

TEXAS STATE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION BOARD



PRESS RELEASE

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The Importance of Pollinators to Soil and Water Conservation in Texas

TEMPLE – The Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board, Association of Texas Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association, and Texas Wildlife Association are joining other state agencies and organizations in a statewide campaign to highlight the importance of voluntary land stewardship in Texas. Soil and Water Stewardship Week is April 29 through May 6, 2018, and the focus this year is “The Importance of Pollinators to Soil and Water Conservation in Texas.”

Pollinators include the birds and the bees (butterflies, bats, beetles, moths, and even small mammals) and are vital for production agriculture, our food supply, and the preservation of our natural resources. Many Texas farmers, ranchers, foresters, and urbanites recognize the importance of these insects and animals, and are attempting to regenerate pollinator populations by implementing voluntary conservation practices on private and public lands. Texans have been working with their local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) for over 75 years to

voluntarily implement conservation practices that protect and enhance our soil and water resources.

Unfortunately, pollinator populations have been declining in the United States for several years, primarily due to loss of habitat. Thankfully there are many landowners in Texas that want pollinators on their property, and for good reasons. To begin with, pollinators are essential for productive agricultural ecosystems, such as row crop production and agro-forestry, and they ensure the production of fruit and seeds in many crops, grasses, and timber. Likewise, pollinators play a significant role in natural rangeland ecosystems by helping to keep plant communities healthy and reproducing, which in turn prevents soil erosion, improves water quality, and provides food and cover for native wildlife.

Soil and Water Conservation Districts are assisting producers to achieve their goal of regenerating pollinator populations by developing voluntary conservation plans. These conservation plans include the implementation of conservation practices that have the dual benefit of protecting natural resources and providing pollinator habitat. Such voluntary practices include riparian buffers, grassed waterways, planting native grasses and wildflowers, cover crops, pest management, and prescribed grazing.

Without healthy and productive rangeland, cropland, and forests, our pollinators will fail, production agriculture will fail, and our society will ultimately fail. Whether you're a farmer, a rancher, a forester, or just want to plant an urban flower garden, it is up to you to decide how to run your operation. We need pollinators, and we also need good stewards of our lands that protect and preserve the natural resources of Texas.

Partnering organizations in the "The Importance of Pollinators to Soil and Water Conservation in Texas" public awareness campaign includes Audubon Texas, Earthmoving Contractors Association of Texas, Independent Cattlemen's Association of Texas, San Antonio River Authority, South Texans' Property Rights Association, Texan by Nature, Texas Association of Dairymen, Texas A&M Forest Service, Texas A&M Natural Resources Institute, Texas Conservation Association

for Water and Soil, Texas Grain and Feed Association, Texas Grazing Land Coalition, Texas Land Trust Council, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas Poultry Federation, Texas Seed Trade Association, Texas Sheep and Goat Raisers Association, Texas Water Resources Institute, U.S Rice Producers Association, and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

For more information on “The Importance of Pollinators to Soil and Water Conservation in Texas,” please visit www.tsswcb.texas.gov.
