



News Release

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Texas NRCS Can Help Landowners with Wildfire Recovery and Restoration

TEMPLE, TX, *March 13, 2017* - In the wake of the wildfires that went across the Texas Panhandle the week of March 6, 2017, the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is urging landowners affected by the fires to contact the NRCS office at their local USDA Service Center.

The NRCS can provide land management advice, and in some cases, financial assistance, to install measures that reduce post-fire damage and aid in the rehabilitation process.

“NRCS in Texas is prepared to assist landowners with their efforts to address wind erosion that is continuing to occur due to drought and the effects from wildfires,” states Salvador Salinas, State Conservationist for the USDA-NRCS in Texas. “Loss of vegetation not only affects forages for livestock and wildlife habitat, but it can lead to increased soil loss due to erosion by wind and water.”

Professional resource conservationists with the NRCS can visit with landowners about practices such as grazing deferment, cross fencing, reseeding and water development that are effective post-fire strategies to help reduce erosion.

“We can also provide assistance that will enable landowners to accelerate the health and vigor of affected rangeland,” said Salinas. “In all but the most extreme cases, plants are still alive below the surface of the soil and will recover with proper management.”

Salinas suggests landowners and managers consult with their local NRCS district conservationist to develop a conservation plan, which can be an effective strategy for pasture

and rangeland recovery. Landowners and managers affected by the wildfires can apply for possible financial assistance through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) for range deferment of all livestock grazing throughout the growing season, plant health concerns, and cross fencing assistance.

In order to apply, landowners must visit their local NRCS office to fill out an application. Applications will be ranked and those approved for funding will be offered an EQIP contract. An additional \$3.4 million has been requested to help address resource concerns related to wildfires, but that amount has not yet been approved.

For further assistance in evaluating your land and planning practices to address concerns following a wildfire, contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) or Soil and Water Conservation District. For more information and listings for additional USDA Service Centers visit the Texas NRCS website at www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov

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