



L.I.P. Bulletin

Texas Landowner Incentive Program
Quarterly Newsletter

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LANDOWNER PROFILES: FROM THE CROSS TIMBERS AND PRAIRIES & THE PINEYWOODS ECOREGIONS

The Cross Timbers and Prairies

It was the early 1990's when Dr. Rickey Fain decided to trade one passion for another. He was a successful family practitioner in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, but wanted more from life, a bit of Texas wildlife habitat to manage and enjoy. His new found passion became Quail Ridge Ranch, 1,600 acres near Glen Rose located roughly 60 miles south of Fort Worth.

Quail Ridge is positioned in the Lampasas Cut Plain Ecoregion, an area that once fostered an oak-prairie savanna landscape with little or no Ashe juniper (cedar) residing in its uplands. Historically, the countryside was vegetated by a diversity of native grasses, forbs and shrubs. The native grasses -- big bluestem, little bluestem, Indiangrass, and sideoats



grama -- dominated the landscape. When Fain purchased the property in 1992 the land was 75% cedar covered and starved for attention. Grass cover was nonexistent. "I remember my realtor saying that we could play a game of marbles out in the pasture and never lose a marble" he recalls. Long term overgrazing, reduction in standing grasses and forbs and a resulting lack of fire had created an evergreen woodland where oak prairie savanna once stood.

New landowners often skip proper planning and start throwing money into land management. Fain took a more sensible approach, observing the land, studying its natural history, weighing his options, and then deciding on a course of action. He wanted to recreate the open, prairie pocket character of the landscape. Not only was this good for Bobwhite Quail but also beneficial to other grassland nesting birds and

other rare species like the Texas horned lizard and the Black-capped Vireo. Over the years Fain worked with Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Environmental Defense (ED) to develop and refine a plan to return the land to its natural state by selectively removing cedar, restoring the historic fire regime and using cattle in a rotational grazing system.

Fain discovered first hand that the initial costs associated with conducting habitat restoration can be very prohibitive. That's when he and ED biologists contacted Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) about utilizing the Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) to help defray habitat restoration costs. "Cost-share programs like LIP can often be used as seed money to get landowners over-the-hump and down the path to sustainable habitat maintenance practices" he explains. In 2000, the three partnered to share the costs associated with selective juniper removal and prescribed burning. A few years later, Fain worked with Texas Cooperative Extension and TPWD to design a grazing system to improve range condition to benefit wildlife and water resources. Once again, LIP was called to action, sharing the costs of interior cross fence installation.

"This has been a win-win situation. Everything we have done to benefit the Black-capped Vireo and the Texas horned lizard also benefits our quail, deer and turkeys."

Submitted by: Mike Miller, TPWD.

The Pineywoods

The Durst Lakes property was purchased by the George F. Ingraham family in 1898 and 1902 from John Durst, who at that time owned considerable acreage along the Angelina River in Eastern Texas. The 656 acre tract straddles the Angelina River in Cherokee and Nacogdoches counties with about 2.5 miles of river frontage and three slough lakes. According to family lore, the property was acquired to provide a large family with hunting and fishing opportunities within easy access of Nacogdoches where the extended Ingraham family has lived since the mid 1800's. The property has long been managed for hunting, fishing and timber production. Both of the Ingraham grandparents enjoyed hunting quail and fishing on the property when visiting in East Texas. The family, who has leased the

The Pineywoods, continued

property for over 65 years, continues to run a fishing and hunting club there. When the current landowners inherited the property in 1993 from their mother, they recognized the need for a realistic, long term management plan. They contracted with a consulting forester to inventory the timber and develop a management plan that emphasized natural regeneration, uneven-aged management and protection and enhancement of the wetlands, wildlife and scenic values. The limited acreage that was once in cultivated fields is now planted in loblolly pine and is being thinned and burned to approximate natural stands. Shortleaf pine, as well as loblolly, has been harvested from mixed natural stands, and on sites where natural regeneration was not sufficient, loblolly seed has been broadcast to ensure loblolly regeneration rather than shortleaf.

In the fall of 1999, approximately 85 acres on the highest ridge were planted with containerized longleaf pine seedlings following the harvest of a sparse, mixed pine stand dominated by shortleaf



pine. (Longleaf reaches the western extent of its range immediately to the east). The only site preparation was a single herbicide treatment prior to planting to reduce competition. Seedling survival was exceptional and seedlings are well out of the grass stage.



Now, with the assistance of the LIP program, it is time to introduce fire to control hardwood competition and loblolly pine encroachment. Prescribed fire has been used several times in the past 15 years in the mixed pine stands and plantations and will continue to be used as frequently as feasible, in all but the wettest (lowest) pine stands to limit under story development and promote a diverse grass and herb dominated ground cover.

The longleaf pine - little bluestem vegetation series, historically native to East Texas, was identified as a series that was globally threatened throughout its range. In Texas it is extremely rare throughout the state, and considered vulnerable to extirpation by the Texas Natural Heritage Program (1993). As a result this vegetation series along with its associated wildlife have been designated as a high priority for conservation. Several savannah nesting song birds including the Bachman's Sparrow (*Aimophila aestivalis*) a state listed species, as well as the Louisiana Pine Snake (*Pituophis ruthveni*) will benefit from this restoration project. Existing Longleaf forests and savannahs are threatened by overgrowth of midstory and a lack of natural fire or fire management. LIP funds will be used to cost share subsequent prescribed fires on this property allowing for the return of the Longleaf Savannah and its associated species.

This LIP project highlights how valuable partnerships between private landowners and government entities can be in reaching goals for wildlife and habitat restoration and preservation.

Submitted by: Rusty Wood, TPWD

Fall 2007 LIP Calendar

June 1st

Request for Proposals. (Early submission is encouraged as it helps keep the process on track, HOWEVER, it does not result in LIP approval earlier than the 11th of October. It may help speed up the cultural resources review.)

July 27th

Last day to submit proposals.

July 27th – October 11th

Proposals reviewed first by TPWD species specialists, then the LIP Advisory Committee. Final decisions will be made on October 11th.

October 12th - November 11th

TPWD Cultural Resource review and Texas Historical Commission (THC) consultation.

NOTE: THC has up to 30 days to review and approve projects.

***Award Packets will be mailed 1 week after TPWD receipt of the THC approval letter.**

THE TEXAS LIP PROGRAM, A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

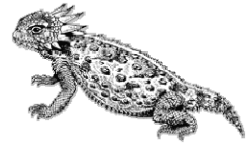
Linda Campbell, Program Director, Private Lands and Public Hunting

The mid 1990's was a difficult time for rare species conservation in Texas. Too many landowners expressed mistrust of the government in general and lack of support for rare species conservation in particular. Clearly, a new approach to private lands conservation was needed. Discussions throughout the nation began to center around the concept of providing incentives for private landowners to manage habitat benefiting rare species, while also removing disincentives inherent in the laws and policies of that time.

In 1997, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department piloted the first Landowner Incentive Program with financial support from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The first LIP program was designed to reverse the top down regulatory approach to rare species conservation and replace it with a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to landowners to help achieve their overall conservation goals for the land, including habitat-based work benefiting rare species. For many landowners, this voluntary, incentive-based approach was all that was needed to encourage participation in the conservation of rare species on private land throughout the state.

In 2002, LIP became a national program administered by the USFWS, offering the same incentive-based approach to all states. The program in Texas has matured over the years, targeting a greater diversity of rare and declining species. TPWD has learned a great deal about how to effectively work with landowners who want to do the right thing for the wildlife on their land. Since becoming federally funded in 2002, Texas has provided more than \$2.7 million dollars in cost share assistance for habitat-based projects benefiting a wide variety of rare species, including endangered songbirds, rare reptiles, declining grassland birds, and cave invertebrates. During the last round of funding, LIP provided cost share funding and technical assistance for eight projects. Two will restore grassland ecosystems on the coastal prairie and six will enhance habitat for declining species in shortleaf and longleaf pine ecosystems of east Texas.

Our thanks to East Texas field staff for assisting landowners with preparation of these LIP proposals. We hope to see good proposals from other regions in the next round of funding.



A New Beginning

Steven Bender, SWG / LIP Administrator

Recently, the Texas Landowner Incentive Program has gone through changes, the least of which is a new leadership. In January 2006, I took on the responsibility of administering the program. In order to ensure success, Arlene Kalmbach has taken on the responsibility of coordinating projects and proposals for the program. You will also see Arlene in the field reviewing projects and determining the success of projects. As part of that review, Arlene will be coordinating a project with Texas A&M University which will help us determine the success of the program over the last 10 years (that's right, the program is 10 years old!). Please look for Arlene's e-mails and assist her with her work.

In addition to Arlene, the Wildlife Division has hired a Cultural Resources Coordinator to ensure that all projects meet programmatic requirements. Dr. Christopher Lintz (Chris) has 40 years of experience in archaeology and is a welcome addition. Chris immediately jumped in and has already spent a significant amount of time in the field for us. He will be working with staff on LIP projects as well as Wildlife Management Area clearances. He is already working hard for our program and I encourage you to get to know him.

In September of 2005, TPWD staff completed the Texas Wildlife Action Plan (TWAP) which is now in the implementation phase. We will be using LIP as an implementation tool for the TWAP. It will allow TPWD to get monies to Landowners to assist with statewide goals.

**We look forward to working with Wildlife staff on this program.
Please call or write with questions or comments.**

Thanks!



WELCOME ABOARD CHRIS LINTZ, PHD

Wildlife Division Cultural Resource Coordinator

On August 1st, Chris Lintz joined TPWD as the cultural resource specialist for the Landowner Incentive Program (LIP), and the Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) within the Wildlife Division. Chris comes to the job with extensive experience in archaeology, working mostly with private environmental consulting firms and universities. He began working in archaeology at the Nevada State Museum in 1964, while in high school, and went on to earn a B.A. degree in anthropology (1970) from Arizona State University, and both M.A. (1975) and Ph.D. (1984) degrees in anthropology from the University of Oklahoma. While in graduate school, he worked as a contract archaeologist for the University and later with the Oklahoma Conservation Commission on a wide range of projects across the state. Since 1970, he has cultivated a research interest in the Oklahoma-Texas panhandle region and both his thesis and dissertation dealt with behavioral changes reflected in 800 year-old farming communities during drought conditions along the Canadian and North Canadian Rivers.

After serving briefly on the faculty at Denver University, and working for a private consulting firm in Albuquerque, New Mexico his team won the contract for testing (assessing) and mitigating (salvaging) information from some of the 470 archaeological sites within the O.H. Ivie Reservoir under construction near San Angelo. His company established a branch office in Austin in 1989, and he has been a transplanted Texan ever since. He has worked on more than 200 archaeological projects—ranging from the Palo Duro Reservoir in the Upper panhandle to Falcon Reservoir along the Mexican border, and from Fort Bliss in the west to Lake o' the Pines and Sabine Pass on the east. He has served on the Advisory Committee to the Texas Historical Commission (THC), and as President of the Plains Anthropological Society, as well as officers in the Council of Texas Archaeology and the Oklahoma Council of Archaeological Preservation.



He has been recognized with two "Awards of Merit" for outstanding contributions to Texas prehistory from the Texas Historical Commission.

The use of federal funds in LIP mandates that these projects consider their affects on cultural resources before implementation. None of the LIP applications can be funded until a cultural resource assessment and consultation with the Texas Historical Commission has been completed. Since joining the program in August, Chris's work has focused on the fall 2006 batch of LIP applications. Year end reports to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the Advisory Council on Historic preservation must also document efforts conducted to assess and avoid adverse impacts to archaeological sites on LIP projects. In addition to the LIP activities, the Antiquities Code of Texas requires that entities of the State of Texas must manage their cultural resources. Proposed projects involving earth disturbances and maintenance on structures more than 50 years old on the WMAs must be reviewed by the Texas Historical Commission (THC) staff before activities are undertaken. Most routine maintenance activities on WMAs are regarded as Standard Procedures and are allowed to proceed under Operation Management Plans (OMP). These plans are approved for a decade interval, but the OMPs for all 51 WMAs will expire in 2007. Without approved OMPs, every maintenance action on old buildings and field compartments will have to be individually reviewed and approved by the THC. Chris is updating the cultural resource database and the GIS maps for all 51 WMAs. Using this information along with data about existing facilities, and standard operations provided by the regional Wildlife staff, he is in the process of up-dating the OMPs and sheparding them through the THC review process. The revised Matador WMA OMP was the first approved plan through this process.

As if these activities were not enough, Chris is also conducting fieldwork and coordinating SHPO consultation on all those proposed projects regarded as non-routine at the 51 WMAs. Clearly, these are big tasks, and he is eager to work with the private landowners and TPWD staff across Texas to help the agency keep in compliance with federal and state laws regarding cultural resources.

Important LINKS

TPWD LIP Webpage: www.tpwd.state.tx.us/landwater/land/private/lip

Texas Wildlife Action Plan: www.tpwd.state.tx.us/business/grants/wildlife/wildlife_action_plan

Rare, threatened & Endangered Species of Texas by County:

www.tpwd.state.tx.us/landwater/land/maps/gis/ris/endangered_species.phtml

TPWD Staff: the LIP WILDnet page will have the most current documents associated with the program.

FARM BILL PROGRAMS AND PRIVATE LANDS IN TEXAS
Chuck Kowaleski, TPWD

Any landowner involved in improving habitat knows that it takes plenty of time and money. One potential source of funding is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's farm bill conservation program. There are currently 6 USDA conservation programs available, CRP, WRP, EQIP, WHIP, FRPP and CSP. Let's take a quick look at each one, we'll spend time on each program in future columns. Additional information can be found at: www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farm_bill/index.html

Eligibility for these programs is limited to individuals or entities that made less than \$2.5 million adjusted gross income for the last 3 years unless 75% or more was made from farming, ranching or forestry. Most cropland programs require that the land have a cropping history of 4 out of 6 years between 1996 and 2001.

CRP – Conservation Reserve Program

Removes highly erodible or environmentally sensitive land from production by planting it with a conservation cover. Provides practice cost share and annual rental payments on 10 or 15 year contracts. Whole field signups announced at irregular intervals by the Farm Service Agency (FSA). Landowners are selected nationally by an environmental benefits scoring system. Practices on certain environmentally sensitive lands can be enrolled noncompetitively at any time.

WRP- Wetlands Reserve Program

Run by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Restores drained or damaged wetlands. Provides 100% of the agricultural land value and restoration cost on permanent easements, 75% on 30 year easements, and 75% of just the restoration cost on cost share agreements.

EQIP – Environmental Quality Incentive Program

Run by the NRCS. Provides 50%+ cost share for producers who face serious threats to soil, water and related natural resources including wildlife. There are currently 5 special wildlife resource concern areas in Texas.

WHIP –Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program

Run by the NRCS. Provides cost share for improving declining wildlife habitats.

FRPP – Farm & Ranchland Protection Program

Run by the NRCS. Provides 50% matching funds to land trusts to purchase easements preventing development of highly productive or historically important farm and ranch lands.

CSP – Conservation Security Program

Run by the NRCS. Rewards good land stewards through a tiered system of payments and cost shared conservation practices.

LOOK FOR NEWS & UPDATES FROM OTHER AGENCIES IMPLEMENTING CONSERVATION PRACTICES ON PRIVATE LANDS IN FUTURE ISSUES OF THE *L.I.P. Bulletin.*



"Keeping common species common."



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