



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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Austin, Texas 78758

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NOV 14 2013

Nathan Pence
Program Manager
Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Program
c/o Edwards Aquifer Authority
900 E. Quincy
San Antonio, TX 78215-1415

RE: Requested Clarification of Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan (EAHCP) Support for Refugia Efforts

Dear Mr. Pence,

As you know the EAHCP Implementing Committee (Committee) directed the Program Manager at their July 18, 2013, meeting to seek clarification from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) regarding support for the Refugia Program. This correspondence constitutes our response to your request.

The Service agreed upon issuance of the permit that the annual remittance of \$1,678,597 as specified in HCP Table 7.1: Annualized Implementation Costs further described as "NFHTC REFUGIA" will satisfy permit condition K, which states:

"The EAA will support and coordinate with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) on the work relating to the San Marcos Aquatic Resources Center's operation and maintenance of a series of off-site refugia at the Service's San Marcos, Uvalde, and Inks Dam facilities. The support of the refugia will augment the existing financial and physical resources of these facilities, and provide supplementary resources for appropriate research activities, as necessary, to house and protect adequate populations of Covered Species and expanded knowledge of their biology, life histories, and effective reintroduction techniques. The use of this support will be limited to the Covered Species in the EARIP HCP."

The Service clarifies that the use of these funds will be limited to activities associated with the EAHCP Covered Species, their surrogates, and invasive species unless approved by the EAA and the Committee.

Service policy and regulations prescribe that no additional conservation or mitigation measures or commitments of additional land, water, or financial compensation will be required so long as the HCP is being properly implemented (50 CFR 17.22 and 17.32).

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Thank you for your cooperation and continued efforts to help the Service conserve Texas' natural resources. Please contact Kevin Connally (kevin_connally@fws.gov or 512-490-0057 ext. 234) if there are any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adam Zerrenner', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Adam Zerrenner
Field Office Supervisor