Texas contains ~170 million acres of land, 95% of which is privately owned. Private land stewards make decisions every day about production goals and how they use their land. Today, more landowners than ever are actively engaged in wildlife management. Wildlife-related enterprises, hunting, photography, birding, and ecotourism are now a major source of revenue for thousands of landowners on millions of acres. Given the opportunities, it makes sense to improve habitat conditions when possible.

Energy development is just that – an opportunity to create critical habitat for wildlife. With proper planning and implementation, landowners can convert energy development on their land to native wildlife food plots. These efforts will not only benefit wildlife but help restore pollinators that are critical to our food and fiber supply.

**ISSUE**

The need for diverse habitat to support wildlife-related enterprises is critical.

**SOLUTION**

1. Partner to restore native habitat on energy developed land;
2. Utilize native seed mixes and best practices to restore native prairie;
3. Reverse long-standing population declines

**HISTORY**

Native grasslands were once a major part of the landscape of Texas. Unfortunately, most of these natural prairies have disappeared over time and have been replaced with a mix of non-native grasses and forbs. These grasslands still support common species such as white-tailed deer and Rio Grande wild turkey, however, other native wildlife like bobwhite quail and Texas horned lizard have seen significant declines. Pollinators, such as the monarch butterfly, have also seen drastic population declines with this loss of native habitat. Monarchs and pollinators need much of the same native habitat as other wildlife to thrive. As these habitats have dwindled, so have monarch numbers – a 90 percent overall decrease in population from just two decades ago. **The declining monarch population parallels other declining pollinator populations, which in turn impacts human food systems.** Pollinators are a major part of a natural food web, pollinating over 75% of our crops. Additionally, insects form the foundation of a balanced ecosystem that sustains higher forms of wildlife. Providing enough habitat throughout the migratory pathway is essential to maintaining and improving conditions for the unique and beautiful monarch as well as numerous other species of wildlife.

**FUNCTIONING HEALTHY SYSTEM**

**RAIN** → **FLOWERING PLANTS & GRASSES** → **WILDLIFE** → **POLLINATORS** → **FOOD** → **RAIN**

With proper planning and implementation, landowners can convert energy development on their land to native wildlife food plots.
WHY NATIVE?
Restoring a diverse habitat of native grasses, forbs, and wildflowers will increase productivity and the wildlife potential of the land. Native grasses, when compared to introduced grasses, are drought tolerant and low maintenance. Native grasses have adapted to the poor soils common to many parts of the state yet provide lush, high protein forage under normal rainfall without the need for expensive fertilizers.

Over the years, many non-native grasses have been planted in an attempt to enhance grazing for livestock and stabilize soils along roadsides and other disturbed areas. Invasive grasses – Buffelgrass, guineagrass, johnsongrass, bermudagrass, old world bluestems, kleingrass and some lovegrasses – have degraded wildlife habitat on millions of acres in Texas. These grasses tend to form extensive, solid stands with no forbs, flowering plants, or space for quail and other wildlife to survive. Restoring native grasses and forbs within freshly reclaimed areas has the potential to duplicate the historical habitat that is lacking over much of the state.

OPPORTUNITY: PAD SITES, PIPELINES, AND RIGHT-OF-WAYS
Re-seeding native plants on oil well sites, right-of-ways (ROW), and other energy infrastructure creates the potential for wildlife food plots over thousands of acres. The monarch butterfly makes an annual migration from Canada to Mexico, passing through Texas along its pathway. Texas is known as “the funnel” of the monarch migration because of its geographic positioning. Monarch butterflies must pass through our state during both phases of their migration each year. This happens every spring and fall and makes Texas a crucial place for monarch habitat. Well pads, pipelines, and ROWs are a significant opportunity for critical habitat, especially because they represent food plots that transect the state, connecting existing blocks of habitat along the migratory path. These food plots not only benefit monarchs but birds and other wildlife as well.

THE LANDOWNER’S ROLE
EOG Resources would like to work in partnership with you to restore native grassland and nectar-producing forbs on pad sites and pipeline ROWs. Working together, we can make a difference. Contact your ROW agent today.

In addition to working with EOG, educational materials and technical assistance for landowners are available through numerous public agencies; including, but not limited to:
• Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD)
• Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
• Wildlife Habitat Federation
• Native Prairies Association of Texas
• Oaks and Prairies Joint Venture
• National Wild Turkey Federation
• Texas Wildlife Association

MONARCH MIGRATION SPRING & FALL

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