



TEXAS STATE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION BOARD

QUARTERLY REPORT - FALL 2023



TSSWCB RECEIVES OVER \$4 MILLION FROM EPA TO MANAGE WATER POLLUTION

The Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) recently received a grant of \$4,003,350 from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The grant will support TSSWCB's Texas Nonpoint Source (NPS) Management Program which addresses water pollution caused by water runoff that carries pollutants into rivers, lakes, and other waterbodies.

Projects include implementing agricultural components of watershed protection plans for Leon River, Lavon Lake, Petronila, and San Fernando Creeks. In addition, the funds will provide educational and outreach opportunities for landowners through the Lone Star Healthy Streams Program and Lone Star Healthy Streams Feral Swine Component as well as provide supplemental water quality monitoring in the Plum Creek, Lampasas River and the Geronimo and Alligator Creeks watersheds.

"TSSWCB is proud to work alongside conservation partners and local Soil and Water Conservation Districts to provide technical and financial assistance to landowners in impaired watersheds. We aim to implement conservation practices that will encourage the protection and wise use of Texas' natural resources," said Jana Lloyd, TSSWCB NPS Grant Coordinator.

The federal Clean Water Act requires States to develop a plan to protect the quality of water resources from the adverse effects of nonpoint source water pollution. NPS pollution is all water pollution that does not originate from regulated point sources. Types of regulated point sources include wastewater treatment facilities, municipal stormwater systems, and concentrated animal feeding operations. NPS pollution occurs when rainfall flows off the land, roads, buildings, and other features of the landscape. This diffuse runoff carries pollutants into drainage ditches, lakes, rivers, wetlands, bays, and aquifers.

The Texas NPS Management Program is a comprehensive strategy for addressing nonpoint source pollution across Texas, where assessment has determined that water quality is impaired or threatened. TSSWCB implements the agricultural and silvicultural aspects of Total Maximum Daily Loads and Watershed Protection Plans through assessment, planning, implementation, education, and research.

PROGRAM UPDATES

BUDGET & ACCOUNTING

- TSSWCB approved an increase in the maximum reimbursable rate for Technical Assistance to \$25.00/hour. The new rate will be effective for work beginning October 1, 2023.
- Annual Financial Reports
 - October 30th is the deadline for submitting Financial Statements prepared by the district.
 - October 30th is the date for districts using a CPA to prepare their Financial Statement, Review, or Audit to have provided all required information to their selected CPA.
- District Director Mileage and Per Diem
 - The deadline for submitting Fiscal Year 2023 4th Quarter claims is September 30th.
- Technical Assistance
 - The deadline for submitting Fiscal Year 2023 regular and supplemental claims is September 30th.
- Technical Service Provider
 - The deadline for submitting claims for Fiscal Year 2023 NRCS Farm Bill Assistance (TSP) is September 30th.
- Matching Funds
 - The deadline for submitting Fiscal Year 2023 regular and supplemental claims is September 30th.
- Manual of Fiscal Operations
 - The manual is being updated to incorporate changes from the 88th legislative session with an updated version to be made available on the SWCD resources page on October 2, 2023.

IMPORTANT DATES & DEADLINES

Important Dates and Deadlines for Calendar Year 2022 is now available at the SWCD resources section on the TSSWCB Website. Please note the SWCDs resource section on the TSSWCB website contains documents, forms and important updates to SWCDs in conducting their daily business operations.

FLOOD CONTROL PROGRAM

- The State Board approved \$4,000,000 for dam operation and maintenance (O&M) grants for fiscal year 2024. Proposals for O&M work are currently being accepted. Proposals will be funded until available funding is exhausted. Work on funded proposals must be completed within 90 days of Purchase Order date. Guidance for O&M in Fiscal Year 2024 may be downloaded from the TSSWCB website.
- For FY24, \$20,000,000 is available for structural repair. Applications for the Dam Structural Repair Grant Program are currently being accepted. Deadline to apply for structural repair is November 1, 2023. Application forms may be downloaded from the TSSWCB Flood Control Program website. Applications received before the deadline will be scored and ranked for funding based on the "Policies and Procedures – Structural Repair," which can also be downloaded from the website. Currently, \$110 million is needed to repair about 166 flood control program dams in Texas, and \$2 Billion is needed to upgrade and rehabilitate about 500 high hazard dams where downstream urban development has resulted in public safety issues.

PROGRAM UPDATES

TEXAS NONPOINT SOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

On August 11, 2023, staff issued the FY2024 Request for Proposals (RFP) for the NPS Grant Program. The RFP was published in the Texas Register, posted on the TSSWCB website, and all SWCDs and cooperating entities were notified of the funding opportunity. TSSWCB Staff identified priority areas and activities for this funding cycle based on the Texas NPS Management Program and the Integrated Report. The RFP closed on September 22, 2023. The TSSWCB received 22 proposals from various entities across the state, requesting approximately \$6.3 million in funding. Staff is currently reviewing the proposals.

WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN PROGRAM

With the enactment of Senate Bill 503 (73rd Regular Session - Sims / Counts) in 1993, the Texas Legislature designated the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) the lead agency in the state for the abatement, management, and prevention of nonpoint source pollution from agricultural or silvicultural sources. Additionally, the Legislature authorized the agency to administer a certified water quality management plan (WQMP) program, complete with a cost-share program to incentivize participation and offset the cost of implementing soil and water land improvement measures, for lands within the state. For FY2023 as of August 31, 155 WQMPs have been certified on 67,513 total acres.

COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH

- 2024 Conservation Awards Program: The 2024 Conservation Awards Program Packet has been emailed out to all districts and is available online.
- 2024 SWCD Director & Employee Workshop: The workshop will be held April 2-3, 2024 at the Mayborn Convention Center in Temple. Registration and hotel room blocks will open up after the first of the year. More details will be released soon.

CARRIZO CANE ERADICATION PROGRAM

In FY23, the CCEP received funding through General Revenue and the Office of the Governor for Disaster Funds for Border Security that treated 741.2 acres at a total cost of \$2,053,058.15. Approximately 29.4 miles of Carrizo cane was treated in areas deemed by DPS as high priority in Cameron, Maverick, and Val Verde counties. Staff continues working with DPS, Border Patrol, SWCDs, Irrigation Districts, and landowner groups to determine potential areas for future treatment of Carrizo cane.



TSSWCB EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER

Dakota Massey has been a part of TSSWCB for one year. She currently holds the position of Natural Resource Specialist III in the Nonpoint Source Program at the Temple Office. She consistently radiates positivity in the workplace, works to foster a collaborative atmosphere, and demonstrates a strong willingness to embrace new challenges that extend beyond her designated responsibilities.