Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board
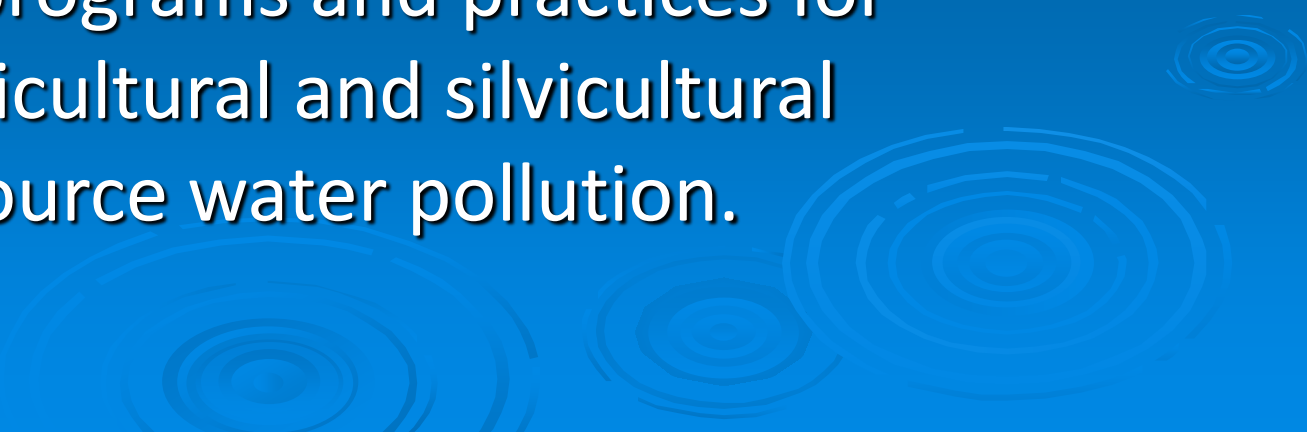# Water Quality Management Plan Program

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Agency Role

Water Quality Mandate - Texas Agriculture Code §201.026

Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) is the lead agency in Texas responsible for planning, implementing and managing programs and practices for abating agricultural and silvicultural nonpoint source water pollution.

Agency Role

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➢ Provide technical and financial assistance to local soil and water conservation districts

- *Local districts encourage landowners and agricultural producers to voluntarily conserve natural resources on their private lands through the implementation of best management practices*

➢ Results in a positive impact on state water resources, and protects soil quality which supports the strength of Texas' agricultural economy

How this gets done

TSSWCB administers several programs to achieve conservation goals across the state, they include, but are not limited to:

- Water Quality Management Plan Program
- Nonpoint Source Grant Program
- Rio Grande Carrizo Cane Eradication Program
- Flood Control Program

WQMP Program History

➤ Created by the 73rd Texas Legislature in 1993 through Senate Bill 503 (often referred to as 503 Program, or 503 plans, or 503 cost-share)

➤ Voluntary enrollment in WQMP Program for farmers and ranchers, except that the 77th Texas Legislature in 2001 (Senate Bill 1339) said poultry operations must obtain a WQMP

Water Quality Management Plans

- ➢ Site-specific plan for land improvement measures developed through SWCD for agricultural lands

- ➢ Provides farmers and ranchers a voluntary opportunity to achieve a level of pollution prevention or abatement consistent with state water quality standards

- ➢ Includes appropriate and essential land treatment practices, production practices, management measures, or technologies applicable to the planned land use

- ➢ Best available management and technology as described in NRCS Field Office Technical Guide

WQMPs

➢ Site specific plans with a <u>combination of BMPs</u> for the treatment of identified resource concerns

➢ Based on:

- Soil types

- Planned land use/production goals

- Known/potential water quality/natural resource problems (SWAPA)

- Other site specific factors (topo, etc.)

WQMPs

➢ Cover the <u>entire</u> farm or ranch

➢ Specifically designed to achieve pollution prevention/abatement

➢ Texas Water Code §26.121

Technical Criteria for WQMPs

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NRCS Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG)

To view all approved practices for selected county:

- http://efotg.nrcs.usda.gov/efotg_locator.aspx?map=TX
- Select region
- Select county
- Select Section IV
- Select A. Conservation Practices

FOTG "essential practices" for each land use:

➢ **Cropland**

  ➢ Conservation crop rotation

  ➢ Residue mgmt.

➢ **Pastureland**

  ➢ Prescribed grazing

  ➢ Livestock water

➢ **Rangeland**

  ➢ Prescribed grazing

  ➢ Livestock water

➢ **Wildlife**

  ➢ Wildlife mgmt.

➢ **Forestland**

  ➢ Forest mgmt.

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WQMPs also include:

➤ Nutrient management

➤ Pest management

➤ Animal waste management system

➤ Waste utilization

➤ Irrigation water management

WQMPs also include:

- ➢ Erosion control measures to bring soil loss to acceptable levels (T)

- ➢ Erosion control to treat other forms of erosion (i.e. gullies) according to FOTG quality criteria

- ➢ Other practices to meet site specific concerns

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Why have a WQMP?

➢ Abate/prevent erosion and promote conservation

➢ A strategic "management" plan for your operation

➢ "Assurance" policy – state-certified proof that you are implanting conservation practices

➢ Demonstrate that voluntary conservation programs promote agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible goals

➢ Demonstrate that agriculture is doing our part to protect water quality

➢ Resolve water quality complaints through voluntary process with SWCD and TSSWCB

WQMPs

What Does A Plan Contain?

➢ District-Cooperator Agreement

➢ Request for Planning Assistance

➢ Soils Map & Interpretations

➢ Conservation Plan Map

➢ Narrative Record of decisions (practices) needed to implement WQMP

➢ Implementation schedule indicating years practices are to be applied

➢ Worksheets used during the inventory and planning process of developing WQMP

➢ NRCS Practice Standards and engineering designs

➢ Signature sheet to verify individual's privacy

How to get a WQMP?

➢ An individual requests planning assistance through their local SWCD

➢ The WQMP is usually developed by the SWCD Technician with NRCS and TSSWCB assistance

➢ The WQMP is approved by the landowner, the SWCD and NRCS and then certified by the TSSWCB

➢ Producer implements the WQMP on their land

➢ Annual status reviews are conducted to ensure that the landowner implements BMPs as agreed to in the implementation schedule

Financial Assistance

State (TSSWCB) or Federal (NRCS) assistance is obtainable for certain conservation practices

- ➤ TSSWCB
  - ➤ WQMP Financial Assistance (State)
  - ➤ CWA Section 319h funding (Federal)
- ➤ NRCS
  - ➤ Farm Bill Programs (Federal)

WQMPs in Petronila and San Fernando Watersheds

Petronila

93 WQMPs on 18,907 acres total, 13,176 crop, 4111 pasture, 1380 range, 239 other

San Fernando

43 WQMPs on 10,112 acres total, 3807 crop, 1943, 3969 range, 392 other

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