

Wildfire Resource Information Packet

published by the:

Texas Wildfire Prevention Task Force

COMMISSIONER TODD STAPLES, TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Wildfire Resource Information Packet (WRIP)

The information contained in this packet is an overview of potentially available state, federal and private assistance programs that may assist Texans with wildfire preparedness, mitigation, and recovery. Response activities, procedures and resources are not a focus of this packet due to the level of technical assistance needed; for wildfire response questions and needs, please contact your County Judge's office, local Office of Emergency Management (OEM), and/or Texas Division of Emergency Management District Coordinator (TDEM DC).

For specific program rules and requirements on items contained in the WRIP, contact the agency or organization or refer to their Web site for further details. Where possible, the distinction is made whether a resource is targeted towards the landowner or government organization.

The Wildfire Prevention Task Force (WPTF) has made every effort to compile a useful listing of information resources, agencies, universities, organizations and Internet links. If we have excluded any programs that can provide assistance, please contact Lance Williams at (512) 463-3285 or lance.williams@texasagriculture.gov

- I) Wildfire Prevention Task Force Members
- II) Preparedness & Mitigation Resources
 - a) Personal Wildfire Plans & Preparedness
 - b) Technical Resources & References for Decision Making
 - c) Climatology & Weather
 - d) Multimedia
- III) Recovery Resources



Texas Wildfire Prevention Task Force

COMMISSIONER TODD STAPLES, TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

The historic 2011 fire season was truly devastating to the people, property, and natural resources of Texas. Local fire departments and the Texas Forest Service responded to over 30,000 individual fires that consumed approximately 4 million acres.

As we prepare for another potentially active fire season, it is important to ensure the priorities of first responders, local and state officials, and landowners are aligned. All agree on the priority of preserving life and quickly and efficiently extinguishing the fire. These priorities can be more easily attained by providing strategic state support to local and private wildfire prevention and mitigation efforts.

The goals of the Texas Wildfire Prevention Task Force are:

- Identify areas of the state most at risk for wildfire.
- Identify the best tools available to mitigate wildfire risk.
- Provide direct and effective outreach to implement mitigation tools.

Task Force Chairman	Task Force Co-Chairman	Task Force Co-Chairman
Commissioner Todd Staples Texas Department of Agriculture	Chief Nim Kidd Texas Division of Emergency Management Department of Public Safety	Tom Boggus Director Texas Forest Service
Dr. Bryan Shaw Chairman Texas Commission on Environmental Quality		Gene Richardson Associate Director for Commodity and Regulatory Activities Texas Farm Bureau
Carter Smith Executive Director Texas Parks and Wildlife Department		Susan Durham Executive Director South Texans' Property Rights Association
Eleanor Kitzman Texas Insurance Commissioner Texas Department of Insurance		Stewart M. Kenderdine, CLU Designee Independent Insurance Agents of Texas
Chris Connealy State Fire Marshal Texas State Fire Marshal's Office		Larry Joe Doherty President Prescribed Burn Alliance of Texas
Rex Isom Executive Director Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board		Joe Leathers Board Member Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association
Salvador Salinas State Conservationist USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service		Jim Allison General Counsel County Judges and Commissioners Association of Texas
Ron Hufford Executive Vice President Texas Forestry Association		Chris Barron Executive Director State Firemen's and Fire Marshals' Association of Texas
Dr. Lynn Drawe Chairman Texas Prescribed Burning Board		James K. "Rooter" Brite, Jr. Public Member
Brandon Belt Coryell County Attorney		Stan Graff Public Member
Bob Watson Borger Fire Chief Texas Fire Chiefs Association		Dr. Charles A. (Butch) Taylor Superintendent, Sonora Research Station Texas AgriLife Research Service
Penny Redington Executive Director Texas Association of Regional Councils		Dr. Pete Gibbs Associate Director - State Programs Texas AgriLife Extension Service
Kirby Brown Senior Policy Analyst Texas Wildlife Association		Monty Wynn Assistant Director of Legislative Services Texas Municipal League
Gilbert Jordan Emergency Management Coordinator Texas Department of Transportation		Mr. Steve Westbrook Executive Director Sheriff's Association of Texas

II) Preparedness & Mitigation Resources

Preparedness and mitigation measures are important in saving lives and reducing response and recovery time – two items especially critical when a wildfire threatens. Money and time spent on preparedness and mitigation measures save having to spend even more money and time after the disaster to recover – it is an investment. Resources listed in the following categories can help prepare your business, home, family, and community to face a wildfire whether it is by creating a disaster plan, learning about prescribed burns, or reading about weather impacts and their precursors that influence wildfire conditions.

a) Personal Wildfire Plans & Preparedness

There are several links that can help you, your family, and your business prepare for a wildfire or any disaster. There's Ready, Set, Go! (<http://www.wildlandfirersg.org/>) and Texas's disaster planning site (<http://www.texasprepares.org/English/Information-wildfires.shtml>). For general disaster planning for families, check out FEMA and Ready.gov (www.ready.gov) and (<http://www.ready.gov/wildfires>).

Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP)

Destructive wildland fires in 2002 were a catalyst for Congress to pass the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) in 2003. The intent of the HFRA was to provide funding and guidance for better forest management practices throughout wildland areas and the wildland urban interface. One of the key outcomes of the HFRA was to incentivize communities to create a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). An approved CWPP can influence and prioritize future funding for hazardous fuel reduction projects, including where and how federal agencies implement fuel reduction projects on federal lands. Both "Preparing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan: A Handbook for Wildland-Urban Interface Communities" and "Community Guide to Preparing and Implementing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan" are available here (<http://www.forestsandrangelands.gov/communities/cwpp.shtml>).

Texas Forest Service (TFS) Mitigation Specialists work with communities, upon request, to help develop CWPPs that include community assessments, risk and hazard identification, and mitigation planning. For additional information, see (<http://tfsweb.tamu.edu/main/popup.aspx?id=10064>).

CWPPs are an integral part of a larger cooperative effort under the Firewise Communities Recognition Program, (<http://www.firewise.org/>).

Children's Wildfire Preparedness

Kids need not feel left out of helping the family prepare. By visiting the [Smokey Kids](#) area of the Smokey the Bear public service campaign, one can find games and information geared towards children (<http://www.smokeybear.com/kids/?js=1>). Additional preparedness information for youth can be found via FEMA and Ready.gov (<http://www.ready.gov/kids>) and the Texas Department of Insurance's (TDI) fire safety for youth page (<http://www.tdi.texas.gov/fire/fmyouth.html>).

b) Technical Resources & References for Decision Making

Prescribed Burning Board (PBB)

The PBB regulates certified and insured prescribed burn managers who work to control vegetative fuels that can contribute to wildfires. The burn managers help to manage, maintain and restore valuable ecosystems in Texas.

The PBB certifies commercial and private prescribed burn managers to ensure that they have the proper training, experience and financial responsibility to protect themselves and those they serve.

“Prescribed Burn Management During County Burn Bans” document

(<http://www.texasagriculture.gov/Portals/0/forms/PEST/Burn/Prescribed%20Burning%20Packet%20for%20Counties.pdf>)

Prescribed burning laws and regulations

(<http://www.texasagriculture.gov/Home/ProductionAgriculture/PrescribedBurnProgram/PrescribedBurningBoardLawsandRegulations.aspx>)

Find an insured certified prescribed burn manager or instructor

(<http://www.texasagriculture.gov/Home/ProductionAgriculture/PrescribedBurnProgram/FindaBurnManager.aspx>)

Find applications, prescribed burning board training verification, burn-do not burn checklist, and prescribed burn plan, among others.

(<http://www.texasagriculture.gov/Home/ProductionAgriculture/PrescribedBurnProgram/PrescribedBurningBoardForms.aspx>)

Certified and Insured Prescribed Burn Program home page with all the above links and more.

(<http://www.texasagriculture.gov/Home/ProductionAgriculture/PrescribedBurnProgram.aspx>)

Texas AgriLife Extension Service (ALEXT)

(<http://agrilife.tamu.edu/>)

(<http://agrilife.tamu.edu/drought/>) and (<http://essmextension.tamu.edu/drought/index.html>)

(<http://irnr.tamu.edu>) Institute of Renewable Natural Resources

ALEXT agents located throughout Texas can provide a vast array of information and technical assistance for producers. ALEXT educates Texans in the areas of agriculture, environmental stewardship, youth and adult life skills, human capital and leadership, and community economic development. This site has extensive information and research on weather, disaster preparedness, soils and crops, and more. Extension agents can also provide producers with technical and financial planning through the Financial and Risk Management (FARM) Assistance Program software program, in which Extension economists input data on every aspect of a producer’s operation to calculate a risk component prior to making a costly financial decision. Producers pay a subscription fee for the service and after a computer analysis is performed, the producer receives a bound copy of the report to assist in operation decisions. ALEXT also offers an eight-hour prescribed burn training, “Introduction to Prescribed Rangeland Burning,” that can be attended by anyone (<http://campus.extension.org/course/category.php?id=97>).

Texas Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN), a part of Texas AgriLife Extension Service, portal contains links to wildfire ebooks, maps, and documents covering topics such as land management, livestock concerns, mortality management, and even home fires.

(<http://texashelp.tamu.edu/004-natural/fires.php>)

Texas AgriLife Research-Texas A&M University

(<http://agresearch.tamu.edu/>)

The Texas AgriLife Research conducts research programs that support the state's agricultural and natural resource industries and ultimately Texas consumers.

Research resources are invested in scientific investigations that maintain and enhance Texas natural resources, ensure the safety and affordability of our food supply, and contribute to the state's economic vitality.

Prescribed Burn Alliance of Texas (PBAT)

(www.pbatexas.org)

Landowners and volunteers can make a difference by pre-burning open spaces, especially in the Wildland/Urban Interface. Prescribed burning can deprive the wildfire of essential fuel by burning it off under controlled conditions prescribed by a Burn Plan. PBAT is an alliance of private citizens who formed burn associations to educate and train other landowners and citizens in the safe techniques of fighting fire with fire. These are neighbor-helping-neighbor groups that are open to all individuals interested in knowing what preparation they can do to mitigate the effects of wildfire and serve as good land stewards at the same time. Prescribed burn association members can also assist in providing help with recovery from wildfires and provide suggestions to make your home safe from a wildfire. To see if there is such an association in your county, please visit our Web site. If there is not an association in your area, now is a good time to start one; PBAT officers and directors will help.

Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB)

(<http://www.tsswcb.state.tx.us>)

TSSWCB provides technical assistance through local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) to assist agricultural landowners in developing plans for soil and water conservation. These plans include practices for mitigation and response to drought. Plans for grazed land include drought contingency measures for reducing or removing cattle. Plans for irrigated land include on-farm water management measures that improve efficiencies and mitigate drought impacts. Water Quality Management Plans (WQMP) are site-specific plans, which include appropriate land treatment practices, production practices, technologies and combinations thereof, and an implementation schedule; TSSWCB employees conduct on-site planning with landowners to develop a WQMP. The WQMP program is administered by the TSSWCB via the SWCDs with NRCS personnel assistance. To determine your SWCD, follow this link and click on the district your property is located in, (<http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/swcds/locatormap>). You may also call the TSSWCB to determine your county SWCD, (254) 773-2250 or toll free (800) 792-3485.

USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)

(<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/feature/highlights/drought.html>)

(<http://www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov>)

The NRCS works with landowners throughout Texas to provide technical assistance to conserve, improve and sustain natural resources and lessen the devastating effects of natural disasters such as wildfire and drought. NRCS helps producers with conservation planning on cropland, rangeland and grazing lands, areas affected by wildfires and forestlands.

Conservation Planning

Rangeland and Grazing Lands – NRCS assist producers in inventorying forage resources. With this information and producer's input, NRCS develops customized grazing management plans. NRCS also shows producers how to determine rangeland health. These management tools improve a producer's chances of surviving and recovering from the drought with minimal impact on the land's natural resources.

Areas affected by wildfires – Technical assistance can be provided on management techniques required to prevent erosion and speed the recovery of the natural resources affected by wildfire.

Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) – RC&D coordinators inspect dry hydrant locations frequently to ensure adequate water remains for fire protection. They also examine remaining water sources as potential sources for new dry hydrants. Dry hydrants are a permanent, non-pressurized system installed at a dependable water source, such as a pond or lake, with connections for fire trucks to pump water.

Soil Surveys furnish soil maps and interpretations needed in giving technical assistance to farmers and ranchers. Soil conservation district offices and county agricultural extension offices have hard copies of local soil surveys that can be used for reference. The new Web Soil Survey allows individuals to access to soil surveys online at (<http://www.soils.usda.gov>). NRCS offices are located in USDA Service Centers in 233 counties in Texas. Phone numbers can be found in the phone book under “United States Department of Agriculture” or by contacting the NRCS main office in Temple at (254) 742-9800.

Texas Forest Service (TFS)

TFS unveiled in 2012 a new tool to assist with determining wildfire risk; the web-based program is entitled the [Texas Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal](http://www.texaswildfirerisk.com/) (<http://www.texaswildfirerisk.com/>) or TxWRAP. Explore your risks through the public viewer or via TxWRAP’s several other applications.

If you need assistance after a fire, there are many state and federal resources available to turn to. The TFS maintains a [list of informational resources](#) from income tax guides for timber and yard tree losses to wildlife and agricultural issues. Additional information can also be found under the [Landowner](#) tab of their main Web page; under Mitigation, (<http://texasforestservicetamu.edu/main/article.aspx?id=8512>), Protect Your Home (<http://texasforestservicetamu.edu/main/article.aspx?id=15378>), Protect Your Communities (<http://texasforestservicetamu.edu/main/article.aspx?id=15379>), Protect Your Wildlands (<http://texasforestservicetamu.edu/main/article.aspx?id=15380>), and Prevent Wildfires (<http://texasforestservicetamu.edu/main/article.aspx?id=15381>).

Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP) – Pine and/or hardwood reforestation and various non-timber related practices such as wildlife habitat enhancement and soil and water protection can be cost shared at rates of up to 35 percent of actual costs and up to \$3,500 per year. This program replaces two other federal cost share programs: Forestry Incentives Program and Stewardship Incentive Program. Applications for FLEP are available from Texas Forest Service field offices. Funding is on a first-come, first-served basis.

Fire Department Directory
(<http://tfsfrp.tamu.edu/fdd/>)

A TFS-maintained Web application which provides a comprehensive listing of fire departments within the state.

Texas Department of Public Safety, Division of Emergency Management (TDEM)

Wildfire awareness resources for landowners.

(http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem/threatawareness/pio_wildfire_awareness.htm)

<http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem/ThreatAwareness/wildfireInfoLinks.htm>)

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)

TDEM oversees the HMGP program for Texas government entities. HMGP is authorized by Section 404 of the amended Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to provide post disaster statewide FEMA funding for eligible mitigation projects submitted in accordance with the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Unified Guidance and the 44 CFR § 206.430. These types of grants are only available following a federally declared disaster, but the submitted mitigation projects do not have to be tied to that disaster. For more information on this program, contact TDEM.

<http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem/GrantsResources/index.htm#HMGP>)

Fire Management Assistance Grant Program (FMAG)

The FMAG program provides federal financial assistance to states, local and tribal governments, for the mitigation, management, and control of fires on publicly or privately owned forests or grasslands. FMAGs are requested by TDEM. Requests are submitted electronically while the fire is burning uncontrolled, and threatens such destruction as would constitute a major disaster. The entire process is accomplished on an expedited basis and a FEMA decision is rendered in a matter of hours. The grant is based on a 75% (federal) and 25% (state and local) match. For additional information on the FMAG program, see the TDEM Web site

<http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem/Recovery/FMAGs.htm>).

Agencies should report the response and cost for all fires throughout a calendar year to the Texas Forest Service (TFS). This information is used to calculate the individual and cumulative threshold. Reporting is done through the [TFS Web site](http://tfsfrp.tamu.edu/fdd/login/login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2ffdd%2fmyaccount%2ffirereport.aspx%3fmode%3dinsert&mode=insert) (<http://tfsfrp.tamu.edu/fdd/login/login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2ffdd%2fmyaccount%2ffirereport.aspx%3fmode%3dinsert&mode=insert>) If there are problems or questions regarding reporting, contact the TFS help desk number at (979) 458-7306.

FEMA Declarations

Occasionally, a wildfire(s) may become so intense that an effective response exceeds the capability of local governments and the state. In this situation, local governments who determine response capabilities are beyond their means, need to follow the usual state protocol by conducting an assessment of the situation and forwarding a request for assistance package to the state through their local TDEM District Coordinator. The state will in turn review the request and conduct a state assessment and then determine if federal assistance is needed.

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

Can provide other state agencies, communities and members of the public technical assistance in relation to emergency response and water, air, and land environmental quality. TCEQ also enforces regulations for outdoor burning. (<http://www.tceq.texas.gov/response/>)

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Contact: (800) 792-1112

<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/>)

For some, technical assistance and questions on how to manage and protect wildlife and fisheries is a serious concern. For assistance on wildlife and fisheries management, hunting or boating, contact the local TPWD office or the TPWD in Austin.

Texas Interagency Coordination Center (TICC)

[\(tamu.edu/ticc/\)](http://tamu.edu/ticc/)

A cooperative effort of the Texas Forest Service (TFS), United States Fish & Wildlife Service, United States Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Texas Parks and Wildlife, and The Nature Conservancy. Maintained by the TFS, the TICC Web site is designed to provide information and assistance to county officials, community leaders and the fire response community with easily accessible information that will be a valuable asset in daily operations. Both the TFS and TICC Web sites include links to the Google Fire Activity/Common Operating Picture application that shows current TFS fire response activity and related tools (<http://ticc.tamu.edu/Response/FireActivity>).

Burn Ban List by County

<http://tfsfrp.tamu.edu/wildfires/DecBan.pdf>

Current list of [county burn bans](#). This .pdf file is generally updated daily on the TICC home page. Burn ban information may also be obtained by contacting your County Judge's office.

c) Climatology & Weather

Southern Plains Wildfire Outbreaks

[Firestorms](#), are also known as "Southern Plains Wildfire Outbreaks" by the National Weather Service (<http://texasforestservicetamu.edu/main/article.aspx?id=12296>). Particular areas of Texas need to be aware of the dangers associated with these deadly wildfires. Some background information and a video can be accessed online. For the more intrepid readers, the NWS published a white paper entitled "[A Meteorological Composite of the 2005/06 Wildfire Outbreaks in the Southern Plains](#)."

http://texasforestservicetamu.edu/uploadedFiles/FRP/Predictive_Services/NWS%20outbreak%20paper%20.pdf

Texas Climatic Bulletin-Office of the State Climatologist (OSC) for Texas

<http://www.met.tamu.edu/met/osc/osc.html>

OSC is a component of the Department of Meteorology and the Texas Center for Climate Studies (TCCS). OSC retains a large database covering Texas and southern states and, as well as publishing regular reports and monographs, undertakes research on climate patterns and applied meteorology.

National Weather Service (NWS) Page for Texas

www.weather.gov/view/states.php?state=TX

Palmer Drought Severity Index

<http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/oa/climate/research/prelim/drought/palmer.html>

Uses temperature and rainfall information in a formula to determine dryness.

The Palmer Index is most effective in determining long term drought and uses a 0 as normal, and drought is shown in terms of minus numbers; for example, minus 2 is moderate drought, minus 3 is severe drought and minus 4 is extreme drought.

Drought Monitor

www.drought.unl.edu/dm/

A map that summarizes information from numerous drought indices and indicators on a single, easy-to-read color map.

Keetch-Byram Drought Index Map

(<http://twc.tamu.edu/drought/kbdi>)

Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) is an index used to determining forest fire potential. The drought index is based on a daily water balance, where a drought factor is balanced with precipitation and soil moisture (assumed to have a maximum storage capacity of eight inches) and is expressed in hundredths of an inch of soil moisture depletion.

d) Multimedia

Several recorded public service statements are available highlighting the stories of families impacted by recent wildfires and what you can do to prepare.

Surviving Disaster: How Texans Prepare video series from the Department of State Health Services. A wildfire specific video entitled, A Community Rebuilds: Recovering from Wildfires, is available among others. (<http://www.texasprepares.org/survivingdisaster.htm>)

Preparedness video messages featuring TDEM's Chief Nim Kidd are also posted on TexasPrepares.org; click on the "Why It Matters" tab. (<http://www.texasprepares.org/ScreeningMap.htm>)

The Texas Firestorm video from the Texas Forest Service illustrates the particularly devastating nature of firestorms, or Southern Plains Wildfire Outbreaks. (<http://texasforests.tamu.edu/main/article.aspx?id=12296>)

NRCS Prescribed Burn Video via YouTube. Also available on hardcopy DVD; contact your local NRCS office. (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9fb0VuUmZJA&lr=1&uid=qkIIwi1Jl08xBU7tR2eXdw>)

III) Recovery Resources

The devastating effects of a wildfire require both short-term and long-term recovery strategies. Some of the agencies listed earlier in this publication offer recovery resources in addition to mitigation, preparedness, response, and/or technical assistance for those impacted by a fire.

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) – Texas State Office

Contact: (979) 680-5150

(www.fsa.usda.gov/tx)

Emergency Loan (EM) Assistance

(<http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov/emloan.htm>)

A USDA Secretarial Disaster Declaration or Presidential Disaster Declaration results in the implementation of the Emergency Loan (EM) Program through the Farm Service Agency. FSA provides low-interest loans to eligible farmers and ranchers in the declared county as well as contiguous counties, including counties across state lines, to help cover production and physical losses. In situations involving serious physical losses, the FSA Administrator may designate a county a disaster area, but only for physical loss loans. Producers can borrow up to 100 percent of actual production or physical losses, to a maximum amount of \$500,000. Loan repayment time is usually one to seven years, but

may be up to 20 years (in special circumstances) for production losses such as crop, livestock and non-real-estate losses, and up to 30 years or up to 40 years in unusual circumstances for physical losses to essential buildings and facilities.

Emergency Haying and Grazing

During periods of natural disasters, emergency haying and grazing of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acreage may be authorized to provide relief to livestock producers in areas affected by a natural disaster.

Managed Haying and Grazing

(<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=copr&topic=crp-eg>)

Managed haying and grazing is authorized no more frequently than one out of every three years after the CRP cover is fully established. Managed haying and grazing may be available less frequently in a particular area depending upon local conditions, resource capacity, and the conservation goals of the program. Also, acreage either hayed or grazed under managed or emergency provisions in either of the previous two years is ineligible for managed haying or grazing in the current year.

Emergency Conservation Program

(<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=copr&topic=ecp>)

ECP shares with agricultural producers the cost of rehabilitating eligible farmlands damaged by natural disaster. ECP may be made available in areas without regard to a Presidential or Secretarial emergency disaster designation. To be eligible for ECP assistance, the applicant must have suffered a natural disaster that created new conservation problems. ECP funds may be used for the following purposes: debris removal, fence restoration; grading and shaping of farmland, restoring structures, or water conservation measures, including providing water to livestock in periods of severe drought.

USDA NRCS

(<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/feature/highlights/drought.html>)

(<http://www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov>)

NRCS offices are located in USDA Service Centers in 233 counties in Texas. Phone numbers can be found in the phone book under United States Department of Agriculture or by contacting the main office in Temple at (254) 742-9800. In addition to these programs, NRCS may also assist FSA with technical assistance with the FSA Emergency Conservation Program (ECP).

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) – EQIP is designed to assist farmers and ranchers with solving resource problems on their land. Application is made through the county NRCS office. Signup is continuous if program is available. Cost shares up to 75 percent. There are eligibility requirements and a signup period.

Cost Share Contracts – In addition to ongoing technical assistance, NRCS can modify existing cost-share contracts to reschedule conservation work to another year, if needed.

Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) – Through EWP, NRCS personnel are on alert and ready to respond to situations where there is imminent threat to human life due to dust or sedimentation in public water supplies.

Forestry Incentive Program (FIP) – FIP helps producers replace seedling trees that died as a result of the drought. NRCS also promotes management practices that prolong survival of trees in short-term drought.

Texas Forestry Association (TFA)

Contact: (979) 632-TREE

(<http://www.texasforestry.org/>)

Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA)

Texas CDBG Program, administered by the Office of Rural Affairs

Contact: Tom Entsminger, (512) 936-7891

(<http://www.texasagriculture.gov/GrantsServices/RuralEconomicDevelopment.aspx>)

Administers the State's non-entitlement Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, which is supported by monies received directly from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. TDA's various CDBG programs support rural community planning activities, and housing and public facility needs such as sewer, water system, road, drainage improvements, and disaster relief funds.

TDA's Disaster Relief funds assist units of local government with disaster relief projects in rural areas of the state by providing recovery assistance for eligible activities that address damages caused by natural disasters (floods, tornados, drought, etc.) following an emergency declaration by the President or the Governor.

STAR Fund

Contact: Lance Williams, (512) 463-3285 or lance.williams@texasagriculture.gov

(<http://texasagriculture.gov/Home/ProductionAgriculture/DisasterAssistance/STARFund.aspx>)

The STAR Fund (State of Texas Agriculture Relief Fund) was created solely with monetary donations from private individuals and companies, including Farm Credit, Valero and McCoy's Building Supply, which generously donated the first \$20,000. To date, farmers and ranchers across the state have received \$70,000 in STAR Fund donations. STAR Fund money can be used to assist farmers and ranchers in rebuilding fences, restoring operations and paying for other agricultural disaster relief. As wildfires and other disasters continue to impact Texas farmers and ranchers, the need for donations continues.