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Agency Workforce Plan Fiscal Years 2015-2019

Workforce Plan

Agency Overview

The Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) was created by the Texas Legislature in 1939. The TSSWCB is charged with overall responsibility for administering and coordinating the state's soil and water conservation program with the state's soil and water conservation districts. Title 7, Chapters 201 and 203 of the Agriculture Code of Texas contains the provisions of law pertaining to soil and water conservation. The TSSWCB is named as the agency responsible for implementing constitutional provisions and state laws relating to conservation and protection of soil resources. Within this framework of law, Section 201.026 gives the TSSWCB responsibility for planning, implementing and managing programs and practices for abating agricultural and silvicultural nonpoint source pollution. It is through this, that water quality management planning is incorporated into conservation planning methodologies. Chapter 203 creates the Water Supply Enhancement Program, designates the TSSWCB as the implementing agency, establishes a cost-share program for water supply enhancement and provides for delegation of certain powers and duties to SWCDs.

Passage of the Texas Soil Conservation Law makes it possible for local landowners to organize and manage their own districts. Each local district develops a Long-Range Program and Plan of Work and an Annual Plan of Operations that guide the district in solving its conservation problems. These district programs and plans of work are updated regularly to recognize and evaluate changes in agriculture, economy and natural resources. Farmers and ranchers desiring to use a conservation program on their land receive assistance from their local district. Currently, there are 216 local soil and water conservation districts that cover the entire state.

Since their creation conservation districts have effectively administered conservation programs based on the voluntary application of conservation practices. The voluntary approach, incorporating the basic philosophy prevalent throughout the farming and ranching industry, has proven successful. That philosophy recognizes private land as property of the owner and management a responsibility of ownership. Most Texas landowners have great respect for natural resources including water quality. With appropriate education, these landowners readily recognize the desirability of implementing suitable management practices. These management practices are what constitute conservation plans and water quality management plans.

The current network of 216 districts into which Texas is organized is the logical vehicle to provide the necessary local leadership and the appropriate information as to what practices are best for individual farming or ranching operations. The Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board is responsible for coordinating the programs of districts through advice and consultation.

The agency structure consists of seven State Board members (five Board members are elected by soil and water conservation districts, two Board members are Governor appointed) and staff. The staff is organized into Executive Management, and seven program areas: Budget and Accounting (including Information Technology and Purchasing), Statewide Resource Management (including Flood Control),

Human Resources, Conservation Outreach, Water Supply Enhancement (administered out of San Angelo), Soil and Water Conservation District Program Support (administered by Field Representatives), and Water Quality Management Plan Program (administered by Regional Offices). See Organization Chart (Appendix B of agency strategic plan).

The TSSWCB is currently staffed by 66 (64.3- FTEs) employees and has a current operating budget of approximately \$52.5 million for the biennium. Twenty-four (22.3 FTEs) employees are centrally located in Temple, Texas in close proximity to the state headquarters of the NRCS, a federal agency that is a partner in the statewide conservation program. The other 42 employees are located throughout the state. Seven regional water quality offices have a total staff of 32 employees. In addition, there are four contract employees who work in regional offices. Ten field staff employees serve their assigned districts from a designated headquarters location. One Director administers the Water Supply Enhancement Program in a San Angelo field office. One program office specializes in poultry water quality management plans with two additional satellite offices in Centerville and Gonzales. Two field positions (with one currently vacant) coordinate Flood Control activities.

Overview of Operations

The Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board's workforce plan describes each major program of the agency and its associated workforce planning.

Executive Management

Composed of an Executive Director, an Administrative Coordinator, along with an Administrative Assistant. Directs the administrative affairs of the TSSWCB including the execution of rules, guidelines, decisions, and directives of the State Board to ensure the efficient and effective operation of the agency.

Budget and Accounting

Responsibilities include: development and oversight of TSSWCB's overall budget, revenue and expenditures, strategic planning, performance measures, cost recovery efforts, and proper expenditure of state appropriations and federal grants in order to ensure compliance with the agency's fiduciary responsibility.. Responsibilities also include: managing TSSWCB's general ledger and ensuring the proper processing of cash, communicating and implementing state and federal cash management practices, monitoring and processing expenditures in accordance with state and federal statutes and regulations, and information technology. Budget and Accounting also performs contract management; and manages the Conservation Implementation Assistance Grant Program, the Conservation Assistance Matching Funds Grant Program, and the SWCD Director Mileage and Per Diem Reimbursement Program.

With respect to information technology (IT), the Budget and Accounting program installs and maintains network services including: local area networks; wide area network; internet services; local application support; infrastructure security; implements and maintains web-based technology; and trains staff on the use of applications and services. IT also configures, secures and maintains both wired and wireless local area network environments and troubleshoots computing hardware and software problems for local and remote staff in all agency departments. The program audits and tracks the use of hardware and software

deployments; serves as the agency Information Resource Manager and Security Officer, working with the Department of Information Resources to ensure agency compliance with state IT law; develops, maintains, and enforces policies regarding security, the acceptable use of IT infrastructure, and disaster recovery and works with agency purchaser on the procurement of IT software and hardware.

The budget and accounting program executes all purchasing efforts for the agency in accordance with state and federal requirements, the HUB program and vendor recruitment requirements.

Statewide Resource Management (SRM)

Constitutes the bulk of the agency's technical program support and policy personnel assigned to the state headquarters. The SRM team administers the agency's statewide agricultural and silvicultural nonpoint source (NPS) water pollution abatement mandate, with the exception of the direct day-to-day administration of the agency's Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP) Program and its associated financial cost-share functions. The statewide agricultural and silvicultural NPS management mandate is codified at Agriculture Code Section 201.026 (Senate Bill 503, 73rd Regular Session of the Texas Legislature), and serves as a policy umbrella for numerous water quality programs essential to carrying out the broader mandate. Additionally, the SRM team administers and coordinates most natural resource conservation and environmental management functions that fall under the agency's responsibilities.

The SRM team's responsibilities include overall management of the agricultural and silvicultural aspects of the Texas Nonpoint Source Management Program. In carrying out this program, the SRM team administers the Federal Clean Water Act, Section 319(h) NPS Grant Program, an Environmental Data Quality Management Program, a Watershed Protection Plan Program, a Total Maximum Daily Load Program, and the Coastal Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program.

The SRM team also manages most of the agencies grant contracts (internally and externally funded), and provides administrative and technical support on water conservation and irrigation management issues. Members of the SRM team represent the agency on the Water Conservation Implementation Task Force, Water Conservation Advisory Council, the Coastal Coordination Advisory Committee and the Texas Drought Preparedness Council.

The SRM team manages both agency grant programs designed to provide grants for the operation, maintenance, and repair of flood control structures.

The SRM team manages the policy and fiscal aspects of the Poultry Water Quality Management Plan Program, as well as the Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan Program for the dairies in the North Bosque and Leon River Watersheds. Additionally, the SRM team coordinates certain aspects of the cost-share function for the WQMP Program in areas that did not receive a cost-share allocation by the State Board at the beginning of the current fiscal year. The SRM team also represents the agency's Executive Director on the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee, and provides technical and programmatic support to local soil and water conservation districts on flood control structure issues.

Other duties of the SRM team include providing support to other agency staff on information technology issues, and managing the content of the agency's website. This group also provides technical support on

natural resource matters to the agency's field staff and regional office personnel in the areas of geographic information systems, engineering, water quality, agronomy, soil science, and environmental compliance coordination with state and federal agencies.

Certain members of the SRM team also coordinate agency activities with agricultural industry groups, and perform certain intergovernmental relations activities with other state agencies, the Governor's Office of Budget, Planning and Policy, and the Texas Legislature.

The 81st Legislature appropriated funding to the TSSWCB to administer grant programs to SWCDs for conducting operation, maintenance, and repair activities on the State's approximately 2,000 flood control dams. Local SWCDs, county governments, municipalities, water control and improvement districts, and other special districts are all party to sponsorship agreements across the state whereby they have agreed to perform needed maintenance and repairs on federally designed and constructed flood control dams on private property. The TSSWCB has developed two separate grant programs for delivering these funds to local dam sponsors. The Flood Control Operation and Maintenance Grant Program focuses on routine up-keep activities, while the Flood Control Structural Repair Grant Program focuses on major repair activities related to dam function. Both programs became effective during Fiscal Year 2010.

Human Resources

Responsibilities include: overseeing all personnel matters including benefits administration, state classification plan, payroll, leave accounting, employment and recruitment, managerial, developmental and safety training. Human Resources also ensure that TSSWCB personnel practices are in compliance with state and federal laws and regulations. Human Resources serve as a strategic partner with Executive Management and also consult and advise managerial staff regarding human resource matters.

Conservation Outreach

Responsibilities include: planning and coordinating the Annual State Meeting for SWCD Directors; coordinates agency rulemaking functions; coordinates the development of various agency reports; coordinates requests for public information; coordinates the complaint process; and maintains an open and relevant relationship between SWCDs, agricultural interest groups, and the general public; serves as the primary agency liaison with the Association of Texas SWCDs, the National Association of State Conservation Agencies, and the National Association of Conservation Districts; represents the agency on the Texas Invasive Species Coordinating Committee, the Prescribed Burning Board, the Interagency Task Force on Economic Growth and Endangered Species, and subcommittees of the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee; administers agency responsibilities for facilitating and managing the Texas Invasive Species Coordinating Committee; manages the Texas Conservation Awards Program including the public speaking, poster, and essay contests; provides administrative services and programmatic support for the Wildlife Alliance for Youth; administers a conservation education video library loan service; produces the agency's Monthly Program News and Activities report; distributes agency press releases and Conservation News updates; produces content for the agency's social media platforms; supports conservation education for teachers through continuing education workshops; provides conservation education demonstration models on nonpoint source water pollution for schools; plans and

coordinates SWCD Program Development Workshops; and represents the agency at numerous trade shows and conferences across the state.

Water Supply Enhancement

Carries out duties and responsibilities associated with administering the WSEP; manages a financial incentive cost-share program supporting the removal of water-depleting brush; coordinates the work of SWCDs that implement specific water supply enhancement projects; collaborates with various state and federal entities to conduct brush control feasibility studies to identify priority watersheds; and develops resource management plans for landowners addressing brush control and other natural resource issues.

Soil and Water Conservation District Program Support

Provides assistance to SWCDs and their employees through TSSWCB field representatives that meet regularly with the SWCDs to provide guidance, training and consultation. The field staff also coordinates the activities of districts and provides a direct link between the TSSWCB and districts. Field Representatives explain TSSWCB policies, programs, rules, and regulations to SWCDs; assist SWCDs in developing and implementing their local conservation programs; provide guidance on proper expenditure of funds, bookkeeping procedures, and audits; train SWCD employees in proper accounting and fiscal reporting procedures; provide guidance to SWCDs on employment issues, open meetings, and open records; and assist SWCDs in organizing and conducting conservation education activities.

Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP) Program

Assists agricultural and silvicultural producers in meeting the state's water quality goals and standards through a voluntary, incentive-based program. There are special requirements regarding Poultry WQMPs. Staff carry out duties and responsibilities associated with administering the WQMP Program; provide technical assistance to SWCDs and cooperators in developing and implementing WQMPs on agricultural or silvicultural operations; certify WQMPs; conduct engineering work associated with implementing WQMPs; manage day-to-day operation of the agency's Poultry WQMP Program; address the issue of nuisance odors created by poultry farms and land application of poultry litter; investigate water quality complaints involving agricultural and/or silvicultural NPS pollution; and manage a financial incentive program supporting WQMP implementation.

Workforce Profile

Critical Workforce Skills

Although the TSSWCB has qualified employees, there are several critical skills that are important to the agency's ability to operate. Without these skills, the TSSWCB could not provide basic services. These skills are listed below:

- Developing and promoting voluntary approaches
- Conservation Planning
- Database development and maintenance
- Providing a liaison with districts
- Providing technical assistance
- Project/Contract management
- Developing Water Quality Management Plans
- Coordinating activities of districts
- Strategic Planning
- Customer service
- Interpreting legal statutes
- Educating clientele
- Providing liaison with other local, state, and federal agencies and interest groups
- Integrated watershed protection planning
- Geo-spatial data manipulation and management
- Water quality pollutant load reduction characterization
- Invasive species management
- Environmental data quality management
- Interpretation of hydrologic data
- Grant management
- Engineering expertise
- Agronomic expertise
- Expertise in soil science
- Web application development and delivery

Workforce Demographics

Information from the State Auditor's Office (SAO) Human Resources Analysis System shows the average headcount was 70.25 (total headcount, 77, includes 7 State Board members). Of that total, 45 employees were male and 25 were female. The overall percentages are shown in Figure 1. Over 55% of TSSWCB's employees are over the age of 40 as shown in Figure 2 below. Approximately 44% of employees have less than 10 years of service. These employees have the potential for continued service with the agency. About 56% of employees have over 10 years of service and have the ability to serve as mentors to the other staff. The following charts profile TSSWCB's workforce for fiscal year 2013.

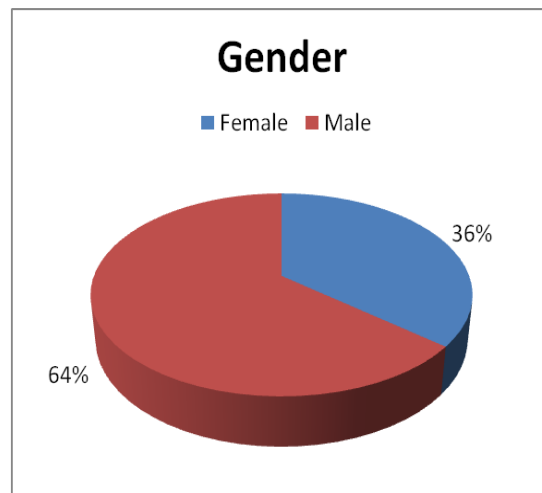


Figure 1. Percentages of male and female population employed at the TSSWCB.

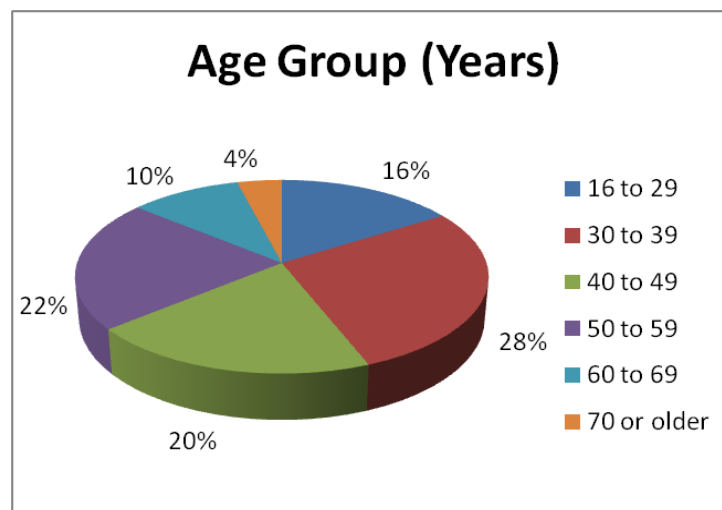


Figure 2. Employees' age employed at the TSSWCB.

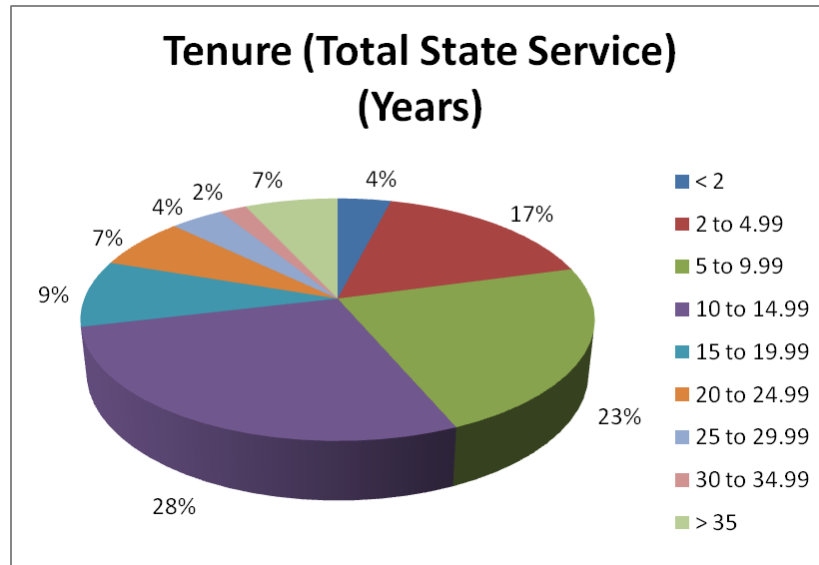


Figure 3. Total years of service for each employee.

Employee Turnover

Turnover is an important issue in any agency, and TSSWCB is no exception. The following graph compares the TSSWCB turnover to that of the State over the last five fiscal years. For the last five fiscal years, TSSWCB's employee turnover rate has remained below the statewide average for turnover.

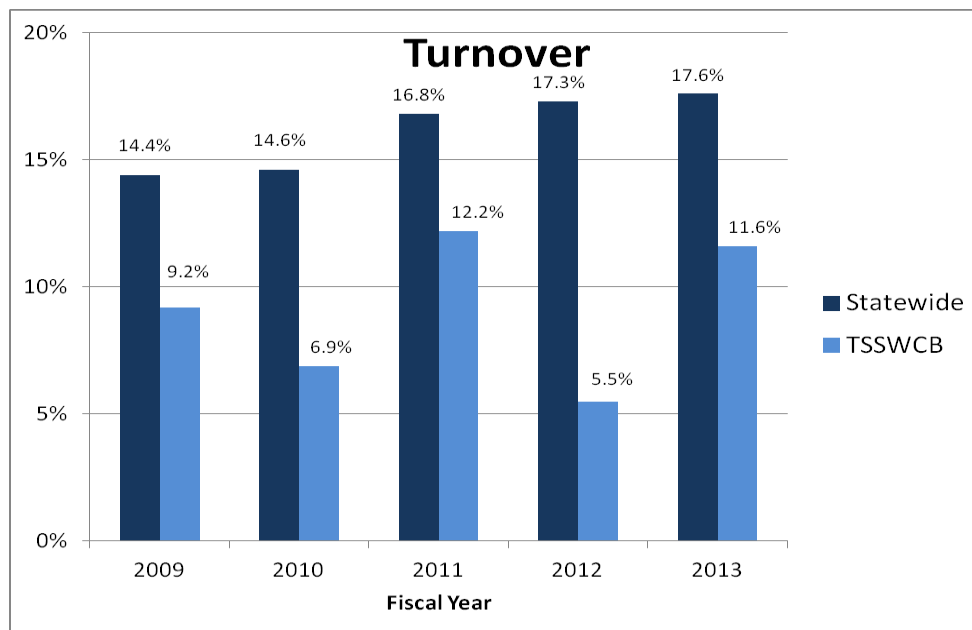


Figure 4. Employee Turnover Rate at TSSWCB as compared to Statewide

Attrition

TSSWCB has not experienced forced attrition in the last 7 fiscal years.

Retirement Eligibility

Since 36% of TSSWCB's employees are 50 years of age or older, retirement accounts for a considerable part of employees leaving the agency. Because 20% of the agency's employees are between the ages of 40 and 49, in the next few years, retirement will become increasingly significant. Currently the agency could experience a potential loss of at least 12 employees. These employees have helped to further establish and improve the agency, and it is important to ensure that this knowledge and organizational experience is not lost.

Future Workforce Profile

The ultimate goal is to ensure continuity of task performance in each area and program at TSSWCB. Employees approaching retirement eligibility should work with management to develop a succession plan for their program area.

TSSWCB workforce changes are anticipated to be driven by goals, strategies, performance measures, technology, work, workloads, work processes, program related federal grants, and federal contract programs.

The knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to perform specific functions and tasks within the agency requires an educated staff that has extensive information technology, project management, managerial and professional training. Written and verbal proficiency is essential in all agency positions. Individual skill development will also need to be accommodated to recruit, train, retain, and motivate workers.

Projected future workforce knowledge needed includes the following:

- Conservation planning
- Working with locally elected soil and water conservation district directors
- Negotiation and facilitation
- Strategic planning
- Project/Contract management
- Performance management
- Stakeholder group facilitation

TSSWCB recognizes the need to maintain and improve current skill levels and anticipates projected future workforce skills needed includes the following:

- Knowledge of legislative processes
- Knowledge of applicable state and federal laws
- Technology advances in agricultural best management practices
- Accounting services
- Technical planning
- Computer technology
- Decision making
- Communication
- Engineering services
- Customer service
- Public service
- Contract management

The strategic vision anticipates annual technological advances requiring knowledge and skill improvement. TSSWCB anticipates information will be processed faster and more accurately allowing for smooth transitions during staff changes. TSSWCB foresees more electronic document exchange, more accountability and more reporting requirements.

TSSWCB also projects an increase in involvement addressing agriculture, silvicultural, and nonpoint source pollution concerns, water supply enhancement and brush control activities, flood control, invasive species management and control, and contracting to provide technical services for federal agriculture programs.

It is also recognized that additional future changes to strategies and goals are contingent on legislative activities, new initiatives defined by the TSSWCB and changes in state and federal laws. Economic trends in the marketplace would dictate our ability to retain and recruit employees with competitive job skills.

Changes We Anticipate in Our Workforce

- Expansion of water supply enhancement and brush control activities
- Addressing flood control infrastructures
- Addressing mandated deadlines/requirements for Poultry operations
- Emerging technology

Expected Workforce Changes

- More direct relation with producers
- Increased use of technology to revise, increase efficiencies, streamline work processes enabling better communication between mobile staff members and an increasing mobile public
- Employees cross-trained in functional areas
- Increased number of Grant Managers, Project Managers, Contract Managers, and Natural Resource Specialists

Anticipated Increase/Decrease in Number of Employees Needed to Do the Work

- Expect current staff to remain relatively static
- Increased demands to be addressed by reallocation of workload within the agency

Gap Analysis

The projected retirement or loss of employees in technical and professional areas has the potential to create a shortage of expertise in various areas. Mentoring, coaching, cross training and succession planning along with improved on-the-job training must take on greater importance. The increased alliance on information technology requires lifetime learning for all employees.

Strategy Development

Our strategies to address gaps in our workforce agency-wide include: (dependent upon budget constraints) adequate salary; merit increases; monetary and non-monetary rewards for performance; flex time and/or telecommute opportunities; career, leadership and professional development; cross training,

contract workers; and increased participation in agency programs. When possible, a mentoring process whereby replacement employees are hired prior to the current employee retiring, contingent upon FTE issues is utilized as needed. A continual review of the agency's Workforce Plan is conducted as business goals change.