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# Texas Wetland News

## AND WETLAND CONSERVATION PLAN UPDATE

January 2001

Texas Parks and Wildlife • 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas 78744

### TPW Launches New Wetland Web Pages

TPW now offers individuals interested in wetland ecology, government regulations, and other issues a series of wetland-related pages. Check out the Wetland-Web at <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/wetlands>

In addition to providing technical information, the "Wetland Web" also features the **Wetland Project Site Registry** database, which is a tool to help private landowners achieve their wetland conservation goals.

Also included on the Wetland Web will be the long-awaited **Wetland Grant Database**, a searchable database of wetland-related grants that can be used for a variety of wetland conservation-related projects in Texas.

The Wetland Web is intended to be an informative and up-to-date site that provides valuable and interesting information. So if there is anything you would like to see included on the Wetland Web, or simply have comments on what's already there, please don't hesitate to call Jennifer Key at (512) 389-8521 or e-mail her at [Jennifer.key@tpwd.state.tx.us](mailto:Jennifer.key@tpwd.state.tx.us)

## Ducks Unlimited Launches Texas CARE Program for Wetlands

A cooperative public-private initiative for Texas wetland restoration, enhancement and protection over the next five years was announced here Thursday, Nov. 9, in a briefing of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission.

Ducks Unlimited, in cooperation with TPW, is spearheading the Conservation of Agricultural Resources in the Environment (CARE) program with a goal of raising \$23.9 million over the next five years for projects on 62,500 acres of wetland in Texas.

The program targets three areas important to waterfowl:

- The Gulf Coast Joint Venture, where 1.7 million acres of habitat have been identified for waterfowl conservation under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.
- The Playa Lakes Joint Venture, which winters up to 30 percent of the waterfowl in the Central Flyway and up to 90 percent of the mid-continent population of sandhill cranes.
- The Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture, where East Texas bottomlands are affected by habitat fragmentation, conversion of forests from hardwood to softwood species, industry and commercial development, and introduced exotic species.



*"When you team up with specialists to conserve agriculture, natural resources and the environment, everybody wins."*

TPW Executive Director Andrew Sansom expressed TPW's commitment to partner with DU in pursuit of its wetlands conservation goals. "Texas CARE will unite public and private partners who care about our natural resources for the benefit of every citizen in Texas," he said. "When you team up with specialists to conserve agriculture, natural resources and the environment, everybody wins."

*Continued on the next page*

## Texas CARE...

*Continued from page one*

One of the many ways that DU will raise money for the Texas CARE program is through the sale of Texas license plates that bear the organization's name and signature duck head. The plates are now available through county tax-collector offices. DU will receive \$45 from the sale of each standard or personalized plate and \$35 from each renewal, all of which will be used to fund wetlands conservation projects in Texas. TPW and DU will work together to determine which projects will be funded with revenues from the plates.

Wetlands provide critical habitat for wildlife, whose presence is a good indicator of overall environmental health. Wetlands also provide benefits to society in other ways, including management of water supplies, water quality, flood control and groundwater.

With more than a million supporters, DU is considered the world leader in wetlands and waterfowl conservation. The United States has lost more than half its original wetlands – some of nature's most productive ecosystems – and continues to lose more than 170,000 wetlands acres every year.

"Texas CARE will address important wetlands conservation needs from a statewide perspective," said Johnny Frederick, DU state chairman.

"Whether you hunt geese and sandhill cranes in the Texas Panhandle, birdwatch in the coastal marshes of Matagorda Bay or support the conservation of the last remnants of bottomland hardwoods in the Pineywoods of East Texas, Texas CARE will be of interest to you."



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## Get on the mailing list!

If you or someone you know  
would like to like to receive

**TEXAS WETLAND NEWS,**

contact:

**Jeff Raasch**  
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# TEAM WETLAND

## The Foundation for Developing Highly Acclaimed Wetlands

*Submitted by Matt Tanner, Team Wetland Facilitator*

### TEAM WETLAND

is a new and innovative approach created and implemented by TXU Mining to develop postmine wetlands, and it exemplifies the vision used to accomplish award-winning wetlands and reclamation at lignite mines operated by TXU.

TXU Mining formed Team Wetland in 1998 as a cooperative group of regulatory, academic and TXU Mining members. These members work together as equal stakeholders on wetland projects that are underway at TXU Mining's Martin Lake and Oak Hill mines.



This team of experts includes the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Texas Parks & Wildlife, the Railroad Commission of Texas, Texas A&M University, Stephen F. Austin State University, TXU Mining and TXU Business Services.



Team Wetland activities benefit TXU Mining by creating wetlands that significantly increase natural resource and economic values of reclaimed land. The other professionals on the team benefit from the first hand experience they gain while working on team projects. Additionally, Texas wildlife, future landowners and the citizens of Texas benefit from the results of Team Wetland.

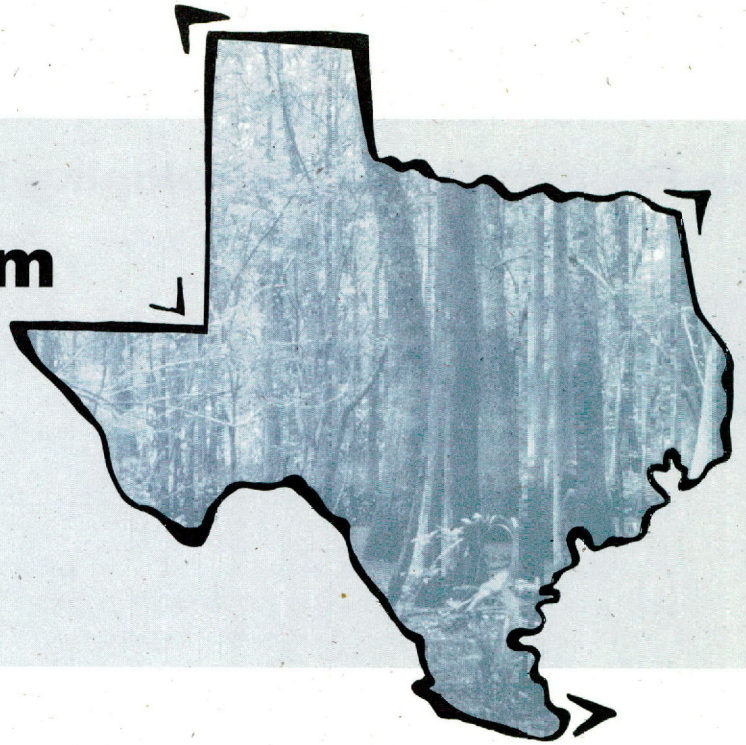
TXU Mining is a wholly-owned subsidiary of TXU that produces lignite to fuel steam electric generating stations in Texas.

Please contact Matt Tanner – (214) 812-4487 or [matt\\_tanner@txu.com](mailto:matt_tanner@txu.com) for more information on Team Wetland and learn more about TXU by visiting [www.txu.com](http://www.txu.com)

*Team Wetland has focused its efforts on two projects within TXU Mining's reclamation areas. One is the Tatum wetland complex at the Martin Lake Mine located in Panola County, Texas. The other project is the Boggy Branch wetland complex at the Oak Hill Mine in nearby Rusk County.*



## East Texas Wetland Program and Other Wetland Initiatives in Texas



Owners and managers of East Texas land soon can expect increased opportunities for technical guidance and cost-sharing support for improvement of migratory bird habitat. During the past year, Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPW) and Ducks Unlimited (DU) developed an agreement to co-sponsor the East Texas Wetland Project (ETWP). Until recently, TPW personnel in East Texas had limited access to funds that could be provided to landowners for projects to improve habitat. DU had no program of this type focused on East Texas. This will change with implementation of the ETWP.

Within DU, the ETWP is a component of Texas CARE (Conservation of Agriculture, Resources, and the Environment). The CARE program is a recent DU initiative to establish partnerships through fund-raising and conservation delivery that includes private lands projects. In Texas, fund-raising will be through traditional sponsorships as well the sale of special automobile license plates portraying the DU theme. These plates now can be obtained through county tax appraiser offices.

However, the ETWP is not an exclusive TPW/DU endeavor. This summer, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service joined the partnership. Other agencies and conservation organizations are expected to participate. This alliance approach is a key factor in achieving the project objectives.

The purpose of the ETWP is provide assistance and incentives to create, restore, and enhance natural and manmade wetlands and associated uplands. According to project documents, "Project objectives will be accomplished utilizing the following management practices: hydroperiod restoration, reforestation, plant propagation, vegetation management, site preparation, fencing to control grazing, and conservation easements." Additionally, project personnel state that: "Wetland habitat types will include forested wetlands, moist soil areas, harvested croplands, or waterfowl food plots to increase biodiversity for waterfowl,

other migratory birds (including shorebirds, wading birds, and neotropical migratory land birds), and other wetland wildlife."

The notable change brought by the ETWP is the increased funding potential. For years, wetland professionals in East Texas met an ever-growing demand from owners and managers of wetlands primarily by providing technical guidance on habitat improvement. Until recently, restricted funds and limited eligibility of applicants hindered distribution of cost-sharing monies. The ETWP relaxes these restricted conditions.

The ETWP is expected to be fully operational by the spring of 2001. Persons interested in obtaining more information or making application for assistance may contact:

Ed Ritter, CARE Coordinator  
Ducks Unlimited, Inc.  
2205 Avenue I, #114  
Rosenburg, Texas 77471  
Phone: 281-341-7968  
E-mail: eritter@ducks.org

Carl Frentress, Regional Waterfowl Biologist—East Texas  
Texas Parks and Wildlife  
2906 Trey Circle  
Athens, Texas 75751-6849  
Phone: 903-675-4177  
FAX: 903-675-7596  
E-mail: crfrentress@aol.com

However, the ETWP is not a program unto itself. In fact, it is a part of a much larger system. Since the late '80s, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) has guided the modern era of successful habitat improvement for waterfowl in North America. The functional units of the NAWMP are joint ventures. East Texas is part of the Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture (LMV JV). During the first phase of its work, the LMV JV concentrated activities in the Mississippi Alluvial Valley (MAV). Because of the MAV boundary, this work did not extend into East Texas. However, in June 2000, the management board of the LMV JV voted to expand activities to the western limits of the LMV JV area. This project is identified as the Western Gulf Coastal Plain Initiative (WGCPI) of the LMV JV. The "western tier" area includes southwestern Arkansas, northwestern Louisiana, southeastern Oklahoma, and eastern Texas.

The activities within the WGCPI will be comprehensive. They will include the ETWP as well as substantial planning, operational support for habitat work, land acquisition, and fund-raising functions throughout the Initiative region. Therefore, the WGCPI becomes the "umbrella" for waterfowl and other wetland wildlife habitat work within the four-state initiative area. Interestingly, the ETWP is the first project to start operating in the WGCPI.

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) will handle the lead role for the WGCPI. The field headquarters will be located at the TPW Management and Research Station in Tyler, Texas. Next spring, a specialist in geographic information systems will assume responsibilities through this office facility. The assistant JV coordinator (also a FWS employee) is expected to conduct activities from an East Texas base. Additionally, the DU biologist for the ETWP will be stationed in Tyler. To further strengthen the regional team concept, the TPW regional waterfowl program personnel work from a field office in nearby Athens.

While the commencement of the WGCPI substantially advances the comprehensiveness of activities, the scope recently was broadened even

more by adoption of the concept of integrated migratory bird management. Therefore, an even larger "umbrella" is provided by the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI). The NABCI concepts generate a structure for bringing together four migratory bird plans that previously were not united. The four migratory bird groups to be integrated under NABCI are: 1) waterfowl, 2) shorebirds, 3) neotropical migratory songbirds, and 4) waterbirds other than ducks and geese. Under NABCI, "bird conservation areas" are units analogous to the joint venture units employed for waterfowl plans. Fortunately, Bird Conservation Area 25 of NABCI conforms to the boundary of the WGCPI of the LMV JV.

As mentioned above, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan has been in effect for more than a decade. Recently, national plans were completed for both shorebirds, and neotropical migratory songbirds. The waterbird plan is expected during 2001. Currently, activities are underway for the detailed tasks of merging the various components of these plans into integrated, functional measures for conservation delivery onto the landscape. More clarity will develop as regional strategic plans are developed and management practices are applied in an integrated manner. The upshot of this approach is that the efficiency inherent in integration will produce larger benefits for any cost expenditure for habitat projects.

Consequently, this new era of migratory bird management promises to reach the level of action (i.e. tangible results on the land) where progress best can be realized for our natural resources. This will benefit all citizens because, actually, we all are benefactors, in some way, of durable and properly functioning ecosystems. This is an overlying, if unstated, goal of all these levels of endeavor in migratory bird management.

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# Other Wetland News and Plan Updates

## The Wetlands Assistance Guide for Landowners has been Updated

The Wetlands Assistance Guide for Landowners has been updated and is now available from Texas Parks and Wildlife. The Wetlands Assistance Guide for Landowners is a comprehensive guide to federal, state, and private programs offering technical and/or financial assistance to private wetland owners within the state of Texas. The document has been completely updated with new program information and contact information. If you would like a copy, try downloading it from TPW's Web site at [www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us). If you would rather have one mailed to you, email Jeff Raasch at [jeff.raasch@tpwd.state.tx.us](mailto:jeff.raasch@tpwd.state.tx.us).

## Texas Coastal Wetlands Guidebook

A new Texas Coastal Wetlands Guidebook is now available (no charge for single copies) from Texas Parks and Wildlife. The guidebook was co-authored by Dan Moulton of TPW and John Jacob of Texas Sea Grant/Texas Agricultural Extension Service. According to Moulton, the guidebook is intended for anyone, especially teachers and other youth leaders, interested in learning and teaching about the values of wetlands on the Texas coastal plain.

The guidebook describes, in understandable terms, the general evolution, structure, and functions of coastal plain wetlands as well as threats and major causes of wetland losses. Each major wetland type is described, in non-technical terms, with respect to location, geology and soils, flooding dynamics (hydrology), vegetation, animals, threats, and ecological functions and human values. Most of the 66-page guidebook is devoted to the descriptions of 111 wetland sites of all types available to the public on the coastal plain from Louisiana to Mexico. Site descriptions are organized by region and include data on ownership, phone numbers, website addresses for more detailed information, size, nearest town, type of wetlands, recreation/education opportunities, general description, and driving directions. Educational and information resources are identified throughout the guidebook.

To obtain a copy of the guidebook, call 512/912-7190, or e-mail [janet.nelson@tpwd.state.tx.us](mailto:janet.nelson@tpwd.state.tx.us), or write to Janet Nelson, Coastal Conservation Branch, 3000 South IH-35, Suite 320, Austin, TX 78704.

## Freshwater Wetlands Discovery Trunk Available From Texas Parks and Wildlife

TPW now has Discovery Trunks targeted for wetlands studies. The Trunk contains field guides, activities, posters, animal tracks and casts of track, audio cassettes featuring vocalizations of wetland bird and amphibians, and invertebrate collecting equipment. Instructions are enclosed with the Trunk.

These Trunks are available to teachers, scout leaders, and camp counselors through the Education Department at TPW headquarters in Austin – Linda Roe (512) 389-4998, the Houston Urban Wildlife Biologists – Diana Foss (281) 456-7029, El Paso Urban Biologist office – Lois Balin, (915) 834-7070, and in the Dallas-Fort Worth area through the TPW North Texas Education Center in Grand Prairie – Steve Campbell (972) 263-0427.

## Upcoming Project WILD Aquatic Workshops

Project WILD Aquatic is a national K-12 environmental and conservation education program that emphasizes awareness, appreciation and understanding of aquatic wildlife and natural resources. It is interdisciplinary and can be used to teach basic learning skills in science, social studies, math, language arts, music and physical education. With an unbiased approach to basic environmental management practices, Project WILD Aquatic teaches young people how to discover more about their natural world.

Project WILD Aquatic provides a set of 48 fun, hands-on, easy to use activities which teach problem solving and decision making skills. Each activity contains the helpful, scientific background information that teachers need to prepare their students and extensions for gifted and challenged students.

Project WILD activity guides are available to both formal and informal educators who attend a 6 hour workshop. For more information on location of upcoming workshops please check our Web site at:

<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/edu/enved/wwkshp.htm>

## Update on Peach Point Mitigation Project

The cooperative Dow / TPW mitigation project at Peach Point WMA is in full swing. In October 1999, Dow acquired and transferred 1,800 of coastal wetland and prairie habitat to TPW. As part of that mitigation, Dow will complete 8 wetland creation/enhancement projects, that will improve habitat on approximately 3,000 acres within the Peach Point WMA.

As of this writing, construction has been completed on two moist-soil units, totaling 600 acres. With recent rains, the units are at full capacity water levels. These units should progress nicely with subsequent winter and spring rains. Already, we have noticed a considerable number of shorebirds, wading birds, and wintering waterfowl using these new units, and we expect these units to provide some critical freshwater habitat during late winter and early spring. These units should also provide excellent breeding and brood-rearing habitat for mottled ducks this coming spring and summer. The surveys and designs have been completed on the remaining six enhancement projects and we should initiate construction on some of those during summer 2001.

## Wetland Project Site Registry Program Back on Track

TPW's Wetland Conservation Team is pleased to announce that the Wetland Project Site Registry Program is once again available online at <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/wetlands/programs/registry>. For the first time, both private and public databases will be available online and can be searched by county or river basin. The Wetland Site Registry Program is intended to assist private landowners and public land managers who are interested in restoring wetlands in addition to improving the quality and diversity of mitigation wetlands. Many landowners desire wetland restoration and wildlife habitat enhancement; however, because the cost of establishing such habitat is often prohibitive, many landowners are unable to complete this restoration on their own. This voluntary program functions like "want ads" to link interested property owners with those who need or want to restore wetlands. If you are interested in searching the database or submitting your property to the Registry Program, you can do so online at <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/wetlands/programs/registry> or call Jennifer Key at (512) 389-8521.



## Have Any WETLANDS NEWS?

If you would like to be added to the mailing lists or would like to submit an article for the next issue, contact:

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