

# BUFFER LANDS INCENTIVE PROGRAM (BLIP)



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# BUFFER LANDS INCENTIVE PROGRAM

## *TPWF Overview*



Founded in 1991, **Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation's** mission is to support **Texas Parks and Wildlife Department** to ensure that all Texans, today and in the future, can enjoy the wild things and wild places of Texas.

We partner with foundations, corporations, and individual donors to leverage public (state and federal) funds with philanthropy.

To date, TPWF has raised more than \$220M to support conservation efforts across Texas.

Headquartered in Dallas with a satellite office in Austin.

Governed by a 21-member Board of Trustees and led by 13 staff members.



# BUFFER LANDS INCENTIVE PROGRAM

## *TPWF Conserve Program*



### Habitat and Species Restoration and Research

- Pronghorn relocation to the Trans-Pecos
- Construction of artificial oyster reefs in the Gulf
- Guadalupe Bass research
- Grassland restoration on private lands



Photo Credit: Rita Frey

# BUFFER LANDS INCENTIVE PROGRAM

## *TPWF Lead Program*



### Enhancing Conservation Law Enforcement Capabilities

- Fundraising and construction of facilities at Game Warden Training Center
- Donation of specialty equipment - “Gear Up for Game Wardens”
- Development of K-9 Program





# BUFFER LANDS INCENTIVE PROGRAM

## *TPWF Engage Program*



### Engaging Communities and Building a Constituency

- Raising \$8M to construct amenities at first new state park in 25 years – Palo Pinto Mountains SP
- Stewards of the Wild – Young Professionals Group
- Leading the Texas State Park Centennial Celebration in 2023



# BUFFER LANDS INCENTIVE PROGRAM

## *TPWF Steward Program*



### Conservation of Iconic Landscapes for TPWD Stewardship

- Led acquisition of 17,351-acre Powderhorn Ranch from 2014-2022 (WMA and future State Park)
- Acquisition of 5,458-acre XO Ranch (now Roger Fawcett WMA)
- Raised private funding to support creation/expansion of Matagorda Peninsula and Follets Island Coastal Management Areas



# BUFFER LANDS INCENTIVE PROGRAM

## *Overview*



We recognize that TPWD land alone cannot achieve the scale and impact necessary to conserve functioning ecosystems

Private land stewardship is critical

BLIP established in 2016 but did not have dedicated funding

Now **\$400,000+ available** to LTA-accredited land trusts facilitate CEs on private lands adjacent/strategic to TPWD properties

BLIP is designed to facilitate voluntary easements for landowners who are willing to conserve their land but need financial assistance with due diligence costs



# BUFFER LANDS INCENTIVE PROGRAM

## *About TPWD*



TPWD's mission is to manage and conserve the natural and cultural resources of Texas and to provide hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation opportunities for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

This mission is carried out on both public and private lands and waters across Texas. Private landowner actions are critical to the Texas conservation mission, since most of the state is privately-owned.





# BUFFER LANDS INCENTIVE PROGRAM

## *Texas Parks & Wildlife Department Overview*



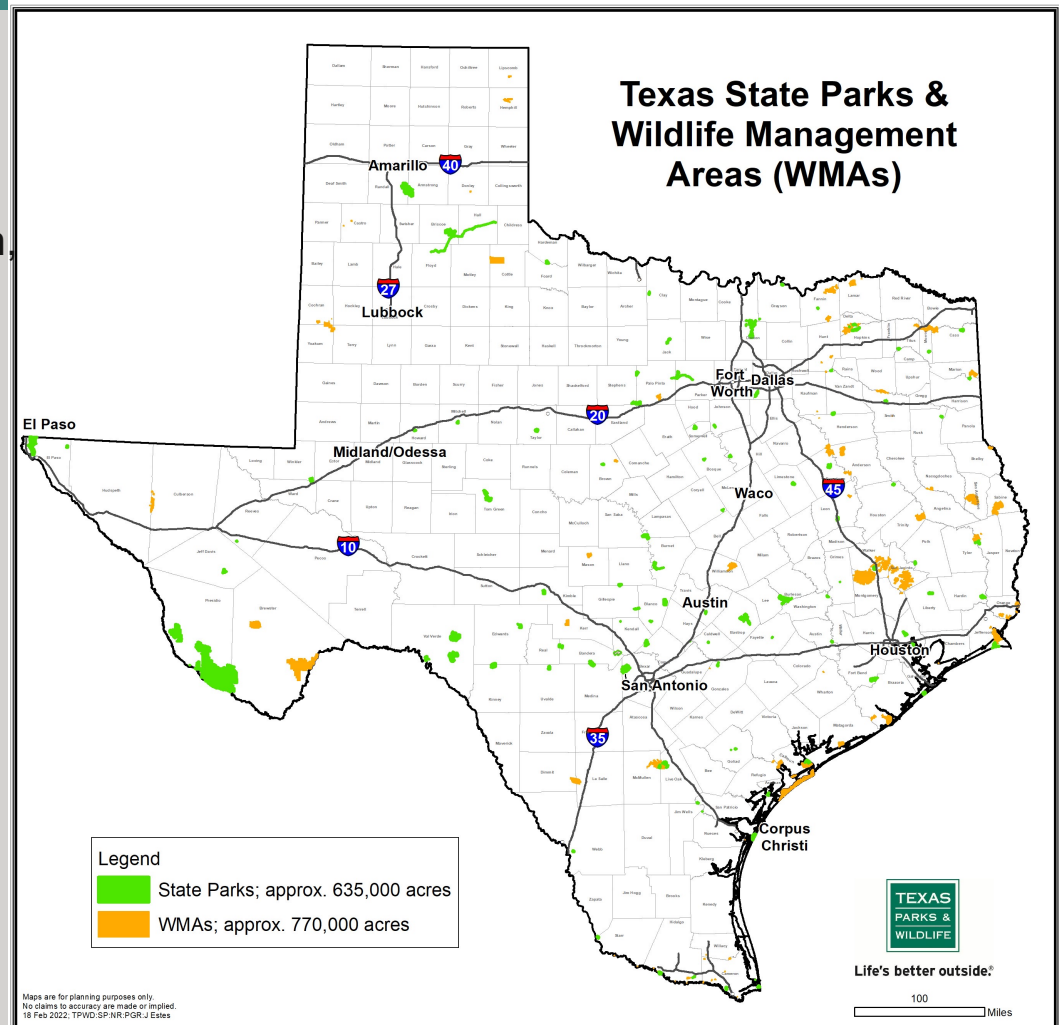
### Wildlife Management Areas:

53 Units; 770,000 acres  
Research, Demonstration, Education,  
Hunting and Fishing

### State Parks and Natural Areas:

89 Units; 635,000 acres  
Camping, Hiking, Education, Outdoor  
Recreation

All landscapes and regions  
eligible for BLIP program

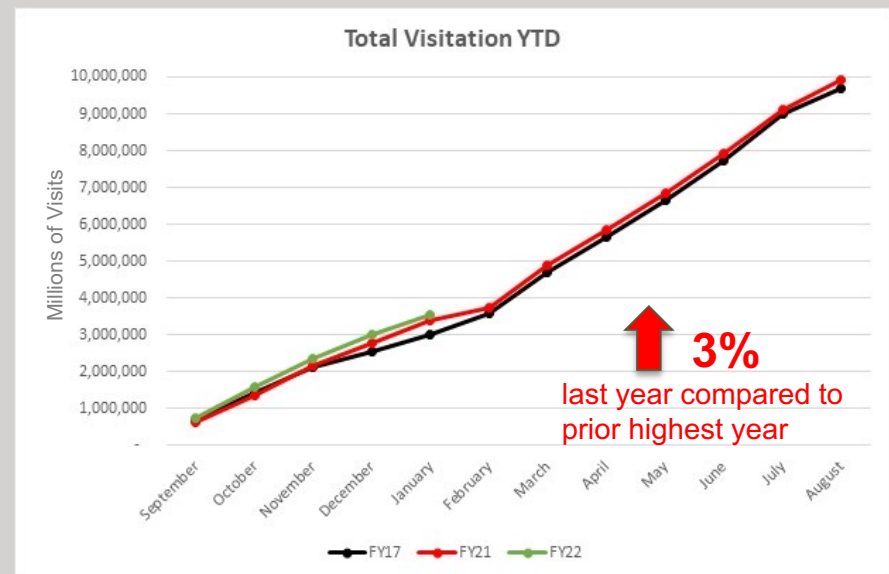
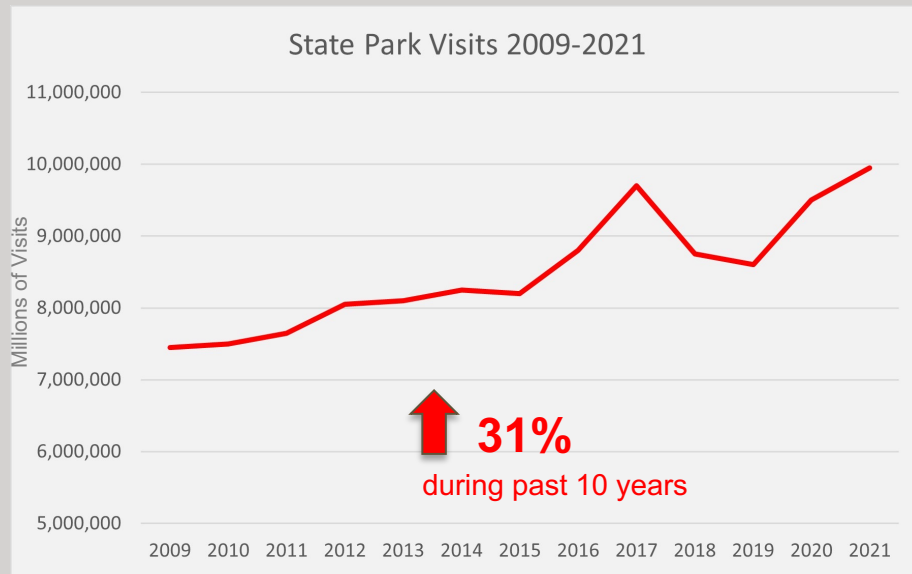


# BUFFER LANDS INCENTIVE PROGRAM

## *Texas Parks & Wildlife Department Overview*



### State Parks Total Visitation



# BUFFER LANDS INCENTIVE PROGRAM

## *Texas Parks & Wildlife Department Overview*



### Benefits of Buffer Lands to TPWD Properties:

- ☐ Species / Habitat Conservation
- ☐ Utilization of adjacent lands to buffer recreational activities
- ☐ Facilitate ecosystem functions and ensure appropriate scale for resource stewardship
- ☐ Consistency of stewardship practices across the landscape; reduce fractionalization
- ☐ Protection of Viewsheds
- ☐ Minimize pollution, exotic species and uncontrolled access from adjacent lands



# BUFFER LANDS INCENTIVE PROGRAM

## *Texas Parks & Wildlife Department Overview*



Conservation of high value  
species and/or habitats



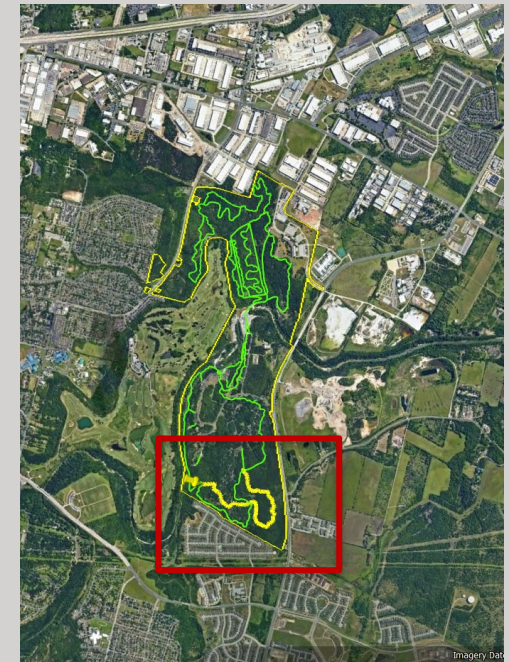


# McKinney Falls State Park:

## *Context Study of Surrounding Growth Over Time*



Use adjacent lands as buffer for recreational activities,  
rather than TPWD-managed lands



**2021: Area of Interest  
at South Boundary**

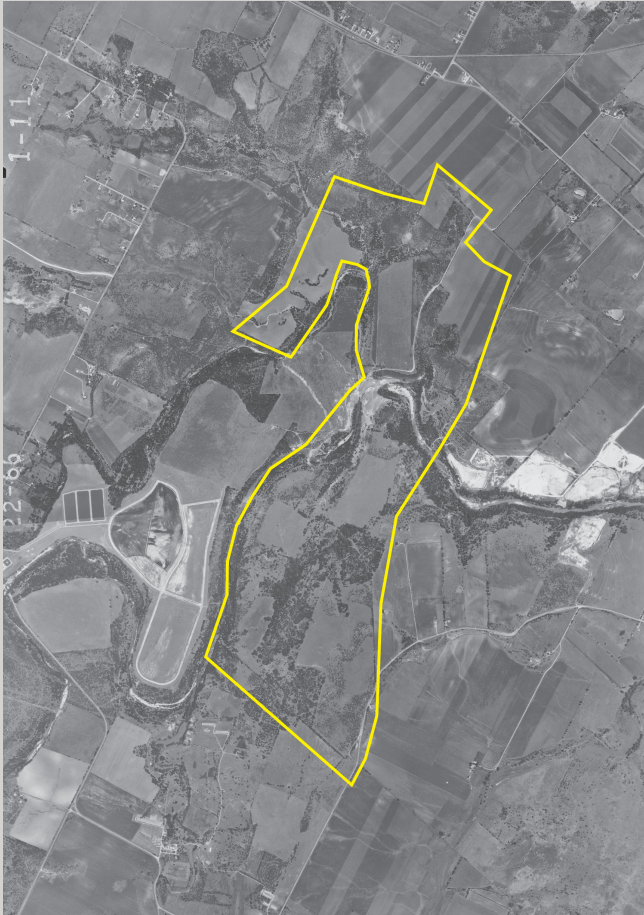


# McKinney Falls State Park:

## *Context Study of Surrounding Growth Over Time*



**1966:** *Before McKinney Falls was a State Park*



**1984:** *Before Commercial Growth Along Highway 71*



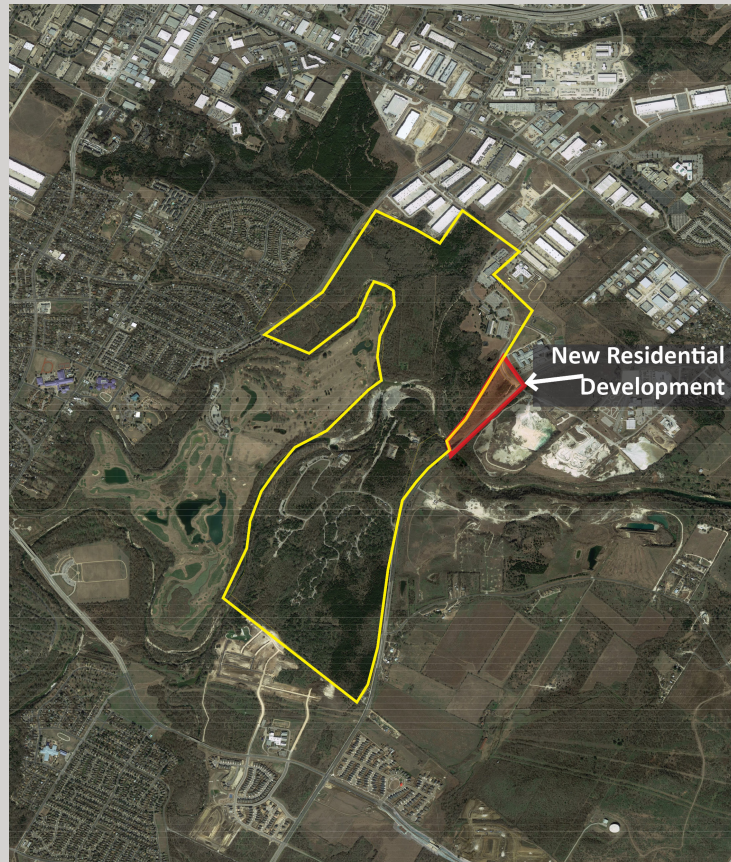


# McKinney Falls State Park:

## *Context Study of Surrounding Growth Over Time*



**2017:** *Increase in Residences to South, Commercial to the North*



**2022:** *Another change coming for Mckinney Falls and Austin HQ*



***Boundary did not capture a 12-acre parcel along road frontage....***





# BUFFER LANDS INCENTIVE PROGRAM

## *Texas Parks & Wildlife Department Overview*



Increased acreage to facilitate ecosystem functions and ensure appropriate scale for resource stewardship (habitat connectivity, habitat diversity, water and nutrient cycling, etc.)





# BUFFER LANDS INCENTIVE PROGRAM

## *Texas Parks & Wildlife Department Overview*



Non-developed buffer lands facilitate needed prescribed fire operations.



Terry Hagerty  
The Bastrop Advertiser



# BUFFER LANDS INCENTIVE PROGRAM

## *Texas Parks & Wildlife Department Overview*



Consistency of stewardship practices across the landscape;  
reduce fractionalization



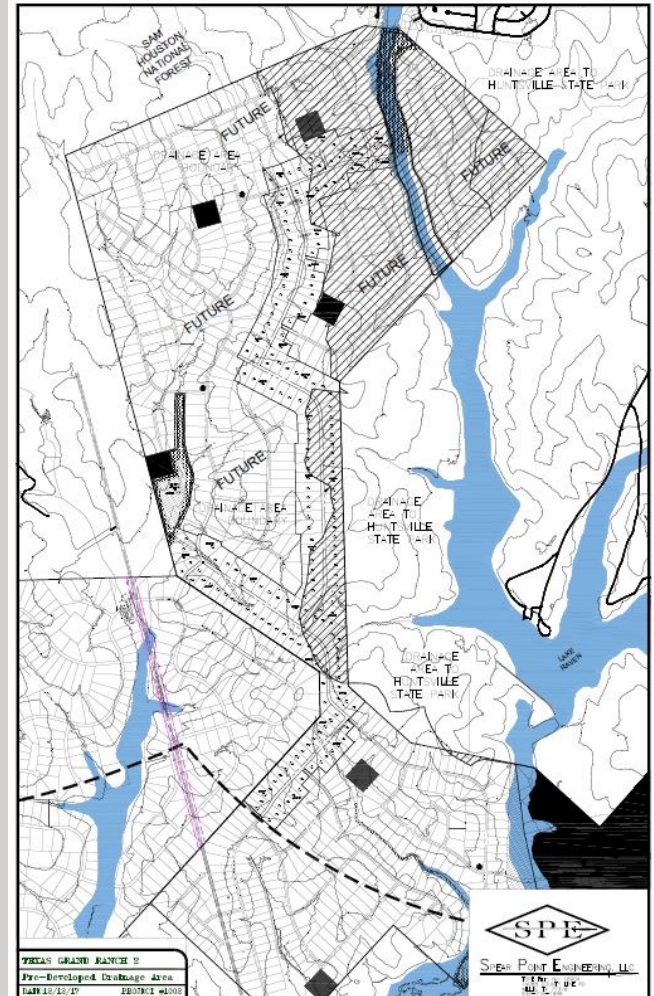


# BUFFER LANDS INCENTIVE PROGRAM

## *Texas Parks & Wildlife Department Overview*



### Protection of Viewsheds





# BUFFER LANDS INCENTIVE PROGRAM

## *Texas Parks & Wildlife Department Overview*



Minimize pollution, exotic species and uncontrolled access from adjacent lands





# BUFFER LANDS INCENTIVE PROGRAM

## *The Need*



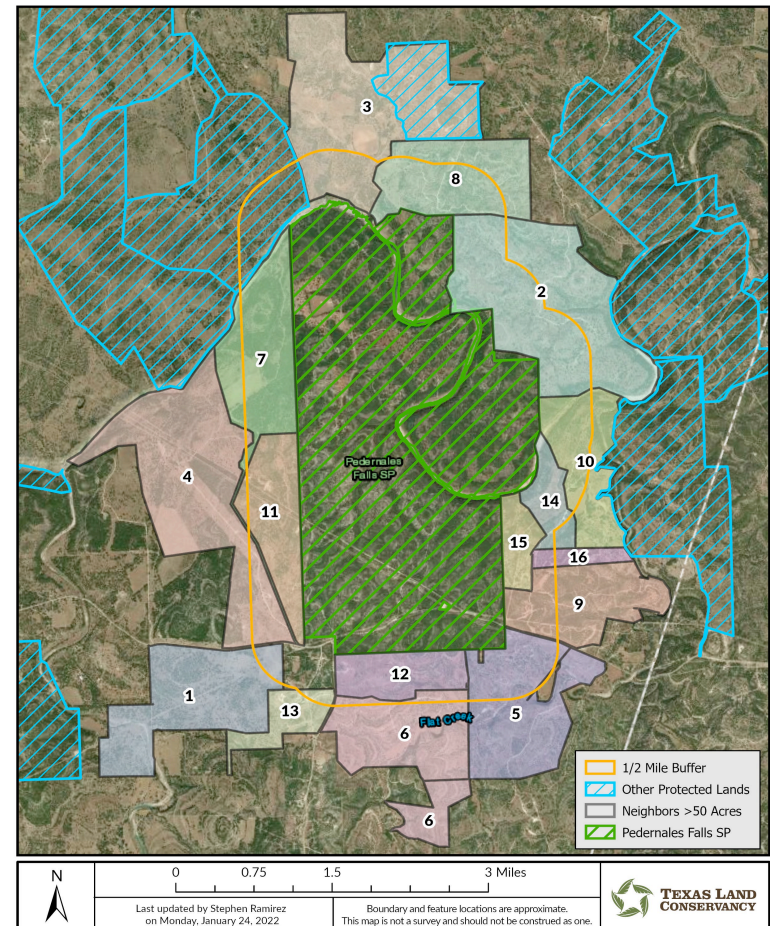
Texas has **142 million acres** of privately-owned farms, ranches, and forestlands; **~139 million** of which are not protected.

Currently, working lands are being lost at a **240,000 acres/year.**<sup>1</sup>

CEs are valuable tool to help mitigate rural land loss and buffer TPWD lands

*1. Texas Farm and Ranch Lands Conservation Program 2020 Evaluation Report*

Pedernales Falls SP



# BUFFER LAND INCENTIVE PROGRAM

## *Overview*



BLIP provides an alternative method for TPWD to conserve valuable habitat without having to acquire it by providing funding to facilitate the creation of CEs on private **land adjacent or strategic to TPWD properties**

BLIP is designed for donated or partially donated conservation easements, but purchased easements are eligible

**Estimated awards = \$10,000 - \$30,000 (project maximum of \$50,000)**

Goal to support 8-20 conservation easement projects within next 2-4 years



# BUFFER LAND INCENTIVE PROGRAM

## *Overview, cont.*



LTA-accredited land trusts and TPWD are eligible applicants

BLIP will reimburse land trusts for costs their private partner **actually incurred**

All TPWD lands are eligible, but 50% of funds will go to projects that support **habitat and lifecycle needs of grassland and shorebirds**

Projects should **close within 1 year** of application award notice



# BUFFER LAND INCENTIVE PROGRAM

## *Eligible Expenses*



### **Eligible Expenses**

- Baseline inventory report
- Survey
- Stewardship endowment
- Title work
- Water rights due diligence
- Mineral assessment
- Mapping
- Environmental assessment
- Closing costs

### **Ineligible Expenses**

- Appraisal
- Legal
- Staff
- Overhead





# BUFFER LAND INCENTIVE PROGRAM

## *Application Scoring*



Scored out of 100 total points:

- 1) Vegetation Diversity, Habitat, and Soil Health (20 points)
- 2) Watershed Value (20 points)
- 3) Native Wildlife Value (20 points)
- 4) Scale and Strategic Location (15 points)
- 5) Threat (15 points)
- 6) Conservation Easement Terms (10 points)

*\*Applications will be reviewed by TPWF and TPWD staff*



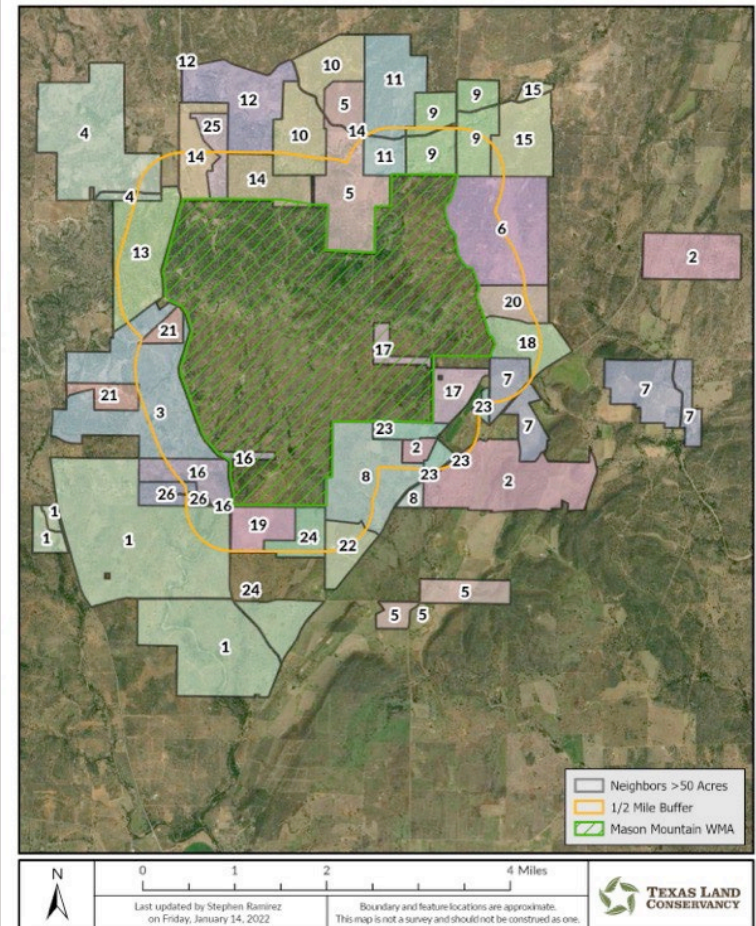
# BUFFER LAND INCENTIVE PROGRAM

## *Application Scoring*



1. Yoakum Dunes WMA (Panhandle Plains)
2. Muse WMA (Hill Country)
3. Kerr WMA (Hill Country)
4. Mason Mountain WMA (Hill Country)
5. M.O. Neasloney WMA (Prairies and Lakes Region)
6. Justin Hurst WMA (Gulf Coast)
7. Matagorda Peninsula CMA (Gulf Coast)
8. Brazos Bend State Park (Greater Houston/Gulf Coastal Plains)
9. Sheldon Lake State Park (Greater Houston/Gulf Coastal Plains)
10. Devil's River State Natural Area (Southwest Texas)

Mason Mountain WMA



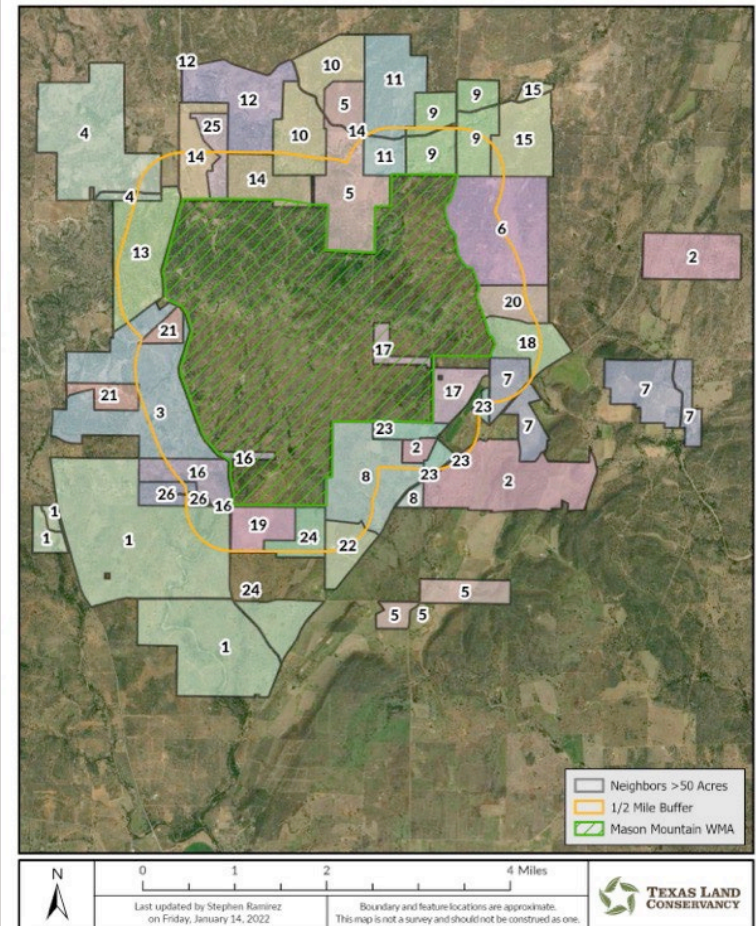
# BUFFER LAND INCENTIVE PROGRAM

## *Application Scoring*



- 11. Pedernales Falls State Park (Hill Country)
- 12. Resaca de la Palma State Park (Rio Grande Valley)
- 13. Estero Llano Grande State Park (Rio Grande Valley)
- 14. Palo Pinto Mountains State Park (Cross Timbers)
- 15. Lost Maples State Natural Area (Hill Country)
- 16. Tyler State Park (Pineywoods)
- 17. Village Creek State Park (Big Thicket)

Mason Mountain WMA



# BUFFER LAND INCENTIVE PROGRAM

## *Application Process*



Rolling application available at:

[www.tpwf.org/blip](http://www.tpwf.org/blip)

### BORDER LANDS INCENTIVE PROGRAM

#### Grant Application and Instructions

##### About

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation's (TPWF) Border Lands Incentive Program (BLIP) provides financial assistance to private landowners who voluntarily encumber their real property with a permanent conservation easement held by either the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) or an LTA-accredited land trust. Specifically, the BLIP program will provide grants to private landowners through a project sponsor to help defray the costs of voluntarily donating a conservation easement on their property. All projects must be adjacent to or otherwise strategically benefit land owned by the TPWD.

Funding awards will range from \$10,000 to \$50,000 and are intended to cover between 50 and 100 percent of eligible costs. Half of the requested funding will go towards conservation easement projects that support the habitat and lifecycle needs of grassland and shorebirds. Grassland and shorebird conservation efforts are critical as no other group of birds in North America has shown a greater or more consistent decline than those associated with grassland, shrub, and coastal habitats. The remaining funding will be used to facilitate easements adjacent to or strategic to other TPWD lands with important conservation values, such as freshwater resources, T&E species, or other declining or priority habitat types.

##### About Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation

Founded in 1991, TPWF's mission is to provide private support to manage and conserve the natural and cultural resources of Texas and to provide hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation opportunities for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

TPWF is committed to accountability and transparency. It has a robust operational infrastructure and dedicated full-time staff responsible for administering the Border Lands Incentive Program. TPWF's [Form 990](#) and [most recent audit](#) demonstrate TPWF's careful and effective use of donations. TPWF is the proud recipient of both the coveted [four-star rating from Charity Navigator](#) and the [Gold GuideStar Member Seal](#).

##### Eligibility

Only Land Trust Alliance accredited land trusts and/or the TPWD are eligible to apply. All projects must be adjacent to or otherwise strategically benefit land owned by the TPWD, including State Parks, State Natural Areas, Wildlife Management Areas, and Coastal Management Areas. Funds are intended to reduce the financial burden on private landowners who are voluntarily encumbering their property, and evidence of such benefit is required. The program will reimburse private landowners through the applicant after successful closing.

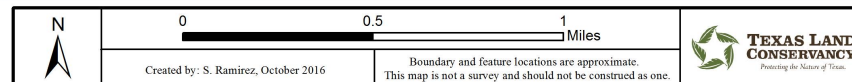
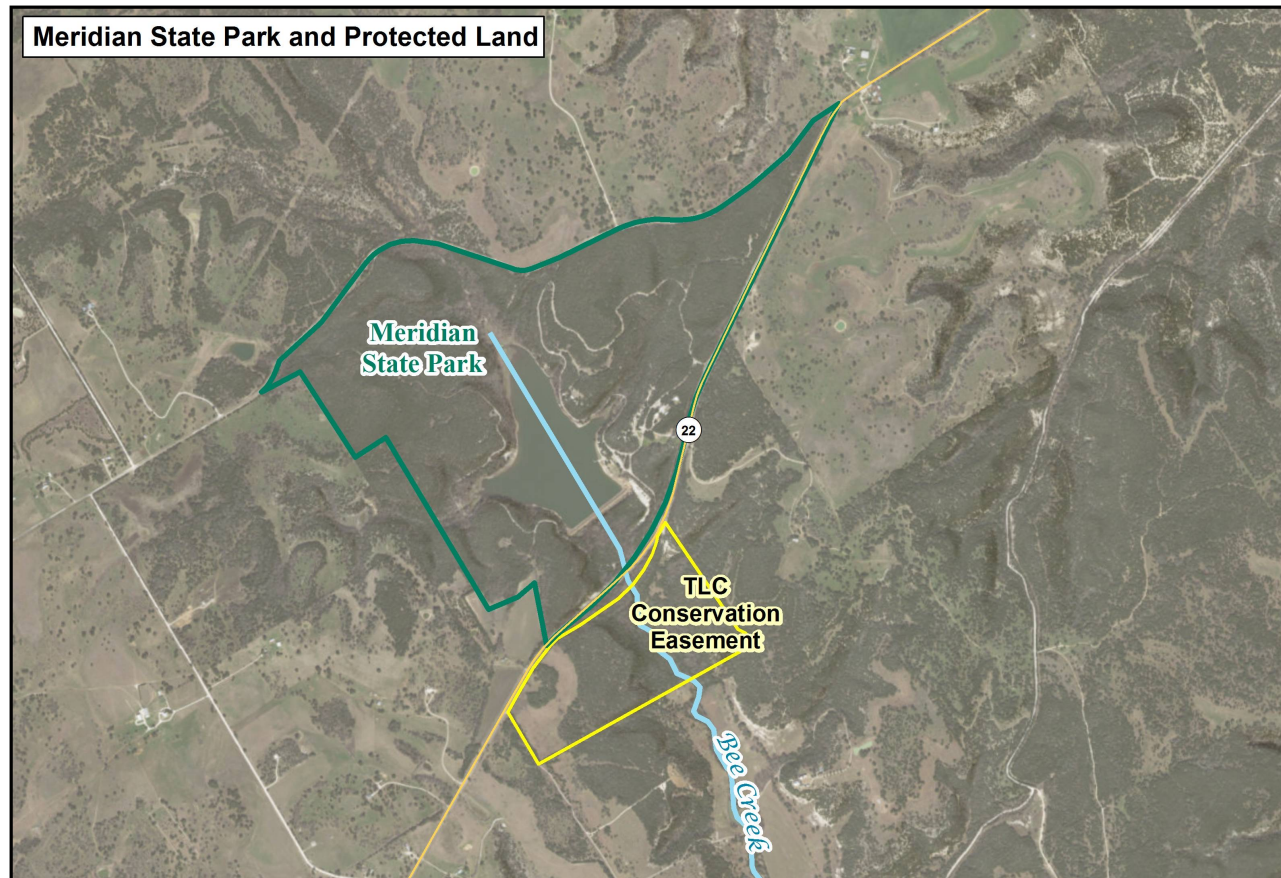
While successful applicants will only be awarded a single grant per project, project sponsors are encouraged to apply for any project that benefits TPWD lands.

##### Grant Approval and Allocation Process



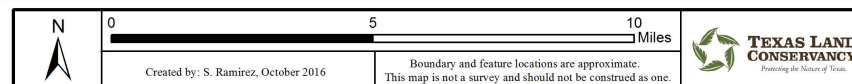
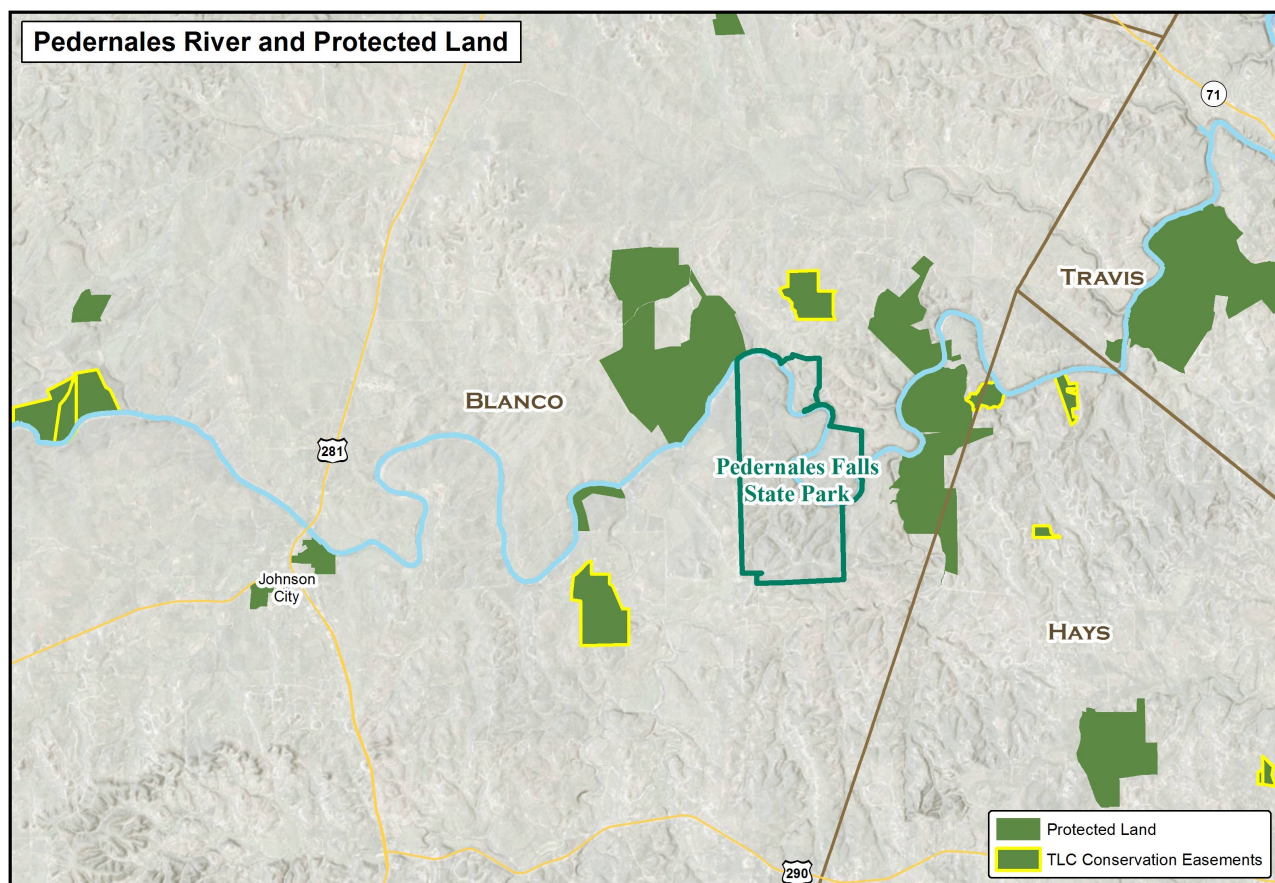
# BUFFER LAND INCENTIVE PROGRAM

## *Land Trust questions*



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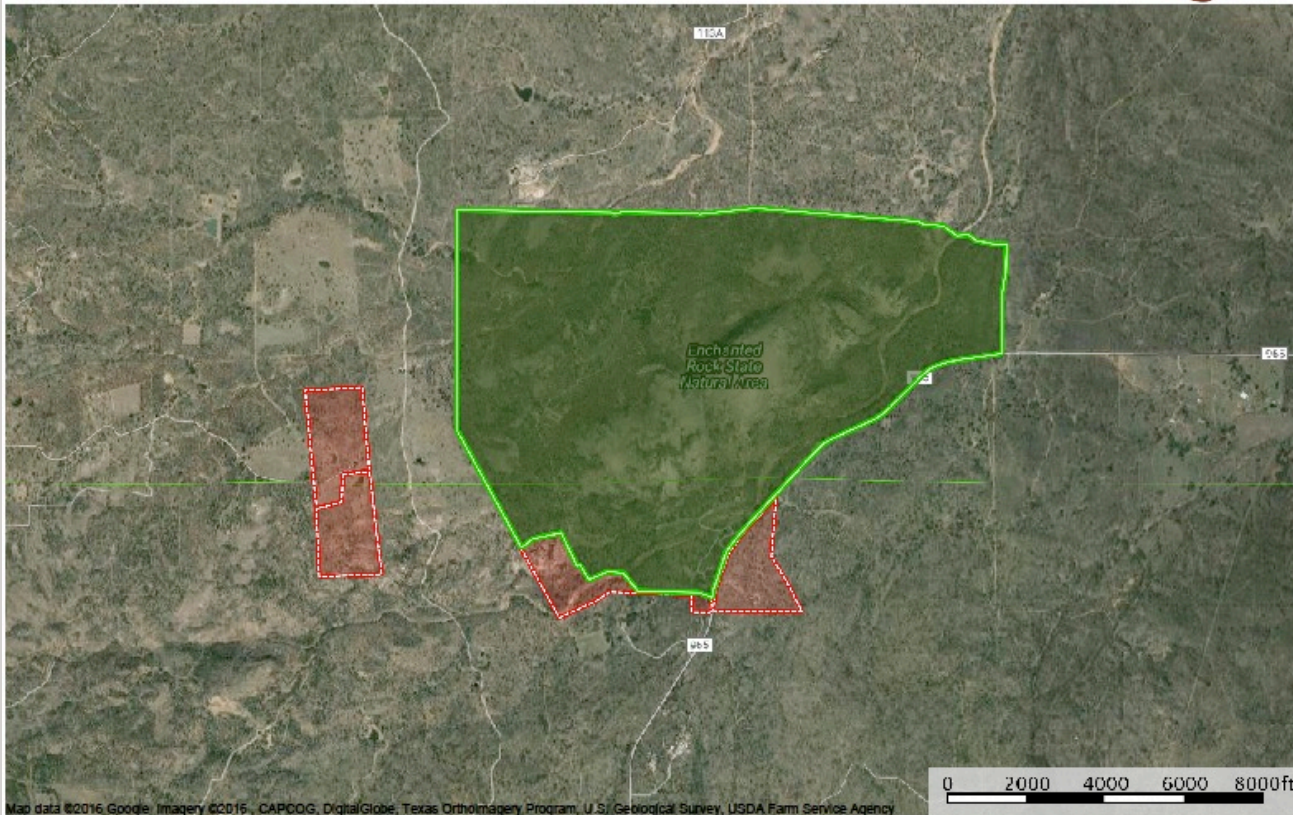


# BUFFER LAND INCENTIVE PROGRAM

## *Land Trust questions*



Enchanted Rock SNA and Current Easements  
Texas, AC +/-



 E Rock SNA Boundary  CE Boundary

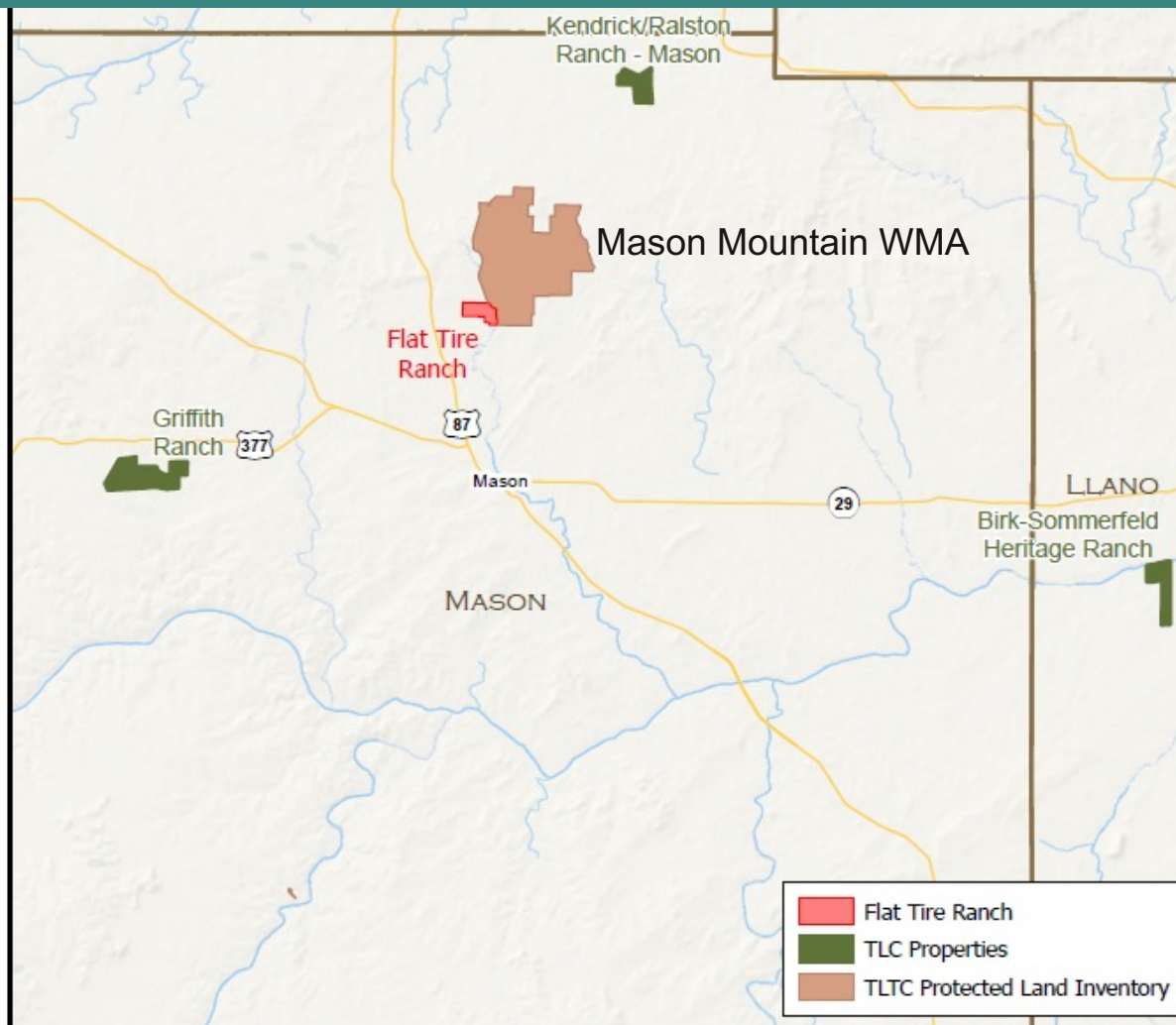
HILL COUNTRY LAND TRUST  
P: 830.997.0027 [hillcountrylandtrust.org](http://hillcountrylandtrust.org) 320 W. San Antonio St Fredericksburg, TX

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# BUFFER LAND INCENTIVE PROGRAM

## *Land Trust questions*



# BUFFER LAND INCENTIVE PROGRAM

## *Land Trust questions*



### Benefits from a Land Trust perspective

- Conservation minded landowners
- TPWD assistance in communications
- Great public relations

### Common questions

- How much is covered?
- Is TPWD a party to the CE?
- Are there additional restrictions?

### Lessons learned

- Create dialogue with the park/WMA supervisor
- Visit with neighboring owners



# BUFFER LAND INCENTIVE PROGRAM

*Thank You!*



## Next steps:

- 1) Connect with TPWF to discuss your project!

Zach Spector

Associate Director of Conservation Programs

[zspector@tpwf.org](mailto:zspector@tpwf.org)

Cell: (210) 413-6761

(Austin-based)

- 2) Visit with TPWD area staff to learn about opportunities... we can help!

- 3) Applications available at [www.tpwf.org/blip](http://www.tpwf.org/blip)

