

THE TEXAS WATER SOURCE

UPDATING NACOGDOCHES, RUSK, SAN AUGUSTINE, & SHELBY CO. FOREST LANDOWNERS ON FORESTRY AND WATER ISSUES

Impacting Future Leaders and Landowners

Part of the Texas A&M Forest Service (TFS) Water Resources mission is to educate those in the forest sector and the public about protecting soil and water resources using forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs), as well as the importance of forests to water supplies.

One aspect of this mission involves educators and students. Demonstrating how the forest sector uses practices that protect water quality and prevent soil erosion, along with how important forests are to our water supplies, helps them see forests and the industry in a different light.

Each year, the Water Resources Program leads forestry labs in the field for Stephen F. Austin State University and Texas A&M University students, teaching them on-site about forestry BMPs, their implementation, and effectiveness.

TFS conducts "Forest Awareness Tours," where school-age students come to learn about all aspects of the forest. Water Resources per-

sonnel participate in many of these, using hands-on activities on water quality and stressing the importance of streamside management zones.

Texas Forestry Association (TFA) sponsors the Teachers' Conservation Institute (TCI), and TFS plays a major role. Teachers of all disciplines are taken to sites to see firsthand how harvesting operations are conducted. During the TCI Phase II sessions, attendees are exposed to BMPs; their rate of implementation on industrial, public, and private tracts; and their effectiveness in protecting soil and water. In 2012, the first TCI Phase III was conducted. The emphasis of this week-long camp was water, exposing the educators to more topics involving water, its use, and conservation.

TFA and TFS also participate in the T.A.L.L. (Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership) program of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, giving participants a glimpse into the forests of East Texas and the "hows and whys" of the industry.

For more information:

- <http://www.texasforestry.org/educators/forest-awareness-tours/>
- <http://www.texasforestry.org/educators/teachers-conservation-institute/>
- <http://tfswater.blogspot.com/>
- <http://tall.tamu.edu/>

Local Landowner Associations

Forest landowner associations help private forest landowners keep in touch with what is going on in the forest industry and what help is available to them. For more information, contact your TFS Forester (see back page of this newsletter).

Those with property in **Nacogdoches County** have the *Angelina/Nacogdoches Counties Forest Land-*

owners Association.

Rusk County landowners can join with Smith County landowners in the *Rusk/Smith County Forestry Association.*

San Augustine and Shelby County landowners have the *Tri-County Landowners Association* and meet with Sabine County landowners.

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*Organization Spotlight***Texas Farm Bureau****For more information:**

- <http://www.texasfarmbureau.org/>
- <http://www.texasfarmbureau.org/County/locator.aspx>
- <http://www.fb.org/>
- <http://www.window.state.tx.us/taxinfo/agriculture/>

The modern Texas Farm Bureau (TFB) was founded in 1933, and grew from a fledgling organization to one of the largest groups of farmers, ranchers, and rural families in the world.

TFB is totally controlled by its members and financed by voluntary dues. The forest industry benefits from the efforts of the Texas Farm Bureau, as timber is an agricultural commodity.

One of Farm Bureau's most important principles is that of grassroots policy development. Policies always originate at the member level and are debated and adopted at the county, state, and national levels. Legislative staffs in Austin and Washington, D.C. work to implement Farm Bureau policy and keep lawmakers informed on agricultural and rural issues.

Legislative staffers with Texas Farm Bureau and the national organization, American Farm Bureau Federation®, work towards the passing of Farm Bills and other legislative bills that benefit the tree farmer and the timber industry as well as those involved in traditional agriculture. For example:

- Some of the Farm Bill programs are a source of cost-share funds for forest landowners.
- Sales tax exemptions for machin-

ery, feed, seed, and fertilizer - *Certain items used exclusively in the production of timber for sale in the regular course of business qualify for exemption from Texas sales and use tax.*

- Refunds of state and federal taxes on farm used fuel - *A producer of timber products can also get refunds of tax paid on gasoline used for non-highway purposes.*
- Reform of inheritance and gift tax laws.

Other items include:

- Texas' superb farm-to-market road system - *These roads are also used to haul harvested timber and wood products.*
- Protection of property rights.

Texas Farm Bureau's mission is to be the "Voice of Texas Agriculture." The vision of Texas Farm Bureau is to benefit all Texans through promotion of a prosperous agriculture for a viable, long-term domestic source of food, fiber, and fuel.

Many of the priority issues of Farm Bureau - water resources, renewable fuels, clean air, and tax reform - are also important issues of the Texas forest sector.

Texas Ag Council**For more information:**

- <http://www.txagcouncil.org/>

The Texas Ag Council (TAC) serves as a forum of organizations whose members depend upon agriculture for their livelihood. TAC's purpose is to promote discussion of political, legislative and regulatory issues of importance to the future of Texas agriculture.

While the Council does not take positions on legislative or political issues, its member organizations are actively

involved in the resolution of these issues for the betterment of Texas agriculture.

Representatives of groups and organizations of the Texas food, fiber, and nursery industry make up the membership of the TAC. This includes, among many others, Texas Farm Bureau, Texas Forestry Association, and Texas Wildlife Association.

Attoyac Bayou Bacteria Sources

At the Attoyac Bayou Watershed Partnership meeting on May 16, 2013, Dr. Terry Gentry of Texas A&M University gave a presentation on the results of the bacterial source tracking study being conducted on the Attoyac Bayou watershed.

This bayou is one of many rural watersheds listed as an impaired water body due to high levels of *E. coli* bacteria. Since 2000, data collected for *E. coli* have consistently shown elevated levels that exceed the applicable Texas Surface Water Quality Standards.

BACTERIAL SOURCE TRACKING RESULTS

The first step in combating elevated levels of *E. coli* in the Attoyac Bayou is to determine the source of the bacteria. In order to do this, fecal samples from potential sources (wildlife, domestic animals, humans) within the watershed were collected since 2010 in a process called Bacterial Source Tracking (BST). DNA in *E. coli* is unique to the respective source organism. In this approach, DNA from *E. coli* is extracted and analyzed to determine its source.

There are two methods of BST used in analyzing water samples. Under one method, samples are examined for the presence of DNA markers for targeted sources. In this case, the targeted sources were: human, ruminant (deer, cattle, goats, etc.), hog, and horse. From 247 water samples examined in this manner, none contained the horse marker; 5% contained the human marker; 33%, the hog marker; and 49% contained the ruminant marker.

In the other BST method, samples are analyzed and their sources are ranked according to their prevalence. Using this approach, the sources of *E. coli* in the Attoyac samples were first broken down into three categories and then further into seven categories in order to get more specific classification.

In the first analysis using this method, Dr. Gentry found the *E. coli* concentrations from the following sources:

- wildlife - 61%
- livestock & domestic animals - 21%
- humans - 6%
- unidentified - 13%

The results of the seven category analysis include:

- wildlife, non-avian - 46%
- 25% of these were feral hogs
- wildlife, avian - 15%
- cattle - 10%
- other livestock, avian - 3%
- other livestock, non-avian - 3%
- humans - 6%
- pets - 5%
- unidentified - 13%

WPP DEVELOPMENT

Over the last couple of years, the scientific research behind the Attoyac Bayou Watershed Protection Plan (WPP) has been completed and characterization of the watershed is done. Now it is time to take this data and identify common sense solutions to improve the water body. These solutions will be put together by a steering committee composed of representatives from all parties involved in the watershed, including but not limited to: government, education, forestry, oil and gas, agriculture, conservation, recreation, and landowners.

The steering committee will set overall goals and objectives, identify critical management needs, develop management measures to achieve goals, develop indicators and targets for implementation, develop implementation schedule, describe how progress will be measured, describe monitoring needs and education needs, and discuss technical and financial assistance needs. The goal is to have a plan in place by September 2013.

For more information:

- <http://attoyac.tamu.edu>

Did you know...

Hogs were introduced into the US by settlers as early as the 1500s for use as a food source due to their adaptability to a variety of environments and their prolific reproduction.

**Updating Nacogdoches, Rusk, San Augustine, & Shelby
Co. Forest Landowners on Forestry and Water Issues**

Distribution of *The Texas Water Source* is provided free of charge to forest landowners of Nacogdoches, Rusk, San Augustine, and Shelby Counties. Funding has been provided through cooperation of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) and Texas A&M Forest Service (TFS). PLEASE ADVISE US IF YOU WISH FOR YOUR NAME TO BE REMOVED FROM OUR MAILING LIST.

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Map Your Own Property

A new application called "Map My Property" has been added to Texas A&M Forest Service's "Texas Forest Information Portal." It is an easy-to-use tool for landowners and managers to produce a simple map of their property that can be shared with others.

When contacting foresters for technical assistance, landowners and managers may quickly produce a map of their property, save it as a PDF document, and email it to the forester so that both may refer to it when discussing the property over the phone. The application allows a tract boundary to be drawn over an aerial image.

Labels and symbols for significant features may also be added. Additionally, it provides a tool that measures area and distance.

Other features of this portal include: Timberland Investment Calculator, Timberland Management Simulator, Timber Supply Analysis, Forest Products Directory, Economic Impact, Forest Distribution, Forest Ecosystem Values, and the Forest Action Plan. This website allows you to query and download data and reports on a these topics statewide.

Check out "Map My Property" and the other geospatial applications at <http://www.texasforestinfo.com/>.



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