

CENTRAL APPRAISAL DISTRICT
OF BANDER ACOUNTY
WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION



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WHAT IS WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT?

Wildlife Management is the exact same tax break as agricultural valuation. However, instead of producing food or fiber as a prudent farmer or rancher, you would focus on wildlife management.

To convert from agricultural use to wildlife management, the land size has to be 20 acres or greater and it has to have the five out of seven-year history of agricultural use. This 20-acre minimum only applies to tracts which have changed size from the prior year.

It sounds very easy, but it is not. First you have to look at your property and develop a wildlife management plan that would show what you are currently doing. Also, included within the plan, you will identify the elements you will add to your plan for the next five years.

Based on your property, you identify target animals (deer, turkey, quail, dove, song birds, ducks, etc.). Once you have your target animals, you identify at least three of seven qualifying items to do for each animal identified. These seven items are as follows:

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- | | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| Supplemental Food | Habitat Control |
| Supplemental Water | Erosion Control |
| Supplemental Shelter | Predator Control |

Census Count (require knowledge to be included yearly in the annual update)

Wildlife Management will require time, money, expertise, knowledge, and energy. BANCAD also requires an annual update and some type of annual census count.

Wildlife Management Qualifications

To begin utilizing “wildlife management” as a special valuation with the appraisal district, the land has to have been in agricultural use for five of the preceding seven years.

The land size has to be larger than 20 acres unless... it is in a property association (12.5 acres) ... or the target animal is candidate, threatened or endangered (11.11 acres).

Texas parks and Wildlife have developed guidelines and a fill-in-the-blank type of plan. This can be used as a guide.

The land size, topography, location, and surroundings as well as the target animal(s) selected will determine the suitability. [Example: land size could be over 20 acres but still not suitable for deer management]

For each target animal selected for management at least 3 of these 7 items must be performed. (Supplemental food, supplemental water, supplemental shelter, census counts, predator control, habitat control, & erosion control)

The Central Appraisal District of Bandera County requires the following on all wildlife management properties:

- An application to convert from agriculture to wildlife
- A personal five-year management plan
- Some type of census count
- An annual update
- A field review when requested

Ratio Percentage Designation for Wildlife Management

The chief appraiser with the advice and consent of the Appraisal District's Board of Directors designated a minimum acreage amount for wildlife management and a minimum acreage amount for wildlife management for a wildlife property association. The Texas Parks & Wildlife Department developed wildlife management standards that the Comptroller adopted. These standards and guidelines are specific for different eco-regions. Bandera County lies in the Edwards Plateau (Eastern) eco-region.

The County designated a minimum ratio devoted to wildlife management use. *It is important to emphasize that these ratios only affect properties that have been BOTH reduced in size and had a change in ownership since the previous tax year.*

In the Edwards Plateau (Eastern), the minimum shall be 93 percent (14.3 acres) to a maximum of 95 percent (20 acres).

“A tract of land's wildlife use requirement is a number expressed as a percentage and calculated by subtracting one from the total number of acres in the tract of land dividing the result by the total number of acres in the tract of land. The following formula expresses the calculation, with 'x' representing the tract of land's total acreage: $(x-1)$ divided by $x =$ wildlife use requirement.” **Texas Administrative Code, Title 34, Part 1, Chapter 9, Subchapter G, Rule 9.2005 (a)**

For example, Bandera County in the Edwards Plateau (Eastern) Eco-Region selected a ratio of 95 percent, resulting in a minimum size 20-acre tract to qualify. Or Bandera County could have selected 93 percent, thus allowing a 14.3-acre tract to qualify. This was determined based on locally determined needs of the county. The Central Appraisal District of Bandera County Board of Directors chose a percentage of 95 resulting in a 20-acre minimum in 2002.

For Wildlife Management Guidelines

	Percentage	# of Acres
Minimum	93%	14.29
	94%	16.67
Maximum	95%	20.00

Formula= $(20-1)$ or 19 divided by 20 = 95% or $(14.3-1)$ or 13.3 divided by 14.3 = 93%

Counties shall impose lower minimum ratio requirements for areas designated as wildlife property associations. In such areas, all properties within the area must have deed restriction, property owner agreements or conservation easements adequately addressing compatible wildlife activities. The chief Appraiser with the advice and consent of the Appraisal District's Board of Directors will designate a ratio one or two percent below the minimum designated for the region.

In the Edwards Plateau (Eastern) Region, the percentage must at least be 91 percent but not more than 92 percent. The ratio for the wildlife property association would be one or two

percent below the minimum of 93 percent for the region, so it would be designated by the county at 92(12.5 acres) or 91 percent (11.1 acres).

For Wildlife Property Associations

	Percentage	# of Acres
1% lower	92%	12.50
2% lower	91%	11.11

Formula= (12.5-1) or 11.5 divided by 12.5 = 92% or (11.1-1) or 10.1 divided by 11.1 = 91%

Areas with species of concern (candidate, threatened or endangered) are addressed in the same method as the wildlife property association. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department will designate these properties.

	Percentage	# of Acres
1% lower	92%	12.50
2% lower	91%	11.11

The percentages for Wildlife Property Associations and species of concern were also designated by the Board of Directors in 2002.

An exception may be granted should a tract of land not meet the new standards if the land owner can provide “clear and convincing evidence” that the property is unique and wildlife management is possible on a smaller tract.

Wildlife Management Application Process

Converting from 1-d-1 Agricultural Use to Wildlife Management

Requirements:

- Must already be in qualified Ag (1-d-1) Special Use Valuation with the 5-year history
- Must be 20 acres or greater excluding the acre for house (if there is a house)

Year One:

- Turn in 1-d-1 Open Space Application
- Turn in Wildlife Management Plan which includes specific detailed information (see List)
- Start the wildlife management outlined in the plan
- If information meets qualifications the application will be approved this year
- BANCAD will do a field inspection to verify what has been done
- Intensity guidelines for our Eco area are to be followed
- If qualifications are met – you will turn in your annual (application) update and follow the yearly process all the wildlife managers follow

Following Years:

- File Wildlife Management Annual Update and each subsequent year thereafter
- Property may be subject to review and field inspection for verification of plan activities

A Wildlife Management Plan will include:

Property Description:

- Map with size & location
- Soil Map or types of soil
- Map [identifying key locations of feeders, food plots, water, path, brush piles, prescribed burn areas (with years identified), etc.]

Target Animals:

- Wildlife currently there and what you want to accomplish
- Land usage (grazing, fishing, hunting, etc. described)

Detailed Description of the following (if they apply to your planned goals or current use).

Supplemental Food

- What feed? Feed for what animal? Map with feeder locations.
- How many feeders? All Year? How Much? How Often?
- Food Plots? Where? When? Every year? How do you plant? (no till)?
- Mineral supplements? Grazing management?

Supplemental Shelter

- Nest boxes, bird houses?
- Brush piles, half-cutting trees?

Supplemental Water

- New pond being built?
- Marsh development or enhancement?
- Other types of watering methods?

Habitat Control

- Grazing management, prescribed burning
- Range enhancement (re-seeding)
- Brush management
- Fence modification, etc

Erosion Control

- Pond construction, gully shaping, dike, water diversion
- Plan establishment on erodible areas

Predator Control

- Identify what the predator or predators are
- Describe how you are controlling this predator(s)
- Keep records on the kills and include in annual updates

Census Counts

- Describe how you will conduct your census each year (spotlight counts, game cameras, aerial counts, harvest data collection & record keeping, browse surveys, roost counts, time/area counts, call and convey counts)

We need to understand what is already done, what you plan to do next year, and the 5 year (long term) goals you plan to accomplish.

Once the Wildlife Management is approved the process is as follows:

ANNUAL UPDATE

- Each and every year the wildlife manager is required to file an annual update.
- The annual update must include some type of census data, as the managers should have knowledge of their census.
- A sample of an update is provided. This is a narrative description of the wildlife management performed the previous year.

ON-SITE FIELD INSPECTIONS

The state requires that all wildlife management properties will have an on-site field inspection. Bandera CAD prefers to have the owner or manager present for the field inspections. Generally, the inspections take less than one hour to complete.

There is a “Field Inspection Check List” that needs to be filled out. This will be checked by the appraiser or consultant who will take a few photos for verification.

We have included an intensity guideline for our eco region for your convenience. This will aid you in setting your long-term goals.

Helpful Ideas on Data Gathering

Wildlife Management Updates

Management requires work, time, and resources. Any information you have pertaining to these should be maintained.

- ✓ Receipts and any documentation on your work should be added to your folder
- ✓ Notebook to journal daily / weekly observations
- ✓ Records on any and all schooling and courses you have attended pertaining to your wildlife management

BANCAD requires some type of “census counts”

- ✓ Decide how often and which method to use on your census counts

(How can you manage something unless you know what you have and if your management is succeeding?)

Information to include in your update:

- ✓ Have you started a new project?
- ✓ What items have you completed?
- ✓ What new projects are in the planning stage?
- ✓ What year do you intend to have that project completed?
- ✓ Did you accomplish your goals?
- ✓ What results are you seeing?
- ✓ Do you need to adjust your plan?

Please include an email address as this will make lines of communication convenient. Also, include a primary day time phone number.

“True Wildlife enthusiasts desire active use of the property with the property owners living up to their responsibilities.”

BANCAD Wildlife Management

Field Inspection Check List

Property Owner: _____ Phone#: _____

Property ID#'s: _____

Total Acreage: _____ Owner present? _____yes _____no

Date of Inspection: _____ Appraiser(s): _____

Target Animals Check List:

____Deer ____Turkey ____Quail ____Dove ____Water Fowl ____ Song Bird ____Other (list)

____ Supplemental Food Circle & Note

Feeders # - location - amount time, Mineral Supplementation (details), Food Plots 1 yr, Fence Modification 5 yr, Grazing Management 1 yr, Prescribed burning 15%, Re-seeding 10%

____ Supplemental Water Circle & Note

Wetland Restoration or Development 5 yr, Well – Trough – Windmill Overflow 5 yr, Spring Development or Enhancement 5 yr

____ Providing Shelters Circle & Note

Nest Boxes 1 yr, Bat Boxes 1 yr, Brush Piles & Slash Retention 3%, Fence Line Management 300", Crop Management 1 yr, Half- cutting trees or shrubs 10%, Woody Plant/Shrub Establishment #500, Natural Cavity / Snag Development 5/ac

____ Habitat Control Circle & Note

Management Plan 1 yr, Grazing Management 1 yr, Prescribed Burning 15%, Range Enhancement (re-seeding) 10%, Brush Management 10%, Vegetation Surveys 1 yr, Fence Modification 5 yr, Riparian Management & Enhancement 5 yr, Wetland Enhancement 5 yr, Wildlife Restoration 1 yr, other species of concern (list)

____ Erosion Control Circle & Note

Pond Construction 5 yr, Gully Shaping 5 yr, Streamside-Pond-Wetland Re-vegetation 3yr, Native Plant Establishment on Erodible Areas #150, Dike/levee Construction or Management 5 yr, Establish Water Diversion 5 yr

____ Predator Control Circle & Note

Predator Management 1 yr, Control of Brown headed Cowbirds #100, Grackle/Starling Control #100

____ Census Circle & Note

All count for year of count only, Spotlight Counts 3/yr, Aerial Counts 1/yr, Daylight County 3/yr, Collection & record keeping, Time/ar3ea counts, camera records, Quail Call & Covey Counts, Songbird, Roost, others list

INTENSITY 5 YEAR GUIDE

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PLAN OVERVIEW - INTENSITY LEVELS FOR PRATICE OVER 5 YEARS

TREATMENTS	PRATICE	INTENSITY LEVEL	TIMING	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5
HABITAT CONTROL:								
HC: Wildlife &Habitat Management Plan	1 yr							
HC: Grazing Management	1 yr							
HC: Prescribed Burning	15%							
HC: Range Enhancement (re-seeding)	10%							
HC: Brush Management	10%							
HC: Vegtation Surveys	1 yr							
HC: Fense Modification	5 yr							
HC: Riparian Management & Enhancement	5 yr							
HC: Wetland Enhancement	5 yr							
HC: Habitat Protection/Species of Concern	5 yr							
HC: Prescirbed Control of Species	10%							
HC: Wildlife Restoration	1 yr							
EROSION CONTROL:								
EC: Pond Construction	5 yr							
EC: Gully Shaping	5 yr							
EC: Streamside, Pond, Wetland, Re-Vegetation	3 yr							
EC: Native Plant Establishment on Erodible Areas	150#							
EC: Dike/Levee Construction/Management	5 yr							
EC: Establish Water Diversion	5 yr							
PREDATOR CONTROL:								
PC: Predator Management	1 yr							
PC: Control of Brown-Headed Cowbirds	100#							
PC: Grackle/Starling Control	100#							
SUPPLEMENTAL WATER:								
SW: Marsh/Wetland Restoration or Development	5 yr							
SW: Well/Trough/Windmill Overflow	5 yr							
SW: Spring Development and /or Enhancement	5 yr							
SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD:								
SF: Grazing Management	1 yr							
SF: Prescribed Burning	15%							
SF: Range Enhancement (Re-Seeding)	10%							
SF: Fence Modification	5 yr							
SF: Food Plots	1 yr							
SF: Feeders & Mineral Supplementation	1/320 ac							
SF: Managing Tame Pasture, Old Fields, Croplands	5%							
PROVIDING SHELTERS:								
PS: Nest Boxes, Bat Boxes	1 yr							
PS: Brush Piles & Slash Retention	3%							
PS: Fence Line Management	300-ft							
PS: Cropland Management	1 yr							
PS: Half-Cutting Trees or Shrubs	10%							
PS: Woody Plant/Shrub Establishment	500#							
PS: Natural Cavity/Snag Development	5/ac							
CENSUS:								
C: Spotlight counts	3/yr							
C: Aerial Counts	1 yr							
C: Daylight Wildlife Counts	3@5-mi							
C: Harvest Data Collection & Record Keeping	1 yr							
C: Browse Utilization Surveys	1 yr							
C: Non-Game Wildlife Species	1 yr							
C: Time/Area Counts	1 yr							
C: Roost Counts	1 yr							
C: Song Bird Transects & Counts	1 yr							
C: Quail call & Convey Counts	1 yr							
C: Point Counts	1 yr							

EXAMPLE OF ANNUAL WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Robert's Roost Ranch
Doug & Dee Dee Roberts
7 Paradise Place
This side of Heaven, TX 97824
(830) 792 -9999

Total AC: 800

PID'S: 123456, 123457, 123478, & 123459

Our main target animals are deer, turkey, quail, & song birds. The 2015 years was still in drought recovery through most of the year. We modified our plan due to the drought and focused on supplemental feed instead of food plots.

For 2015 we followed our plan of staggered landscaping. We have opened up areas for the strip crops (which failed last year). We have half-cut about 1/6th of the cedars on a 100-acre tract and dug out about a 1/6th of the cedars on the same 100 acres. Our three ponds were enhancement and reshaped during the drought – they are filling up nicely and currently hold twice the water as before.

DEER:

We continue to supplement their food with 10 – 100 lb. feeders set up in various locations. We feed year-round. The feeders are typically filled about 2 times a month (3 times a month in winter). Additionally, we have 4 mineral supplement areas for the deer. There was only one deer harvested in 2014. You can see from the rack (on the one buck our grandson harvested this year) the mineral supplements are working. (Photo included) Because of the size of our tract and the feed and relative safety for the deer, our census remains about the same (20).

TURKEY:

It looks like we have 3 flocks of turkey on our land. In the spring, our game cameras indicate each flock has about 24 hens. None were harvested. The predator control of the coyote really paid off. We killed 18 that were located in the south area. We will pay attention to the predators for the 2016 year.

QUAIL:

The quail we set out for the last three years have all but vanished. We have called for them, but have not located them. We want to continue to set out and help the quail population, but may wait another year until the drought is behind us. We want to concentrate our time and money on the animals that are already here for this stressful time.

SONG BIRDS:

We have a 20-acre sanctuary for song birds beside our home. We added 10 more blue bird houses to the 30 we already had. We have 6 martin – condo houses. We have about 30 assorted bird houses in the area. We added another 2 acres this year that we planted specifically for the birds and butterflies. The butterfly plants, sunflowers and other plants are all thriving. The area was irrigated when we added 50 water features to attract the birds last year. This was a school project for our grand-daughter, who also researched the birds with cameras and a daily observation diary. This area was home to about 30 painted buntings, 100 finches, 80 blue birds, and thousands of ribbons that went through the area. We have over 100 different feeders and the plants for our supplemental feed. A fun thing our grand-daughter did this year was to identify bird songs.

PREDATOR CONTROL:

The west side of the property joins the Medina River and has shown some feral hog activity. We contracted with a hunting group and put out 3 different hog traps. The hunting group killed 15 hogs and our traps netted 10 hogs throughout the year that we killed. The 20-acre bird sanctuary was treated for fire ants two times last year. We used the topical Diazasanine at 80 percent. We had 18 coyotes snared last year (all on the south end of the property). In addition, we killed 2 raccoons, 5 skunks and 13 rattle-snakes.

FUTURE PLANS:

For the 2016 year, we plan to remove one-sixth of the cedars from approximately 80 acres. We will half-cut about half of those and remove the other half. We plan to continue our road-way for our hiking and riding trail and continue with our staggered landscaping. We are adding a 10-acre lake as our main project.