

Let's SOAR!

Stop Pollution
Obey Laws
Always Improve
Reduce Waste



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WORLD WETLANDS DAY

February 2nd

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More than 170 nations have recognized that our wetlands are an irreplaceable resource of great economic, cultural, scientific, and recreational value by signing the Convention on Wetlands (1971). World Wetlands Day is observed the 2nd of February, on the anniversary of the first signing.

Wetlands are where the land and the water meet. They are transition zones where the flow of water and the cycling of nutrients meet to produce a unique ecosystem.

Wetlands provide habitat for plants and animals, help to absorb floodwaters, filter pollutants from the water, protect our coasts from erosion, and provide great spots for fishing, kayaking, hiking, bird/nature watching, and photography.

However, wetlands are often drained and filled to be used for other purposes, or damaged due to the grazing of domesticated animals, or the introduction of non-native plants. In the last 200 years, Texas has lost more than half of its wetlands.

Nearly 75% of wetlands are privately owned, so it is in our power to save our wetland resources. To learn more, visit the [EPA's Wetlands Factsheet Series website](#).

TEXAS WETLANDS

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Texas is an ecologically diverse state that contains several types of wetlands.

Bottomland Hardwoods

Forested ecosystems containing standing water for all or most of the year, characterized by baldcypress trees. Experience this at the **Caddo Lake State Park** and you may even see river otters, alligators, or turkeys.

Coastal Marshes & Prairie Depressions

Coastal wetlands contain a variety of plant and animal species that are specially adapted to fluctuations in salinity and seasonal temperatures. You can visit either the **Sea Rims State Park** or the **Galveston Island State Park** to experience coastal wetlands. And the beach!

South Texas Resacas & Depressions

Resacas are channels of the Rio Grande that have been cut off from the river that have formed into wetlands and ponds. The depressions are made of clay soil that traps and holds rain water. The **Estero Llano Grande State Park** sits in the heart of the Rio Grande Valley.

Playa Lakes (High Planes)

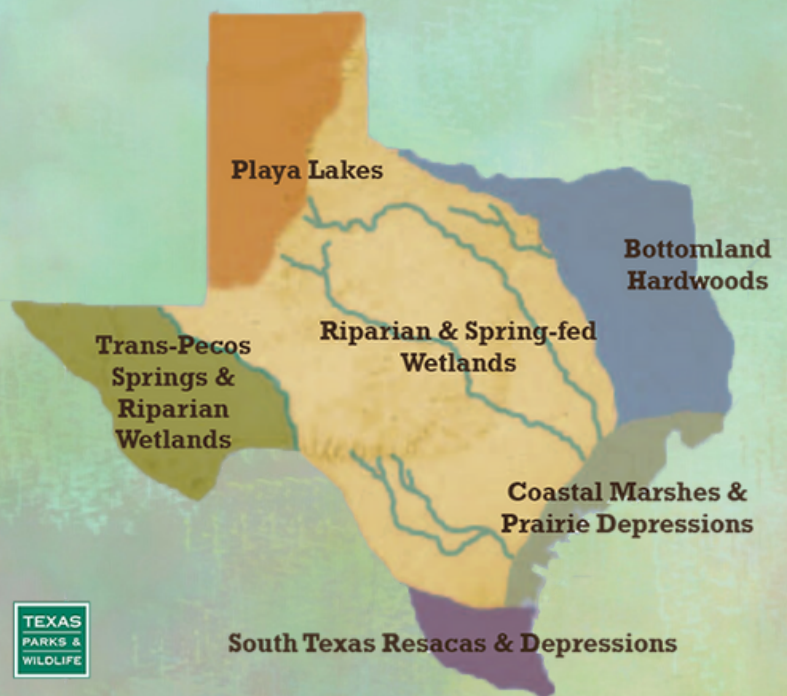
Seasonal wetlands, formed in shallow depressions that often dry up in the mid to late summer, located in the panhandle regions, and characterized by clay soils.

Riparian & Spring-fed Wetlands

Spring-fed wetlands occur where there are faults and other openings in the aquifer.

Trans-Pecos Springs & Riparian Wetlands

In this desert region, small, isolated, spring-fed wetlands are found on the side of mountains or in small mountain valleys, providing water for plants and animals that could not otherwise survive.



WETLANDS REGULATIONS

SARAH OTTO

The 2020 Navigable Waters Protection Act rolls back key portions of the 2015 Waters of the United States regulation that guaranteed protections for ephemeral - or seasonally wet - wetlands and streams under the 1972 Clean Water Act and relieves landowners of the need to seek previously required permits.

The 2015 regulation protected about 60% of the nation's waterways by broadening and clarifying the definition of "waters of the United States" and limited the discharge of pollutants - such as fertilizers, pesticides, and industrial chemicals.

The new regulation, written by the EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers, will retain federal protections of large bodies of water, as well as larger rivers and streams that flow into them and wetlands that lie adjacent to them, but removes protections for many previously protected waters, including ephemeral streams, groundwater, and wetlands not adjacent to large bodies of water. Farmers, fossil fuel groups, and builders support the change, which allows landowners and property developers to dump pollutants - such as pesticides and fertilizers - directly into unprotected waterways and to fill in wetlands for construction projects.

Some waters not protected in the new federal regulations may still be protected by state regulations.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/22/climate/trump-environment-water.html>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-51225604>

<https://www.npr.org/2020/01/23/798809951/trump-administration-is-rolling-back-obama-era-protections-for-smaller-waterways>

