

Protecting the State's NATURAL RESOURCES

Challenges

- Population growth, urbanization, land conversion and increasing water demand threaten Texas' natural resources.
- Environmental factors such as drought, floods, non-point source water pollution and exotic species invasion have placed the state's water supply under tremendous stress.
- Youth are increasingly disconnected from the natural outdoor world due to urbanization, educational priorities, family structure, culture, leisure priorities, values, and more. This is detrimental to awareness and knowledge of natural resources. Education is essential.

AgriLife Extension Response

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service delivers a wide range of researched-based educational resources and programs on water quality, water-use efficiency, wildlife and fisheries practices, ecosystem and parks management, tourism and open-space planning to improve habitat. These programs delivered more than **1,700 educational events**, planning meetings and workshops in 2025 to more than **160,000** educational and other contacts.

- **Water resource** programs focus on watershed health and protection, onsite wastewater treatment systems, water-use efficiency, private water wells and soil nutrient management.
- **Wildlife and fisheries** programs focus on restoration and conservation of wildlife habitat, disease and predator control, harvest management practices and aquaculture and pond management tools.
- **Land and ecosystem** programs address the ecology and restoration of rangeland and coastal wetlands, including best practices for brush, pasture, rangeland and weed management.
- **Community and economic development** programs bolster parks tourism, including open space planning and outreach to support planned development and growth as well as the **\$56 billion** outdoor recreation and tourism industry.
- **Texas Master Naturalist** encompasses **5,600 volunteers** who help with research and provide stewardship education at nature centers, parks, and other nature-based sites totaling more than 256,000 acres.
- **Texas 4-H Youth Development** Program engaged more than **131,400 youth** in natural resource and environmental learning activities.

Economic Impacts

- **Wildlife management** programs led to estimated economic gains of **\$14.8 million** by reducing property damages from feral hogs and improving quail biology and habitat.
- **Wildlife Services' predation and beaver damage** management efforts led to **\$92.2 million** in economic benefits for landowners.
- **Texas Master Naturalists** contributed **617,000 hours** of volunteer service in 2025, which was valued at **\$21.4 million**.
- **Water conservation** programs produced estimated cost savings of **\$18.9 million**, while **groundwater protection education** led to over **\$1.7 million** in economic benefits for private well owners.
- Participants in **rangeland and natural resource management** programs reported anticipated economic benefits of **\$43.5 million** on 23.5 million managed acres, while also impacting 20,000 acre-feet of water.

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