

# FOREST STEWARDSHIP BRIEFINGS

Timber ◇ Wildlife ◇ Water ◇ Soil ◇ Best Management Practices ◇ Forest Health ◇ Recreation ◇ Aesthetics

## HURRICANE HARVEY RESPONSE

from TCEQ and EPA websites

For more information:

- <https://goo.gl/eLZgtN>
- <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/response/hurricanes>  
Click on "Current Conditions to get updated information."
- <https://goo.gl/cQBWuh>

Even while the impacts of this storm continued to unfold, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) worked to help communities assess damage, manage debris, and bring critical services back online, including water and wastewater. In advance of the storm, TCEQ staff members coordinated with industry as they worked to safely shut down facilities. In the areas along the coast, regional staff prepared by moving agency vehicles and equipment to safer areas, arranging for continuous communications, and working with local emergency management officials.

The TCEQ followed the governor's directive by making restoration of water and wastewater services a priority. Staffers began calling the approximately 300 public water systems and 100 wastewater systems in the impacted areas right away to check on status and to provide assistance. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) deployed personnel to assist the TCEQ Drinking Water and Wastewater Phone Bank.

TCEQ's and EPA's command centers responded to drinking water, wastewater, HazMat, and debris management issues, along with air quality monitoring. EPA developed surface water sampling plans to address public health concerns regarding possible contaminants found in storm water. They began field sampling of flood waters as soon as conditions allowed.

In an ongoing emergency response, the TCEQ and other state agencies give priority to protecting and preventing imminent threats to public health. Once flood waters receded, and it was safe to enter

flooded areas, debris removal activities commenced. The TCEQ is aware that spills occur during flooding events, and the appropriate primary agency will monitor and work with the responsible party, if known, to take appropriate actions as conditions allow. Throughout the flooding event, the TCEQ remains in constant contact with state partners in spill response.

EPA granted the TCEQ's request for fuel waivers to allow for additional needed fuel to be transported to affected counties. Even before Harvey made landfall, TCEQ requested EPA to exercise its authority under the Clean Air Act to temporarily waive federal fuel requirements for RFG (reformulated gasoline) fuels and low RVP (Reid vapor pressure), and TxLED (Texas Low Emission Diesel) fuel requirements for specified counties in Texas. EPA approved this, along with subsequent requests to include more counties and eventually multiple states and Washington, D.C.

The shut-down of nearly a dozen refineries and extreme weather prohibiting fuel barge movement in the Gulf area, with several other refineries and pipelines operating at reduced capacity, limited the production and availability of fuel to areas both within and outside of the Gulf area. These events caused created a shortage of compliant fuel for the designated states and D.C.

Working together, EPA and TCEQ continue to coordinate with local, state and federal officials to address the human health and environmental impacts of Hurricane Harvey and its aftermath, especially the water systems in the affected areas.

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## EMERGENCY WATERSHED PROTECTION

from NRCS website

For more information:

- <https://goo.gl/5i8AmT>
- <https://goo.gl/6HEb62>
- <https://goo.gl/vqH5pA>
- <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov>

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is responsible for administering the Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWPP), which was created by Congress to respond to emergencies caused by floods, drought, earthquakes, windstorms and other natural disasters.

There are two aspects of the program - Recovery and FPE (floodplain easement).

### WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

EWP - Recovery: Relieves imminent hazards to life and property caused by floods, fires, windstorms, and other natural occurrences.

Public and private landowners are eligible, but must be represented by a project sponsor that must be a legal subdivision of the State, such as a city, county, township, or conservation district; and Native American Tribes or Tribal governments.

NRCS may pay up to 75 percent of the construction cost of emergency measures. The remaining 25 percent must come from local sources and can be in the form of cash or in-kind services.

EWP - FPE: Privately-owned lands or lands owned by local and state governments may be eligible. To be eligible, lands must meet one of the following criteria:

- Lands that have been damaged by flooding at least once within the previous calendar year or have been subject to flood damage at least twice within the previous 10 years.

- Other lands within the floodplain are eligible, provided the lands would contribute to the restoration of the flood storage and flow, provide for control of erosion, or that would improve the practical management of the floodplain easement.
- Lands that would be inundated or adversely impacted as a result of a dam breach.

### WHAT PRACTICES ARE INVOLVED?

EWP - Recovery Watershed impairments that the EWP Program addresses are debris-clogged stream channels, undermined and unstable streambanks, jeopardized water control structures and public infrastructures, wind-borne debris removal, and damaged upland sites stripped of protective vegetation by fire or drought.

EWP - FPE: Easements are restored to the extent practicable to the natural environment and may include both structural and nonstructural practices to restore the flood storage and flow, erosion control, and improve the practical management of the easement.

Structures within the floodplain easement must be demolished and removed, or relocated outside the 100-year floodplain or dam breach inundation area.

### HOW DO I REQUEST ASSISTANCE?

See websites in sidebar. You can also direct questions to Shawn Anderson, National Emergency Watershed Protection Program Coordinator, at 202-720-5795.

from Texas A&M Forest Service website

For more information:

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

## THERE'S A WEBSITE FOR THAT - TREECOVERY

Trees and forests provide many ecological, social, and environmental benefits, such as retaining and filtering storm water, replenishing groundwater, filtering air, reducing heat in our cities, increasing property values, and providing safe, comfortable places where we live, work, and play.

In the last decade Texas lost millions of trees - and their valuable benefits - to a

variety of natural disasters in communities across Texas. Flood, drought, wildfire, hurricane, tornado, ice, insects, and disease can all take a toll on Texas trees. The TreeCovey Fund helps recover and reforest these communities. Recovery support for distributing and planting trees brings a community together around a common goal: restoring lost tree canopy.

## PRESCRIBED BURN GRANT MONEY

Some Texas landowners may be eligible to be reimbursed for their cost of prescribed burning. Texas A&M Forest Service is now accepting grant applications from private property owners who use strategically-planned prescribed fires to help reduce wildfire risk and restore natural ecosystems.

“Each year Texas A&M Forest Service offers several prescribed fire grants that reimburse private landowners 50 to 100 percent of the cost of having a prescribed burn conducted on their land,” said Andy McCrady, Fuels Coordinator II with Texas A&M Forest Service. “By utilizing the services of a certified and insured prescribed burn manager, these landowners can safely reintroduce beneficial fire to their property in a planned and controlled manner. These prescribed fires reduce the wildfire hazard to the area and benefit the ecosystem.”

The **Community Protection Program — Prescribed Fire Grant** is available to fund prescribed burn treatments to property within 10 miles of a National Forest in East Texas. A total of \$197,469 is available through the program this year.

The **National Fire Plan — Prescribed Fire Grant** has a total of \$21,000 to fund treatments in 33 eligible counties. These

counties have taken steps to mitigate their risks by composing a city or county-wide Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

The **Neches River and Cypress Basin Watershed Restoration Program — Prescribed Fire Grant** will provide \$128,825 to support prescribed fire in priority watersheds in East Texas. These prescribed burn treatments will help improve water quality and quantity, control invasive species, and enhance wildlife habitat by restoring ecosystem function.

The **Texas Longleaf Conservation Assistance Program – Prescribed Fire Grant** is available to fund prescribed burn treatments on private land to enhance longleaf pine ecosystems in nine Southeast Texas Counties. This year, up to \$50,000 is available through this program.

Texas A&M Forest Service does not conduct the prescribed burns in these programs. Upon approval of funding, the prescribed burn will be conducted by a certified and insured prescribed burn manager of the landowner’s choice. Landowners can expect reimbursement of \$15 to \$30 per acre, depending on program eligibility.

The deadline for application submission is Friday, October 13, 2017.

*from Texas A&M Forest Service news release dated Sept. 11, 2017*

*For more information:*

- <http://texasforestservicetamu.edu/cppgrant>
- William “Andy” McCrady, Fuels Coordinator, TFS, 936-689-9393, [wmccrady@tfs.tamu.edu](mailto:wmccrady@tfs.tamu.edu)

## CAN MY TREE BE SAVED?

Devastating storms and other natural disasters can leave you reeling and at a loss of how to begin recovery. Whether you are a city forester acting as a first responder or a landowner checking your property months later, the first step is always safety. It is a common occurrence that people survive storms and natural disasters only to be injured while cleaning up afterward. Be as safe as possible while dealing with damaged and fallen trees.

Storms often leave trees looking bare and deflated—but these looks can be deceiving. Trees have an uncanny ability to re-

cover from storm damage. Before assuming your trees are lost, give them a quick assessment. A tree professional may be needed to help you decide what to do. Don't hire just anyone who shows up at your door after a storm; hire an ISA Certified Arborist.

City officials, homeowners, and landowners can find useful information on what to do to assess and possibly help their trees that have been damaged during a natural disaster. Go to the first link in the sidebar for what to do and how to be safe after your property has been impacted by fire, winds, water, or drought.

*from Texas A&M Forest Service website*

*For more information:*

- <http://texasforestservicetamu.edu/afterthestorm>
- <http://www.isa-arbor.com/findanarborist/arboristsearch.aspx>

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#### **Editorial Board**

- Rusty Wood, TPWD, Nacogdoches, Texas
- Joe Pase, TFS-Retired, Lufkin, Texas

## TREES, WIND, AND WATER

One advantage of the weekly “Trees are Key” podcasts by TFS’ Paul Johnson (<https://soundcloud.com/treesarekey>) is the ability to cover timely topics; and there is currently not a more timely tree topic in Texas and other parts of the U.S. than hurricanes. Go to <http://tfsweb.tamu.edu/afterthestorm> and click on “Storm Recovery Podcasts” to find links to several podcasts that cover what to do with storm-damaged trees. The first link goes to a podcast is called “Keys to Trees and Hurricanes.”

A few other episodes on wind and water damage are also available:

“Keys to Storm Response” – gain a better understanding what is going on will happen after the storm hits.

“Keys to Trees in Floods” and “Keys to Wind Damage” – to better understand what is happening with our trees and how to help them.

“Safety is Key” and “The Key to Safe Tree Care (PPE)” – to learn more about how to protect yourself while working with trees.

“Keys to Hiring a Tree Care Pro” – will help you make the best decision on who can help you care for your trees following the storm.

“Recovery is Key” – will help you understand the next steps after the initial response and clean up.



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