



MONTAGUE COUNTY APPRAISAL DISTRICT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

CONTENTS:

- [Wildlife Management Defined 2](#)
- [Qualifications 3](#)
- [Ratio Percentage Designation 3-4](#)
- [Application Process – Converting from](#)
- [Agricultural Use to Wildlife Management 5](#)
- [Wildlife Management Plans & what they include 6](#)
- [Yearly Process & Field Inspection 7](#)
- [Helpful Ideas on Gathering Info for the Update 8](#)
- [What Not To Include 8](#)
- [Field Inspection Check List..... 9](#)
- [5 Year Intensity Guide..... 10](#)
- [Sample Narrative Update 11](#)

➤ **Wildlife Management Defined**

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.

Productivity value for wildlife management is the same as the property was as it qualified for open space land. In order to determine if a property is qualified under open space land or wildlife management, a property code of WIL has been assigned to the account to each property that qualifies for wildlife management use.

To convert from agricultural use to wildlife management, the land size has to be 20.00 acres or greater and it has to have the five out of seven year history of agricultural use.

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:

Supplemental Food

Erosion Control

Habitat Control

Supplemental Shelter

Supplemental Water

Predator Control

Census Count (Requires knowledge to be included in your annual update)

**Wildlife management will require time,
money, expertise, knowledge, and energy.**

Please ask to speak to someone from our office for more specific information and guidelines.

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 20.00 acres **or larger** unless it is in a property association (13.00 acres) or the target animal is candidate, threatened or endangered (13.00 acres).

Texas Parks and Wildlife have developed guidelines and a fill-in-the-blanks type of plan. This can be used as a guide. However, MCAD needs additional information which is specified on another hand-out.

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 20.00 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)

Montague County Appraisal District requires the following on all wildlife management properties:

- An application to convert from agriculture to wildlife
- A personal five-year management plan
- And an annual update
- A field review when requested

Ratio Percentage Designation

The chief appraiser with the advice and consent of the Appraisal District's Board of Directors is to designate 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. Montague County lies in the Cross Timbers & Prairies eco-region.

The MCAD shall designate 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 Cross Timbers & Prairies, the minimum can be 93 percent to a maximum of 95 percent (20 acres). Montague CAD chose 20.00 as the minimum.

"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 and 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)**

Formula= (20-1) or 19 divided by 20 = 95%

Example: $20.00-1.00=19/20=.950$ or 95%

Example: $13.00-1.00=12/13=.920$ or 92%

Counties shall impose lower minimum ratio requirements for areas designated as **wildlife property associations**. A wildlife management property association is a group of landowners whose tracts of land:

- are contiguous,
- meet the wildlife use requirement,
- appraised as open space land,
- **and** are subject to a written agreement that legally obligates the owner of each tract of land to perform the management practices and activities necessary to qualify under this subchapter for appraisal based on wildlife management use.

A Wildlife Management Property Association must submit one plan for all owners **AND** each owner must submit a plan.

In addition to an annual report from each owner, a wildlife management property association **MUST** file a single annual report, to show how the wildlife management plan was implemented on each tract of land in the wildlife management property association. For example, Pioneer Wildlife Association has three property owners, John Smith, Becky Allen, Suzie Holmes, and Jeff Montague, therefore a total of *four annual reports* must be submitted, one for the Association and one for each property owner.

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 Cross Timbers & Prairies, the percentage chosen by the MCAD is 92% for a wildlife property association.

For **Wildlife Property Associations** the minimum acreage is 13.00 ac

Formula=(13.00-1) = 12/13 = 92%

Areas with species of concern (candidate, threatened or endangered) are addressed in the same, manner as the Wildlife Property Associations the minimum acreage is 13.00 ac method as the wildlife property association. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department will designate these properties.

THE MINIMUM ACREAGE IS 13.00 AC.

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

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 - unless land is already qualified in Wildlife Management
- Must be > 20.00 acres excluding the acre for house (if there is a house)

Year One:

- Turn in application form "Converting from Ag ..."
- 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. (If turned in at the appropriate time)
- Include a narrative in your own words what you are doing with your plan.
- Montague CAD will verify the use and the degree of intensity have been met

Note: *If in any year the property does not meet the qualifications, the special appraisal will be removed and additional taxes will be due.*

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

Plant establishment on erodible areas

Predator Control

Identify who the predator is

Describe how you are controlling this predator

Keep records on the kills and include in annual updates

Census Counts

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

It is highly recommended that some type of census data be included in the update. Census counts are an important factor in determining if you wildlife management plan is successful or needs to be adjusted.

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.

Yearly Process & Field Inspection

Annual Updates

- Each and every year the wildlife manager is required to file an annual update.
- The chief appraiser will review wildlife management plans to verify wildlife management activities are consistent with the guidelines for the appropriate eco-region pursuant of *Comptroller's Rule 9.2004*.
- The update acts as a yearly application for the special valuation.
- The annual update is to be turned in before **April 30th** each year.
- If the annual update is not turned in by **April 30th**, **the special valuation is removed. A certified letter and re-application process must then be completed by April 30th.**
- If the application & annual update are sent in on or after May 1st, but before the roll is certified (mid-July) – it can be approved with a 10% late penalty [which is a substantial penalty].
- Once the roll is certified – there will be no special valuation applied that year.
- 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 once every three years. Montague CAD can do inspections more often if they believe someone is receiving the special appraisal erroneously.

There is a "Field Inspection Check List" that may be used by the appraiser.

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
- ✓ 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?
- ✓ Pictures may be printed on plain paper and more than one to a page. Label and date them so we know what it is you want us to see and to know about your habitat.

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

What Not To Include:

- ✓ Please do not put your plans and annual reports in a binder or book. It will save you money and will make it easier for us to scan your documents if the pages are not bound. If your documents are in a binder or book, they will still be accepted, just not processed as quickly.
- ✓ Do not submit pictures on flash drives, SD cards or CD's.

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

MCAD WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT FIELD INSPECTION CHECKLIST

Property Owner: _____ Phone*: _____

Property ID #'s: _____

Total Acreage: _____

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

Supplemental Water Circle & Note

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

Providing Shelters Circle & Note

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

Habitat Control Circle & Note

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

Erosion Control Circle & Note

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

Predator Control Circle & Note

Predator Management 1yr, 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 Counts 3/yr, Collection & record keeping, time/area counts, camera records, Quail Call & Covey Counts, Songbird, Roost, others list

Intensity - 5 Year Guide

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PLANE OVERVIEW - INTENSITY LEVELS FOR PRACTICE OVER 5 YEARS

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

EXAMPLE OF ANNUAL WILDLIFE MANGEMENT UPDATE

ROBERT'S ROOST RANCH
Doug & Dee Dee Roberts
7 Paradise Place
This side of Heaven, TX 76123
(580) 564-9816

800 Acres

Property ID'S: 123, 124, 126, 77750, & 45789

Our main target animals are deer, turkey, quail, & song birds. The 2018 year was still in drought recovery. We modified our plan due to the drought and focused on supplemental feed instead of food plots.

For 2018 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 2019. 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 2021 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 all are 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 bluebirds, and thousands of robins 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 Red 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 2021 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 roadway for our hiking and riding trail and continue with our staggered landscaping. We are adding a 10 acre lake as our main project.