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WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PLAN GUIDELINES FOR 1-d-1w PROPERTY TAX VALUATION

The following is intended to provide landowners with information to assist them in developing their own Wildlife Management Plan (WMP) for 1-d-1 Wildlife Management Property Tax Valuation. The management practices discussed are intended as guidelines to make landowners aware of the possibilities for their property. The format presented should be followed as closely as is possible. All Appraisal Districts require that a WMP be prepared for the property, but some prefer that the plan be developed for a five (5) year period with an Annual Report turned in each January after approval, and some prefer a one (1) year plan submitted annually.

The first thing to consider is: What do you want to do? That is, what is your goal in managing your property for wildlife? It can be anything from managing for songbirds and bats to managing for white-tailed deer and turkey. What is important to remember is that:

The land must be used to generate a sustaining breeding, migrating, or wintering population of indigenous wild animals.

Once your goal (or goals) has been determined, evaluate which of the 7 acceptable management activities you can implement on your property. You must implement at least 3 of the 7 activities each year to qualify. For each activity there are several management practices that can be used. Additionally, there are levels of intensity for each practice that must be satisfied, and you must address these intensity levels when writing your plan. The following is a list of management activities and their associated practices and minimum intensity levels for each practice.

1. Habitat Control

- a. Grazing Management: Select the type of grazing system to be implemented, and attach an initial grazing schedule to the plan.
- b. Prescribed Burning: A minimum of 15% of acreage annually burned over 7 years.
- c. Range Enhancement: A minimum of 10% of the total area designated in the plan, or a minimum of 10 acres annually, whichever is smaller, until the project is completed.
- d. Brush Management: A minimum of 10% of the total area designated in the plan, or a minimum of 10 acres annually, whichever is smaller. Can include the planting of native tree and shrub species per acre per year for the area designated in the plan. Also includes the removal of trees and brush.
- e. Riparian Management and Enhancement: A minimum of one project must be implemented and maintained every 10 years to qualify.
- f. Wetland Enhancement: Construction of a new project will qualify for 10 years.
- g. Habitat Protection for Species of Concern: A minimum of one project must be implemented every 10 years to qualify.
- h. Prescribed Control of Native, Exotic and Feral Species: The removal or control of exotic vegetation or the conversion of tame grass pastures must affect a minimum of 10% of the area designated in the plan, or 10 acres annually, whichever is smaller. Also includes the removal of exotic or feral wildlife.
- i. Wildlife Restoration: A TPWD approved restoration plan at a scale capable of supporting a sustainable population.

2. Erosion Control

- a. Pond Construction and Major Repair: A minimum of one project must be implemented and maintained every 10 years.
- b. Gully Shaping: A minimum of one project must be implemented and maintained every 10 years.
- c. Streamside, Pond, and Wetland Revegetation: A minimum of one project must be implemented and maintained every 10 years.
- d. Plant Establishment on Critical Areas (erodible): A minimum of 10 seedlings per acre must be planted on 10 acres or a minimum of 10%, whichever is smaller, of the total designated area treated annually.
- e. Dike/Levee Construction/Management: A minimum of one project must be completed every 10 years.

f. Establish Water Diversion: A minimum of one project must be completed every 10 years.

3. Predator Control

a. Predator Management: The predator control plan should be prepared or approved by a competent professional and include the list, duration and intensity of methods to remove the target species annually.

b. Imported Red Fire Ant Control: Proper treatment of at least 10 acres or 10% of infested area per year, whichever is more.

c. Control of Cowbirds: Removal of at least 30 cowbirds annually is required to qualify.

d. Grackle/Starling/House Sparrow Control: Removal of at least 30 grackles/starlings/house sparrows annually is required to qualify.

4. Providing Supplemental Supplies of Water

a. Marsh/Wetland Restoration or Development: A minimum requirement of one marsh/wetland restored or developed per 10 years; or annual water management of project or existing wetland.

b. Well/Troughs/Windmill Overflow/Other Wildlife Watering Facilities: A minimum of one project per 10 years must be completed to qualify. Consistent water management for wildlife at sites qualifies.

c. Sprint Development and/or Enhancement: A minimum of one project per 10 years must be completed to qualify; or existing or restored springs consistently managed to prevent degradation.

5. Providing Supplemental Supplies of Food

a. Grazing Management: Same as above.

b. Prescribed Burning: Same as above.

c. Range Enhancement: Same as above.

d. Food Plots: A minimum of 1% of the acreage should be planted in both winter and summer food plots.

e. Feeders and Mineral Supplementation: A minimum of one free-choice feeder per 320 acres in use during the recommended time period, with a minimum of 16% crude protein feed required to qualify.

f. Managing Tame Pasture, Old Fields and Croplands: A minimum of 5% of the designated area must be treated annually to qualify.

g. Transition Management of Tame Grass Monocultures: A minimum of 25% of the designated area must be treated annually to qualify.

6. Providing Supplemental Shelters

a. Nest Boxes, Bat Boxes: Number and location of nest boxes should be consistent with habitat needs and territorial requirements of the target species and sufficient over the area to provide a real supplement to the target population and address an identified severe limiting factor as part of a comprehensive wildlife management plan.

b. Brush Piles and Slash Retention: A minimum of 1 percent of the designated area must be treated annually to qualify.

c. Fence Line Management: A minimum width of 30 yards and length of 100 yards of fence line management per 314 mile of fence is required annually to qualify.

d. 1-lay meadow, Pasture and Cropland Management for Wildlife: Mowing/swathing of hay fields should be postponed until after the peak of nesting/rearing period of ground-nesting birds and mammals (July 15). Annually mow/shred 25% of open areas per year, preferably in strips or mosaic types of patterns, to create edge and structural diversity.

e. Half-Cutting Trees or Shrubs: A minimum of one clump of trees/shrubs per 100 yards on at least 10% of acreage or 10 acres, whichever is smaller, annually to qualify.

f. Woody Plant/Shrub Establishment: Plant a minimum of 500 seedlings annually, or 4 rows in a 120-foot width by a 34 mile in length.

g. Natural Cavity/Snag Development: A minimum of 5 snags per acre, on 5% of the acreage, must be retained/created annually to qualify.

7 Making Census Counts to Determine Populations

For census activity to qualify for deer, a combination of methods must be used to obtain a reasonable assessment of the deer herd for habitat and harvest management. For most properties, this will require spotlight surveys, daylight or incidental observations, and harvest data for all deer (age, weight, and antler measurements). Similar intensity should be applied for other species to qualify in this activity.

a. Spotlight Counts: A minimum of 3 counts, or a minimum of 15 surveyed miles, must be completed annually.

b. Aerial Counts: Counts should employ accepted methodology for the region and be performed by a trained individual annually.

c. Track Counts: Counts made on 3 consecutive days, minimum, using accepted methodology.

d. Daylight Deer Herd/Wildlife Composition Counts/Photo Stations. Counts should be conducted on standardized transects along 5 mile minimum lines and run at least 3 times (if shorter lines or used, a total of at least 15 miles must be surveyed), or through other standardized methodology to obtain at least 100 observations. On smaller tracts, as least five separate, two hour counts during early morning or late afternoon from deer stands (blinds) may be used.

e. Harvest Data Collect/Record Keeping: Collect all age, weight, and antler development data from harvested deer. Age and sex information should be obtained from game birds and waterfowl to determine sex ratios and annual production.

f. Browse Utilization Surveys: Annually examine deer browse species for degree of utilization on each major vegetative site on the property through vegetation analysis and stem counts.

g. Census of Endangered, Threatened, or Protected Wildlife: Regular, periodic counts of the target species.

h. Census and Monitoring of Nongame Wildlife Species: Regular, periodic counts of nongame wildlife species. This practice also includes developing checklists of wildlife diversity for the property.

i. Miscellaneous Counts: Specific species may require special survey techniques.

Time/area counts

Roost counts

Song bird transects and counts

Quail call and covey counts

Point counts

Drift fences and pitfall traps

Small mammal traps

Bat census

Nest box surveys between March 15 and August 15