Texas Land Trends: 1997-2017
Value of Rural Lands

- Rural working lands – critical role in providing water, food, energy, and national security
- *Effective* conservation requires innovative solutions to sustaining private rural working lands.
- Review of data to give a perspective on challenges
  - More people...
  - Less farms and ranches...
  - Changing landowners....
- Opportunities and approaches
Texas Land Trends

- Primary datasets used
  - County Appraisal District
  - USDA NASS Census of Ag
  - Texas Landowner Survey
- Relationships among
  - Land Value
  - Land Ownership
  - Land Use
- **Working Lands** – farms, ranches, family forests, wildlife (e.g., 1D, 1D1)
Change in Working Lands – *Process*

- Economic growth
- Population growth
- Increased demand for rural land
- High land values
- Incentives to subdivide or sell
- Ownership Fragment/Conversion
More People....
Changing Texas

171 Million Acres...

Population: 28 Million

...141 Million Acres
Private Working Lands

5% PUBLIC vs
95% PRIVATE

17% DEVELOPED vs
83% RURAL

= 250,000
= Rural (10%)
= Landowners (<1%)
Growing Population

- 1997 – 19 million
- 2017 – 28 million
  - 48% increase
- 7 of the 15 most rapidly growing cities in the nation
- 86% of increase within the 25 highest total population growth counties
Texas Rural and Urban Populations

- **Urban Population**
- **Rural Population**

- 1950: 60%
- 1980: 80%
- 2015: 90%
Texas Projections (2010-2050)

Source: State Demographer
Night Time Illumination

Illumination Change 2012-2016
Less Farms and Ranches....
Market Value – *Driver*

- 1997 – $499/Acre
- 2017 – $1,951/Acre
- Gain of $1,452/Acre
Net Income of Farm and Ranch Operations by Ownership Size, 2017

Economic Loss = Predictor of Land Conversion?
Working Land Loss – Fragmentation

- 20,000+ new farms and ranches (1997-2017)
- 6.1M acres impacted

Ownership Size Changes 1997-2017

Increase in small farms < 500 acres in size 1997-2017

Texas Highway

Change in farms
- Decrease
- 1 - 50
- 51 - 100
- 101 - 200
- > 200
Working Land Loss – Conversion

- 1997 – 143 Million acres
- 2017 – 141 Million acres
- Loss ~2 Million acres
Changing Land Use

1997-2017 change:

- Wildlife Management - +5.3 M
- Grazing Land – -4.6 M
- Cropland – -3.1 M
- Timber – +537,000
- Other – -300,700
Landowner Demographics

- Average farmer – 57 years old
- Average forest landowner – 65 years old.
- In the next 20 years, U.S. will see the largest intergenerational transfer of rural lands in its history.
Future Texas Landowner?

- Younger generation less tied to the land.
- Goals and objectives the same? Concerns?
  - New Ownership (25%)
    Owned <10 years
  - Absentee Ownership (40%)
- Texas Landowner Survey attempts to understand some of these trends.
  - Age, Tie-to-Land, Purpose
Reasons for owning land?

- Hunting
- Wildlife
- Family
- Recreation
- Ranching
- Conservation
- Investment
- Nature
- Legacy
- Habitat restoration
- Residential
- Water
- Farming
- Make a living
- Oil & gas
- Timber
- Development potential
- Other
- Ecotourism

[Graph showing reasons for owning land with percentage bars for Millennial and Other categories]
Wildlife Valuation Trends


Acres (millions)

Wildlife Valuation Trends

1997

2017

Acres

- 0
- 1 - 1,000
- 1,001 - 5,000
- 5,001 - 10,000
- 10,001 - 100,000
- > 100,000

Acres

- 0
- 1 - 1,000
- 1,001 - 5,000
- 5,001 - 10,000
- 10,001 - 100,000
- > 100,000
Changing Landscapes...
Future of Rural Texas
Final Thoughts...

- **More People** – Increasing human population, shifts in ethnicity and urban residents.

- **Impacts to Farms and Ranches** – Loss of working lands, fragmentation and conversion **BUT not in all places**...

- **Changing Landowner Perspectives** – Aging landowners, different objectives, largest intergenerational transfer.

- Communicate the *public* benefits of *private lands*...
Promoting Private Lands Stewardship through Research, Education, and Policy.

http://nri.tamu.edu/
http://txlandtrends.org/