

21ST CENTURY LANDOWNER GUIDE

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TEXAS MODEL



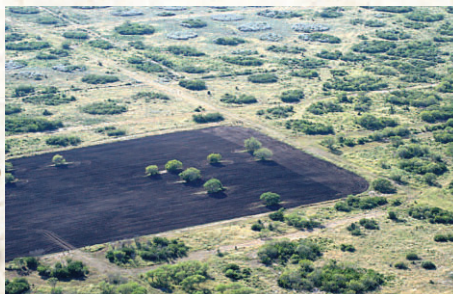


Texas is a vast and diverse landscape encompassing over 268,820 square miles with 3,700 streams, 15 major rivers and mountains as high as 8,751 feet. Annual rainfall ranges from 8" in the West to more than 56" in the East. Texas is the second largest state in the United States and contains at least 11 diverse and unique biotic habitats resulting in the greatest game diversity in the nation.

The Lone Star state contains more than 4.5 million white-tailed deer, the largest wild turkey population in the United States and is the #1 hunting destination for exotic hoof stock.

From the very first to the present day, Texan private property remains a cherished and divine sanctuary.

The people of Texas recognize and appreciate the efforts and dedication of private landowners to enhance the welfare of all wildlife for future generations to enjoy.





The keystone of Texas wildlife management is the private landowner representing 97% of all wild spaces. These landowners, at their sole discretion, provide access to others for the enjoyment of wildlife that exist on their privately owned property.

Responsible use of wildlife by Texas landowners, along with reasonable regulatory oversight, represents longstanding ecological, social, cultural and economical connections in human history. Throughout the state, many landowners depend on conservative use of wildlife resources and their habitats to ensure economic security and the basic fiber of social and spiritual lives.





Sustainable wildlife populations are directly dependent upon private landowners, thus landowner rights and protection—including trespass and liability laws—should be strengthened with regard to state and federal laws. In no event should the rights and privileges of Texas landowners be weakened for any purpose, including the public trust doctrine.

The user-pay system of wildlife conservation in Texas is well-documented and has more than fulfilled the dreams of its early founders. Trespass fees are a potential source of revenue that provide critical incentive for the sound management of habitat as well as the wildlife that depend upon it. These revenues benefit the Texas economy, especially rural economies which continue to suffer from human population shifts and additional land fragmentation.





Actions taken by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department—the trustee of Texas’ wildlife resources—should be balanced between the needs of the public and private landowners.





Hunting is a privilege recognized as a biologically sound wildlife management tool, in which landowners retain sole discretion in granting trespass rights.

Hunting is fair chase when it complies with legally authorized harvest methods; but hunters have an ethical responsibility both to game animals, and the landowners who manage and protect them.

The hunting heritage in Texas is to be celebrated, and also, increased awareness of this important and rich legacy is to be encouraged.

The future of hunting depends on continued education and recruitment of hunters of all age, sex and ethnicity.

Wildlife management decisions should be science-based, while at the same time considering the societal and landowner needs. Current wildlife management permits, licenses and practices should be protected, yet flexible enough to accommodate new scientific discoveries and practices.



Reasonable and cautious response from state agencies during disease occurrences should consider and protect private landowners' rights and privileges, including multi-lab testing for any reportable disease.

Response to wildlife disease outbreaks by state agencies should be reasonable and prudent; protecting landowners' rights and privileges, while assuring the health of wildlife species and their ecosystems.

Wildlife management and conservation involves active rather than passive management of ecosystems, comprised of plants, animals and people.



Collaborators:*

Macy Ledbetter

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**These individuals have more than 170 years of combined professional experience managing wildlife and habitat resources on private property in Texas.*