



Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board

Quarterly Program Update: Winter 2022



Brandenberger Retires After 54 Years of Service to Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board

In 1968, Don Brandenberger embarked upon what will go down in the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) history books as the longest serving employee since its establishment in 1938.

During his tenure he witnessed the relocation of all 4 TSSWCB Headquarter Offices in Temple, 10 out of the 11 Executive Directors, the funding of 6 new agency programs and saw the creation or re-establishment of 63 soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs).

Don worked as a Field Representative traveling throughout Central Texas serving as a resource to 21 SWCDs covering 25 counties. Brandenberger is well known across the state of Texas for his hard work, dedication, generous heart and his love for making others laugh.

Don is a resident of Clifton, Texas where he has a ranching operation with 200 cattle. He was a husband of 54 years to his late wife Alice, is a father to Mark and Mary Ann and “Big” to his grand-kids Dacey, Mason and Makail. His family sings his praise and says he has instilled in them the importance of giving selflessly and loving others. Don is their #1 fan and never misses a football, volleyball, baseball game, dance recital or stock show.

Over the years he has spent many hours at FFA and 4-H contests, stock shows and other events supporting, teaching and caring for kids across the state. He has cooked about a million hamburgers and hot dogs for countless events. He is truly an exemplary human being and someone who selflessly serves always.

He was a Tarleton Texan and a Texas Tech Red Raider graduating with a degree in Animal Husbandry. Before joining TSSWCB, he was a County Extension Agent and also served our country in the Army.

Brandenberger has made a true impact on TSSWCB as well as our friends of conservation across Texas. We wish him the best in his retirement!

Program Updates

• BUDGET & ACCOUNTING

- Conservation Activity Program: Form has been updated for Fiscal Year 2023 and is available on the SWCD resources page of the TSSWCB website.
- Financial Statement Forms: Forms have been updated for Fiscal Year 2022 reporting and are available on the SWCD resources page of the TSSWCB website.
- The SWCD Manual of Fiscal Operations: Updated October 2022 and available on the SWCD resources page of the TSSWCB website.

Important Dates and 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 \$2,000,000 for dam operation and maintenance (O&M) grants for fiscal year 2023. All of this funding has been obligated. Work on funded proposals must be completed within 90 days of Purchase Order date. For FY 2023, \$6,000,000 is available for structural repair. It is anticipated that all of these funds will be used to cover high bids on previously funded projects and provide matching funds for federal rehabilitation projects. TSSWCB is now able to transfer ESF funds from one ESF obligated project to another ESF obligated project when needed to accommodate cost increases. Since 2019 construction has been completed on 50 dam repairs, upgrades, and rehabilitations. Sixteen repair, upgrade, and rehab projects are in construction. Sponsors are preparing to get bids on 10 additional funded projects. Federal rehabilitation planning continues on 14 high hazard dams. Currently, \$110 million is needed to repair about 164 flood control program dams in Texas, and \$2.0 Billion is needed to upgrade and rehabilitate about 500 high hazard dams where downstream urban development has resulted in public safety issues.

• 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 December 19th, 45 WQMPs have been certified on 14,809 total acres.

• CARRIZO CANE ERADICATION PROGRAM

During September 2022, staff oversaw the spraying of 448.0 acres of carrizo cane using the Drone method in Starr and Hidalgo counties for a total cost of \$828,800.00. All GR 23 funds that were allocated for spraying carrizo cane have been utilized. Recently, the TSSWCB submitted a request to the Office of the Governor for an advance of \$718,766 for the mitigation of carrizocane in an area deemed high priority by the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) to ensure border security along the Rio Grande River. This advance was approved by the OOG and will provide the immediate reimbursement to contractors for the work performed along a 1.5 mile section of the Rio Grande in Maverick County. The mitigation of carrizo cane in this area is ongoing.

• FERAL SWINE CONTROL PILOT PROGRAM

Staff has been working with project partners to implement the Feral Swine Control Pilot Program in 15 counties. As of September 30, 2022, fifteen local SWCDs in the pilot project areas have purchased almost 100 smart traps that have been utilized on 473,147 acres by 154 landowners. Landowners have trapped over 4,650 feral hogs through the trap loan efforts.

Program Updates

- COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH

- 2023 Conservation Awards Program

The 2023 Conservation Awards Program Packet has been mailed out to all districts and is available online.

- 2023 SWCD Director & Employee Workshop

The workshop will be held April 4-5, 2023 at the Mayborn Convention Center in Temple. Registration opened January 2nd and will close March 15th. More information on registration and hotels can be found at: <https://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/programs/public-information-and-education/soil-and-water-conservation-district-leadership>

- TEXAS NONPOINT SOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

On August 15, 2022, staff issued the FY2023 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 23, 2022. The TSSWCB received 20 proposals from various entities across the state, requesting approximately 5 million in funding.

- HUMAN RESOURCES

TSSWCB currently has 3 positions open: Government Relations Specialist I, *Temple*, Natural Resources Specialist III, *Nacogdoches Regional Office* and Natural Resources Specialist III, *San Angelo Regional Office*. For more information visit: <https://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/contact-us/employment>

Districts Celebrating 75 Years of Service in 2022

Lipscomb #134

Moore County #137

Hemphill County #138

Devil's River #224

Upper Llanos #225

Medina Valley #226

Starr County #332

Long Leaf #439

Navasota #440

*We appreciate your dedication to conserving
the natural resources of Texas!*