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**Your City** – **SWCD Name** has partnered with the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) and the Association of Texas Soil & Water Conservation Districts to highlight Soil and Water Stewardship Week and the importance of voluntary land stewardship in Texas. The statewide campaign is April 28 through May 5, 2024, and the focus this year is “*May the Forest Be With You Always.*”

Forests contribute immeasurably to the well-being of our communities, our state, and the planet! Beyond producing oxygen and storing carbon, as well as being havens for biodiversity, forests play a crucial role in safeguarding our soil and water resources. They stand as protectors, preventing erosion, filtering contaminants, and fostering healthy watersheds. This year's theme invites us to appreciate the intricate relationship between soil, water, and the abundant forests that shape our Texas landscape.

Forest landowners are an important part of Texas agriculture. They work closely with their local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) and the Texas A&M Forest Service (TFS) to implement conservation practices that promote the health and sustainability of forests and forest ecosystems.

Since 1939, the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) and SWCDs across the state have tirelessly worked to encourage responsible natural resource management. Now, more than ever, the collaborative efforts of TSSWCB, SWCDs, the Texas A&M Forest Service, and our conservation partners are crucial in developing strategies to protect and conserve our precious soil and water resources.

Our goal is to shine a light on the forestry industry's integral role in tandem with agriculture. The collaboration between these sectors is essential for maintaining the health of our soil, water, and forests. Recognizing their relationship is a step towards fostering sustainable practices that benefit us all.

Privately-owned forests contribute significantly to the Texas economy and provide numerous environmental and social benefits. You don't have to stand in the middle of the woods to be surrounded forests. Essential products made from trees include paper products, the lumber that built your home and even household items such as toothpaste, medicines and dyes. Trees also offer habitat and food to birds, insects, lichen, fungi, mammals, and reptiles. Finally, trees increase our quality of life through a relaxing effect, reducing stress. It doesn't matter where you are - the forest is always with you.

In Texas, 11.7 million people get their clean surface drinking water from forests and as stewards of these precious natural resources, we must acknowledge and conserve the bond of soil, water, and forests. Through the theme "May the Forest be with You Always," we acknowledge the intricate interdependence of these elements and commit to conserving the beauty and vitality of our beloved Texas landscape for generations to come. Together, let's ensure that working our forests endure, our soil remains productive, and our waters flow sustainably—may the conservation force be with us always.

This campaign aims to bring more awareness and support to voluntary land stewardship because the way we manage our resources on private lands directly impacts our natural resources. **SWCD** **NAME** is proud to collaborate with conservation partners across Texas to promote the importance of natural resource conservation.

For more information on "*May the Forest Be With You Always*," please visit [www.tsswcb.texas.gov](http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov).