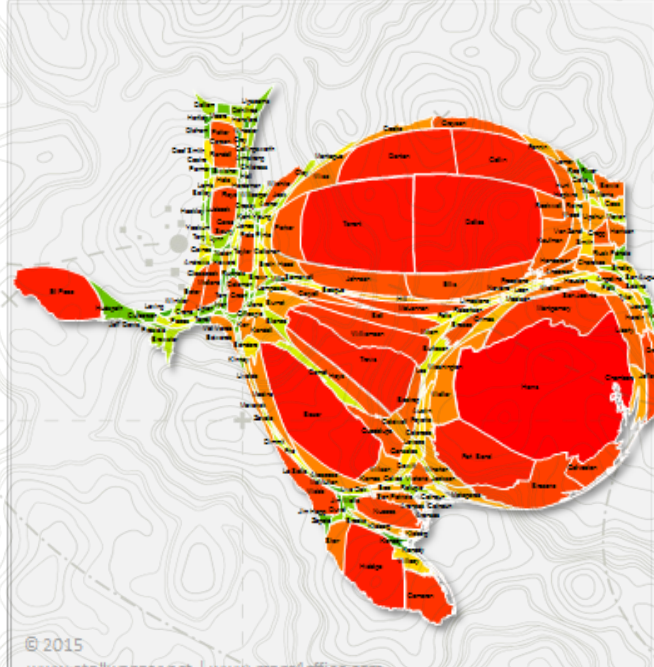
MAPS4OFFICE  
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Lambert Map

Anamorphic Map



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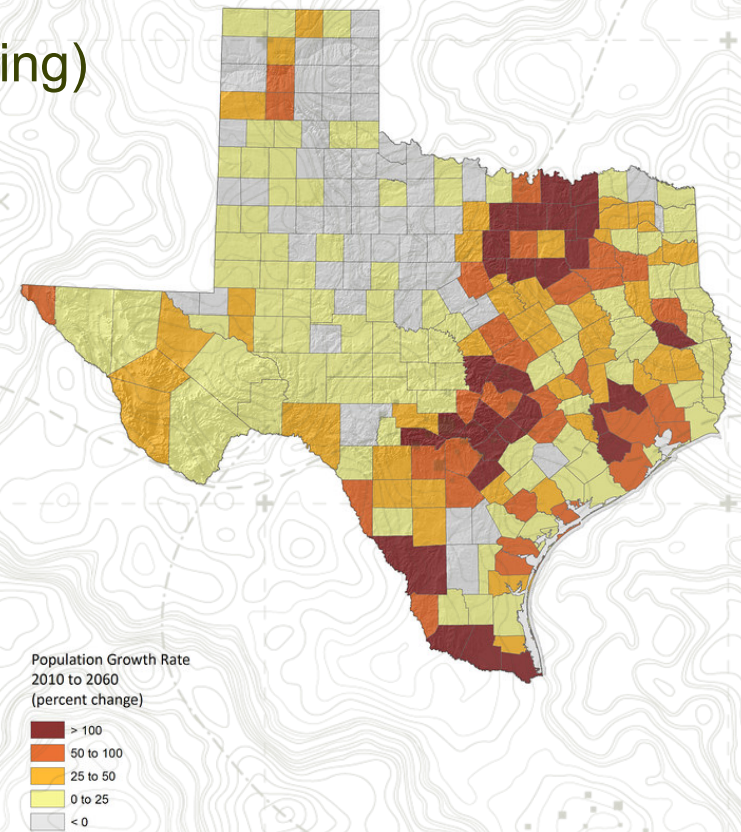
# Wildlife Management



# Wildlife Management Tax Valuation

Projected Texas Population Growth

- Open Space 1-d-1 Valuations
  - Traditional ag (now includes beekeeping)
  - Wildlife management
  - Timber management
- Why?
  - Non-resident landowners
  - Age/Ability/Generational Transfer
  - Something different...
  - Marginal agricultural lands
- Wildlife management valuation is another option for landowners



Source: Texas Land Trends, 2019



# Before you begin

- Talk to a biologist
  - Avoid unnecessary/harmful actions
  - Help develop a plan with feasible activities
  - Detailed habitat and soil descriptions
  - Ask questions
- Evaluate your commitment
  - Will you be living on the property?
  - Time/Money/Equipment needs?
  - Will you be conducting activities or hiring a third-party?





# How to Get Started

# Where should you begin?

*Small acreage can be relative to your location & habitat*

- Analyze your property
  - Plant identification – knowing your plants
  - Habitat types – understanding differences
  - Soil types – potential productivity
  - Current/Historic usage





# General Habitat types

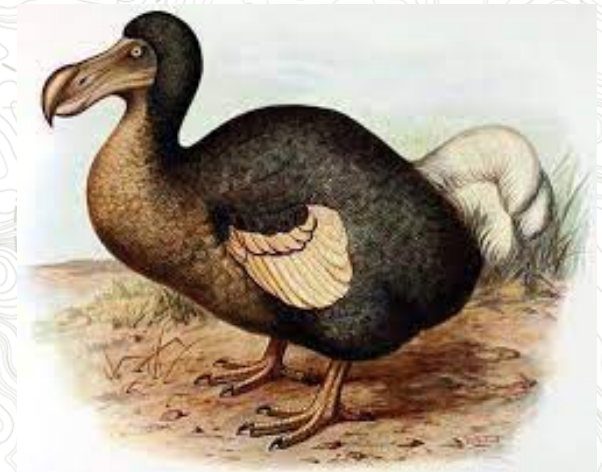
- Grasslands
- Woodlands
- Savannas/Shrublands
- Riparian





# Where should you begin?

- Develop target species
  - Sustainable population size
  - Feasibility (economically & biologically)
  - Management efforts directly impact
  - Important to you!





# Where should you begin?

- Common
  - Game species
  - Deer, quail, turkey
- Not target species
  - Feral hogs
  - Exotic species (Axis, Fallow, etc.)
- Options for small properties
  - Songbirds, owls, doves, waterfowl
  - Pollinators
  - Small mammals
  - Reptiles & amphibians





# Management Activities



# Wildlife Management Activity Categories

- 1) Habitat Control
- 2) Erosion Control
- 3) Predator Control
- 4) Supplemental Food
- 5) Supplemental Water
- 6) Supplemental Shelter
- 7) Census





# Management Considerations

- Managing/manipulating plants to create **diversity**  
(*structure & composition*)
- Managing the “mouths”  
your property
- Managing pests
- Measuring results
  - Census activities





# Food

- Using feeders to supply supplemental feed
  - Scratch grains
  - Black oil sunflower seed
  - Nectar
  - Minerals
- Managing existing plants
  - Discing
  - Mowing
  - Prescribed fire
- Growing food
  - Native plant seeding
  - Food plots (*not just for deer*)





# Water

- Natural sources
  - Ponds
  - Streams
  - Lakes
  - Wet weather creeks
- Supplemental sources
  - Modified troughs
  - Trough/windmill overflow
  - Guzzlers / water tables





# Shelter

- Nesting boxes
  - Songbirds
  - Owls
  - Ducks
- Bat houses
- Brush piles & slash retention
- Strip mowing
- “Snag” management





# ~~Wildlife~~ *Plant* Management

- **Diversity** is key!
- **Brush management**
  - Manipulating structure & diversity
- **Shallow discing**
  - Increase diversity
  - Weeds and bugs aren't all bad!
- **Timing matters when you are talking about plants!**
- **Prescribed burning**
  - Logistically challenging
  - Can get help from TPWD & prescribed fire associations





# Controlling “mouths” on your property

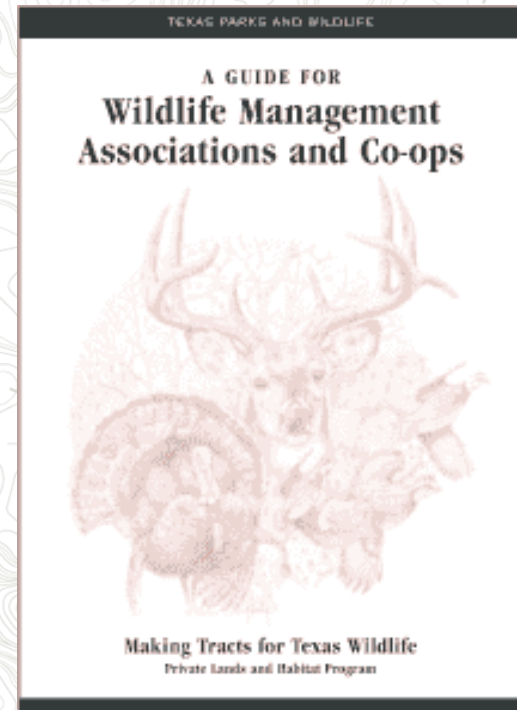
- Hunting (controlling browsers)
  - White-tailed Deer
  - Exotic species
- Grazing management
  - Walking shredder and disk
  - Developing a grazing plan
  - Working with a Co-op for smaller acreages





# Need help ? WMAs or Co-ops

- Several tracts with common goals
  - Larger area
- Can be a few or several properties
- Reduce fragmentation
  - (ownership vs habitat fragmentation)
- Pooled knowledge/resources
  - Grazing livestock
  - Equipment
  - Personnel





# Pigs & Pests

- Nest parasites
  - Predator baffles
  - Cowbird trapping
- Predator Control
  - Feral hogs
  - Coyotes
  - Raccoons
- Important red fire ants
- Non-native plants





# Measuring Success

- A good plan should be adaptive
- Census activities
  - Monitoring of non-game wildlife
  - Wildlife camera stations
  - Incidental observations
  - Any type of measuring...
- Be consistent with your measurement techniques





# Conclusion

- Fragmentation is increasing – smaller, more expensive properties, and loss of open-space lands
- Private landowners are essential to conservation and wildlife management in Texas
- Understanding your land is key to your management success
- Develop a plan with achievable goals
- Working with neighboring properties can greatly benefit your wildlife and management success





# FAMILY OF COMPANIES





# THANK YOU!

## Plateau Land & Wildlife Management

Less work, more enjoyment.

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# Questions?