

# The Creek Community Foundation Wildlife Management Handbook

The Creek Community Foundation  
Millican Reserve  
Brazos County, Texas

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## Welcome Letter

### *An Introduction to Wildlife Management at the Creek at Millican Reserve*

#### **Welcome to the Creek at Millican Reserve!**

The Creek is a unique community dedicated to wildlife management and conservation. We are part of the beautiful Brazos Valley landscape with a natural abundance of flora and fauna. As a member of our community's wildlife association, you have an opportunity to assist in the management of wildlife and enhance the value of your property.

One of the many advantages of our community vision is a tax benefit known as a wildlife management property tax evaluation (or, as the Brazos County appraisal district refers to it, a "1-d-1" evaluation.) **As long as you demonstrate that the primary use of your land is for wildlife management, which is required under the Creek deed restrictions, your property will provide you with significant property tax savings** similar to the better-known agricultural tax evaluation. The attached Wildlife Management Handbook is intended to provide you with information about wildlife management here at the Creek.

All of the property at the Creek benefits from a common set of wildlife management practices. The Creek Community Foundation will assist you in planning, filing paperwork, and managing wildlife practices throughout the year. We work closely with the wildlife biologists at **Plateau Land and Wildlife Management** ("Plateau"), a professional wildlife management company based in Dripping Springs, Texas, to help ensure that all practices and documentation are handled appropriately.

As a new landowner, **your next step will be to develop a Wildlife Management Plan for your property.** Millican Reserve and Plateau professionals will work with you to develop a customized plan that exceeds the requirements of the appraisal district, meets the Creek's common set of management standards, and incorporates any special wildlife interests you may have. Following the filing of the management plan, you should expect to see Plateau and the Creek wildlife management team implementing the wildlife practices on your property occasionally throughout the year. (We will always notify you in advance, and we encourage you to join us as we carry out wildlife practices on your property.)

The Creek's common wildlife practices include the management of deer, songbirds, and small mammals through habitat control, predator control, providing supplemental supplies of food, providing shelter, and making census counts to determine population throughout the year. By way of example, to manage these focus areas, we may regularly schedule and maintain several of the following practices, among others:

- Imported red fire ant control
- Feral hog control
- Songbird and dove feeders
- Songbird nest boxes
- Brush piles for shelter
- White-tailed deer spotlight census
- Breeding bird surveys.

In addition, every year, we will provide an annual report to the Brazos County appraisal district of all of the practices implemented during the prior year. **The documentation of your practices is a critical part of your wildlife tax exemption.** You can help this process by recording sightings of birds and mammals, taking pictures of wildlife and feeders, keeping receipts from wildlife practices such as for bird seed or fire ant control, and cooperating during seasonal management executed by Plateau and Creek Community Foundation staff.

For your reference, we have roughly estimated the costs of wildlife management on your new property (attached), including fees charged by Plateau. These estimates and fees are subject to change. Also, we have provided an approximate estimate of the tax savings afforded to a sample Creek tract through the wildlife management tax evaluation.

Wildlife management is a fun and rewarding activity, and we look forward to working with you in the months and years to come to make the Creek a well-managed wildlife community. If you have any specific questions regarding your Wildlife Management Plan or the attached Wildlife Management Handbook, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

*The Creek Community Foundation*

## Introduction to Wildlife Management

Wildlife management at the Creek is a rewarding opportunity to enhance the native wildlife in your own back yard. As the Texas landscape changes, new land uses such as farming and ranching or development often encroach on the habitat the local wildlife depend upon for survival. The Creek is working to protect and enhance the landscape native to this part of the Brazos Valley. The State of Texas additionally offers certain tax benefits to encourage rural landowners to responsibly manage wildlife.

### **What is “Wildlife Management Valuation” (or WMV)?**

In 1995, Proposition 11 was passed by the Texas Legislature, the Texas Constitution was amended, and the Wildlife Management Tax Valuation/Exemption (WMV) was born. This new law allowed landowners with an agricultural, or “ag,” valuation to maintain the same substantial property tax savings as a working farm or ranch while managing for habitat and wildlife instead of livestock and crops. For the first-time landowners had a legitimate and affordable alternative to agricultural use for their rural property.

### **What’s Required to Move Into WMV?**

Tracts at the Creek already meet the minimum requirements to benefit from the Wildlife Management Valuation. These requirements include the sizes of the Tracts as well as the established primary uses.

### **Benefits of wildlife use over agricultural use**

Both wildlife and agricultural land users share a substantial property tax benefit. There are many reasons for pursuing wildlife use over agricultural, such as:

- Land is maintained/restored in pristine native conditions (limited clearing)
- No management of livestock or fencing requirements
- Enhanced recreational value
- Improved habitat and increased wildlife diversity

### **WMV and the Creek Community Foundation**

The Creek Community Foundation and individual tracts within it are currently in WMV, and the land has been managed for wildlife for many years. Pursuant to the deed restrictions, Creek tract owners are required to implement WMPs on their property. Each land owner must complete a minimum number of wildlife management practices in at least three (3) out of seven (7) separate wildlife management activity categories. It is each tract owner’s sole responsibility to maintain property wildlife management practices; to that end, the Community Foundation and its consultants work closely with tract owners to maintain a responsible wildlife management program that meets minimum requirements of the Brazos County Appraisal District.

## Wildlife Management Categories

According to the statewide Wildlife Management Valuation, as enforced by the Brazos County Appraisal District, there are seven (7) broad categories of wildlife practices.

### 1. Habitat Control and Management

A wild animal's habitat is its surroundings including plants, ground cover, shelter and other animals on the land. Habitat control – or habitat management – means actively using the land to create or promote an environment that benefits wildlife on the land.

Activities that contribute to habitat control of management include:

- Grazing management
- Prescribed burning
- Range enhancement
- Brush management
- Forest management
- Riparian management and improvement
- Wetland improvements
- Habitat protection for species of concern
- Managing native, exotic and feral species
- Wildlife restoration



### 2. Erosion Control and Repair

Any active practice that attempts to reduce or keep soil erosion to a minimum for wild animals' benefits is known as erosion control. Erosion control projects are some of the longest lasting and most beneficial activities you can perform on your property. Erosion control activities require some annual maintenance and therefore can and should be an ongoing part of your wildlife management plan. As with other water and soil related activities, these projects, when done to the proper guidelines, are given a 10-year credit toward wildlife management tax valuation compliance.

Some erosion control practices include:

- Pond construction
- Pond clean out and repair
- Spillway repair
- Gully shaping
- Streamside, pond and wetland re-vegetation
- Establishing native plants
- Dike, levee construction or management
- Water diversions
- Low water crossings and culverts.

### 3. Predator Control and Management

This term refers to practices intended to manage the population of predators to benefit the owner's target wildlife population. Predator control usually is not necessary unless the number of predators is harmful to the desired wildlife population. Predator control and management should not be counted as one of the seven wildlife management activities necessary to qualify for 1-D-1 Ag/WM use appraisal unless it is part of the comprehensive wildlife management plan.



- Mammal predator control (trapping, hunting)
- Fire ant control
- Brown-headed cowbird control
- Grackle or staling control.

### 4. Providing Supplemental Water

Natural water exists in all wildlife environments. Supplemental water is provided when the owner actively provides water in addition to the natural sources. This category of wildlife management activity includes providing supplemental water in habitats where water is limited or redesigning water sources to increase the availability to wildlife. Supplemental water activities can be counted for 10 years or more toward wildlife management compliance.

Some examples of recommended practices include:

- Water collection and distribution systems and guzzlers
- Trough modifications, well and windmill overflow management
- March or wetland restoration or development
- Spring development and/or improvements.

### 5. Providing Supplemental Food

Most wildlife environments have some natural food. An owner supplies supplemental food by providing food or nutrition in addition to the level naturally produced on the land. Grazing management, prescribed burning and range enhancement can be used to provide supplemental food.

Other ways to provide supplemental food include:

- Food plots, feeder and mineral supplements
- Strip discing, range enhancement, and reseeded.





## 6. Providing Supplemental Shelter

This term means actively creating or maintaining vegetation or artificial structures that provide shelter from the weather, nesting and breeding sites or “escape cover” from enemies. The best shelter for wildlife can be provided by a well-managed habitat.

Some practices listed below provide types of shelter that may be unavailable in the habitat:

- Installing nest boxes and bat boxes
- Creating brush piles and slash retention
- Managing fence lines
- Managing hay meadow, pasture or cropland, strip mowing
- Half-cutting trees and shrubs
- Establishing woody plants and shrubs
- Developing natural cavities and snags.



## 7. Census Counts and Surveys

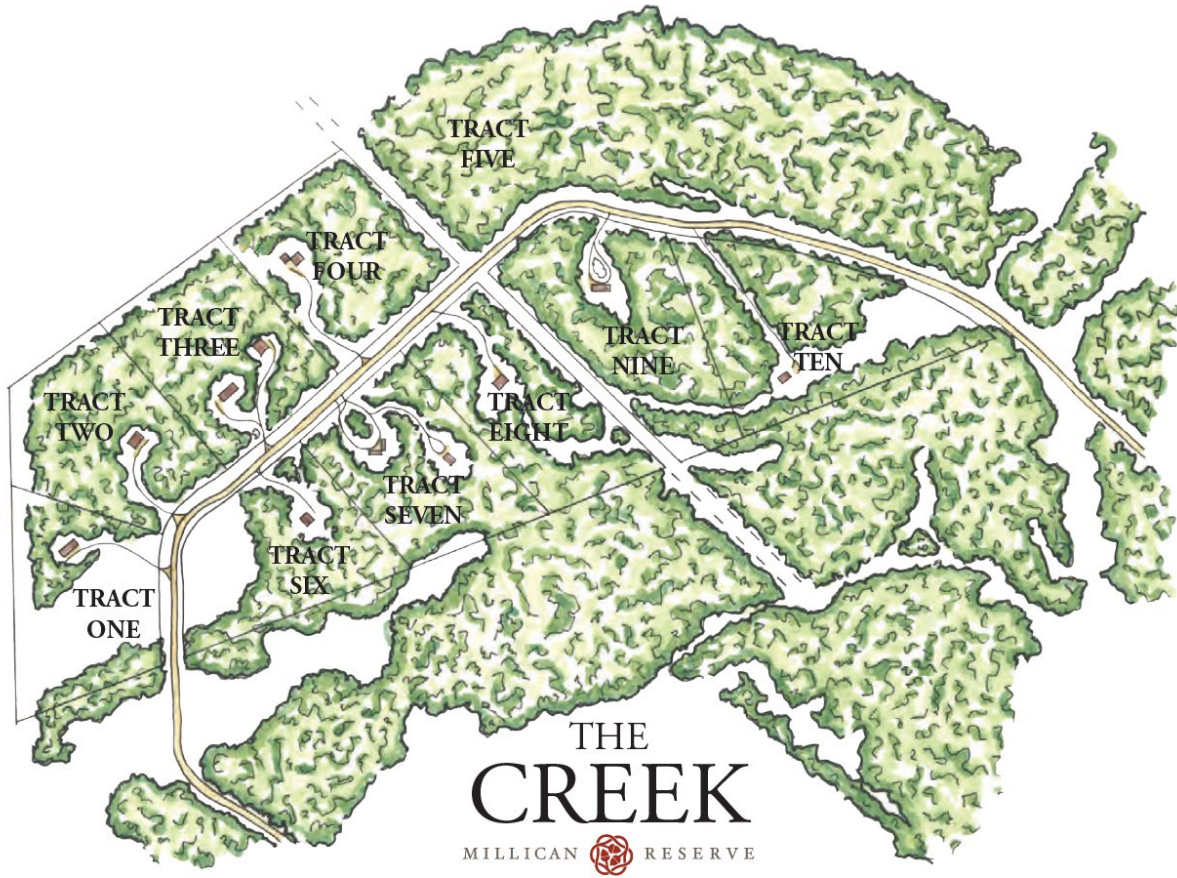
Census counts are periodic surveys and inventories to determine the number, composition or other relevant information about a wildlife population to measure if the current wildlife management practices are serving the targeted species. Such surveys also help evaluate the management plan’s goals and practices. Specifically, this activity estimates species numbers, annual population trends, density or age structure using accepted survey techniques. Annual results should be recorded as evidence of completing this practice.

The survey techniques listed below should be appropriate to the species counted:

- Spotlight counts
- Aerial counts
- Daylight wildlife composition counts
- Harvest data collection and record keeping
- Browse utilization surveys
- Census and monitoring of endangered, threatened or protected wildlife
- Census and monitoring of non-game wildlife species.



## The Creek Community Foundation Map



### Projected Wildlife Management Costs to Tract Owners

ACTIVITY	COST ESTIMATE	BILLING
5-Year Wildlife Management Plan	\$845.00	Plateau fee, billed through Creek to the landowner. Created in the first year of tract purchase and updated with appraisal district every five years.
Initial Install of Bird Feeders	\$400.00	Install (materials and labor) of 2, 20lb heavy-duty metal bird feeders.
Initial Install of Nest Boxes	\$220.00	Install (materials and labor) of 6 songbird nestboxes.
Monthly Wildlife Practices (base)	\$45.00	The costs of implementing wildlife practices are billed annually yet separate from HOA dues.
Annual Wintering and Resident Bird Survey	\$70.00	Annual wintering and resident bird survey completed by Plateau Land and Wildlife.
Annual Report	\$445.00	Annual report of yearly activities prepared by Plateau Land and Wildlife and submitted with the Creek Community Foundation.
Supplemental Wildlife Practices (At owner's discretion)	TBD	Supplemental practices may be performed with the approval of the Foundation and arranged directly with Plateau or performed by landowners themselves.

*Estimates only  
Subject to change*

## Projected Property Tax Savings Based on a Sample Tract

11 acres valued at \$40,000.00/acre with a \$500,000.00 home = \$940,000.00 market value

MARKET VALUE	TAX RATE	TOTAL ANNUAL TAXES
\$940,000.00 • HOME + 11 ACRES	1.674722%	\$15,742.38

WILDIFE (1-D-1) VALUE	TAX RATE	TOTAL ANNUAL TAXES
\$540,000.00 (MARKET VALUE) • HOME + 1 ACRE	1.674722%	\$9,043.49
\$1,330.00 (ASSIGNED BY BCAD) • 10 ACRES	1.674722%	\$22.27
Total		\$9,065.76

<b>TOTAL ANNUAL SAVINGS</b>	<b>\$6,676.62</b>
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*For Discussion Purposes  
Estimates Only*

## Sample Yearly Activity Guide (What to Expect)

The Creek Community Foundation Wildlife Management Association, together with its consultants and landowners, will work throughout the year to implement a base set of wildlife management practices in compliance with the management plans in place for the Association.

### **January:**

- Supplemental Food –fill and monitor bird feeders

### **March:**

- Supplemental Food –fill and monitor bird feeders
- Supplemental Shelter – install/maintain nest boxes
- Submit annual reports, 5-year wildlife management plans, and re-files (if needed)
- Get copies of all reports and update to land-owners

### **May:**

- Supplemental Food –fill and monitor bird feeders

### **July:**

- Supplemental Food –fill and monitor bird feeders
- Predator Control – spread red fire ant bait

### **September:**

- Supplemental Food –fill and monitor bird feeders
- Predator Control – spread red fire ant bait
- Census Count – spotlight counts of white-tailed deer

### **October:**

- Predator Control – spread red fire ant bait
- Supplemental Food – monitor and fill deer feeders with protein in common area

### **November:**

- Supplemental Shelter – install/maintain nest boxes
- Supplemental Shelter – build brush piles in common area
- Supplemental Food –fill and monitor bird feeders
- Supplemental Food – monitor and fill deer feeders with protein in common area

### **December:**

- Supplemental Food – monitor and fill deer feeders with protein in common area

\*Ongoing control of feral hogs is an active part of the Creek Wildlife Management Plan. This practice is completed year-round, as needed, and in locations that do not pose a threat to landowners and guests.

## Introduction to Plateau Land & Wildlife Management



Dear New Creek Landowner,

Congratulations on becoming part of an exclusive group of landowners who have made a commitment to wildlife management on their property. We are here to make sure you have all the tools you need to get the most out of your wildlife management; we are Plateau Land and Wildlife Management and we specialize in helping landowners with their wildlife management needs. With more than 17 years of experience, we are a privately owned company, with Texas roots that run deep.

We offer an extensive line of products and services designed to make life easier for landowners pursuing wildlife management. We have a qualified staff of biologists, tax consultants and field technicians specially trained in all the wildlife management activities and services we offer. We maintain excellent relationships with the county appraisal districts in the counties we serve and are a valuable resource to Texas landowners. We currently work with more than 2,000 private landowners just like you, who care deeply about their land and want only the best for it, helping them get the most out of their wildlife management and reach their goals for their land.

For further information please contact the Creek Community Foundation or visit our website at [www.plateauwildlife.com](http://www.plateauwildlife.com). We can help answer any questions you might have and can help with products and services designed to help keep you in compliance and lead you to become the best possible steward of your land.

Thanks!

Tim Milligan  
Director of Sales  
Plateau Land & Wildlife Management