



TEXAS STATE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION BOARD

QUARTERLY REPORT - FALL 2024

TSSWCB RELEASES 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

The Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) proudly announces the release of its 2024 Annual Report, showcasing a year of remarkable achievements in soil and water conservation efforts across the state. The report highlights key initiatives, partnerships, and programs that have advanced the agency's mission to protect Texas' natural resources for future generations.

Key Highlights of the 2024 Annual Report:

- **Flood Control:** Currently, \$14 million is needed for Operation & Maintenance (O&M) on 2,000 dams, \$110 is needed to repair 166 flood control program dams in Texas, and \$3 billion is needed to upgrade and rehabilitate about 500 high hazard dams.
- **Nonpoint Source:** There are currently 9 ongoing state funded projects addressing an array of agricultural and silvicultural NPS issues.
- **Water Quality Management Plan:** From September 1, 2023 through August 31, 2024, there have been 174 new WQMPs certified on 94,572 acres.

The report also outlines the agency's goals for 2025, which include expanding technical assistance for farmers and ranchers, enhancing community engagement, and continuing to address emerging conservation challenges through innovative approaches.

The 2024 Annual Report is now available for public viewing here: <https://tsswcb.texas.gov/sites/default/files/files/docs/About/2024%20Annual%20Report%20for%20Final%20Review.pdf>.

Stakeholders and community members are encouraged to review the report and learn more about ongoing efforts to protect Texas' natural resources.

Registration Now Open for 2025 SWCD Director & Employee Workshop

The annual workshop will be held at the Frank W. Mayborn Civic & Convention Center in Temple on April 8-9, 2025. This workshop provides attendees with the opportunity to learn more about their duties of the Soil and Water Conservation District Program and how to address issues relevant to the state of Texas' natural resources.

PROGRAM UPDATES

BUDGET & ACCOUNTING

2024 Internal Audit Report

- The annual Internal Audit Report for the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board has been completed and is available under the Agency Reports section of the TSSWCB website.

2024 Annual Financial Report

- The Annual Financial Report for the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board has been completed and is available under the Agency Reports section of the TSSWCB website.

2024 Annual Report of Non-Financial Data

- The Annual Report of Non-Financial Data for the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board has been completed and is available under the Agency Reports section of the TSSWCB website.

Legislative Appropriations Request for Fiscal Years 2026 and 2027

- The TSSWCB has approved and submitted a Legislative Appropriation Request for the 89th Legislative Session. The request is available under the Agency Reports sections of the TSSWCB website.

TEXAS NONPOINT SOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

In September of 2024, we received our FY2024 Grant award from EPA, in the amount of \$4,267,393. This award will fund 9 projects, including a new landowner development program, the development and implementation of WQMPs in the Geronimo and Alligator Creeks watershed, Lampasas River watershed, Cedar Bayou watershed and Double Bayou watershed. Other projects include continuing implementation efforts in the La Nana Bayou watershed and San Fernando and Petronila Watersheds, the Texas Well Owner Network program, Lone Star Healthy Streams program, and the LCRA Creekside Conservation program.

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 FY2025 as of January 17, 150 WQMPs have been certified on 80,000 total acres.

FLOOD CONTROL PROGRAM

- The State Board approved \$5,000,000 for dam operation and maintenance (O&M) grants for fiscal year 2025. The balance of FY 2025 funds remaining for O&M is approximately \$200,000. These funds will be held for funding emergencies and easement re-filing costs. No new O&M proposals for other O&M activities will be funded until further notice. Sponsors may still submit proposals for regular O&M work, but they will not be funded at this time. Work on funded proposals must be completed within 90 days of Purchase Order date. Guidance for O&M in Fiscal Year 2025 may be downloaded from the TSSWCB website.
- For FY 2025, \$20,000,000 is available for structural repairs. Applications for the Dam Structural Repair Grant Program that were received by August 30, 2024, have been scored and ranked for funding. The FY 2025 application ranking is posted on the TSSWCB-Flood Control website. Projects proposed for funding in FY 2025 are also posted on the TSSWCB website. Currently, \$127 million is needed to repair about 180 flood control program dams in Texas, and \$3.6 Billion is needed to upgrade and rehabilitate about 600 high hazard dams where downstream urban development has resulted in public safety issues.

PROGRAM UPDATES

HUMAN RESOURCES

TSSWCB currently has a Natural Resources Specialist III position open in the San Angelo Regional Office and Accountant II-OTG in the Temple office.

ON THE GROUND CONSERVATION PROGRAM

The On-The-Ground Conservation Program focuses on creating and implementing educational, research, and conservation programs, especially in partnership with others. Newly created by Senate Bill 1118 in September 2012, the program's first major project is as lead partner for implementation of the Texas Climate-Smart Initiative (TCSI). TSSWCB is working with TCSI partners, including Texas A&M AgriLife to reach 1,300 producers and pay out nearly \$39 million of incentives for ranch, farm and forestry practices that have a positive impact on soil health and greenhouse gas emissions. Money is still available. The practices and rates can be found at <https://climatesmart.tamu.edu/>

COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH

- Texas Stewardship Week will take place April 26th-May 7th following NACD's theme "Home is Where the Habitat Is." The SWCD press release, stewardship message, newspaper ads and proclamation will be sent out by mid-February.
- 2025 SWCD Director & Employee Workshop: The workshop will be held April 8-9, 2025 at the Mayborn Convention Center in Temple. Registration and hotel room blocks are open and will close on March 14th. More information and a tentative schedule can be found on our website.

CARRIZO CANE ERADICATION PROGRAM

Since the beginning of FY 25 through December, a total of 720.0 acres of Carrizo Cane has been treated for a cost of \$818,750.00. In response to HB 2568, staff has been assisting the mapping contractor with ground truthing in selected areas to determine total acres of Carrizo Cane. The report was completed and submitted to the Legislature by the due date of January 1, 2025.

TSSWCB EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER

Drew Payne was selected as Employee of the Quarter for the 4th Quarter of 2024. Drew has been with TSSWCB for a little over 1 year as a Natural Resources Specialist III in Flood Control.

Drew has proven to be a fast learner, hard worker, and very savvy with Excel and QGIS. He developed methods working with data in Excel and QGIS that makes processing much more efficient. He always has a smile on, an uplifting attitude while doing any task assigned, and proven to be an outstanding member of the Flood Control Staff.

Congratulations, Drew! Thank you, for modeling TSSWCB's mission and goals.

