



STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

June 15, 2017

1. **Call to order-- 9:07 a.m.**
Chairman Steve Raabe called the meeting to order. Mr. Raabe called roll and there was not a quorum present. New members took time to introduce themselves to the committee.
2. **Public Comment.**
There was no public comment.
3. **Approval of minutes from the March 16th Stakeholder Committee meeting.**
Due to the lack of quorum the Committee deferred this action to the September Stakeholder meeting.
4. **Receive report from the Program Manager on general updates about the Habitat Conservation Plan.**
 - **Springflow and Index Well levels**
Dr. Chad Furl, EAHCP Chief Science Officer, provided a brief hydrologic update. Dianne Wassenich mentioned anecdotally that there are members of the San Marcos community that have experience a reduction in their wells.
Nathan Pence, HCP Program Manager, mentioned that the previous meetings expressed that Critical Period is not expected to trigger in 2017 but due to more recent observations, it is expected that some level of restrictions triggered this year.
 - **Budget Work Group Update**
Mr. Pence provided a brief update of the Budget Work Group. Mr. Pence described the membership, charge and ultimately the expected recommendations that will be found in the final report. In summary, the work group found that the EAHCP budget is in a good place. The HCP contemplated a cap to the reserve but now the Work Group has discussed the need for a floor to better manage for the future.
Additionally, Mr. Pence mentioned that on July 28th the EAHCP staff will be providing an Ecological Model showcase for any committee members that may be interested in observing how the Ecological Model works.
 - **City of San Marcos HCP Video showcase**
Melani Howard introduced a HCP educational video that is presented for visitors to the San Marcos River.
5. **Receive an update on the 2017 Adaptive Management Processes: ASR, COSM Sessom Creek, and COSM Sedimentation Ponds.**
Mr. Pence provided an update regarding the 2017 Adaptive Management Processes. The processes include work currently being done in San Marcos on sedimentation ponds in City Park and Downtown, a natural streambed restoration project in Sessom Creek to reduce sediment depositing into the San Marcos River, and EAHCP Aquifer Storage and Recovery leasing changes.

Collett Barron-Bradsby asked about the comparative impact of Sessom Creek compared to the other creeks draining into the San Marcos River. Mr. Pence discussed the metrics currently being developed and the importance and feasibility of impact work in the Sessom Creek watershed provides not only the San Marcos River but the EAHCP Covered Species habitat. Dianne Wassenich mentioned that the City of San Marcos has placed a conservation easement (purchasing development rights in perpetuity) on approximately 200 acres in the Purgatory Creek Watershed through grant funds and landowner donations. Additionally, SMRF has purchased two ranches in the Sink Creek watershed and are working on conservation for those.

Mr. Pence continued the presentation to focus on Aquifer Storage and Recovery program. The AMP is specifically regarding discussions over Drought of Record injection volume, forbearance agreements vs. leases, tiers structure and triggers.

6. Presentation on the National HCP Coalition.

Mr. Pence explained the National HCP Coalition that the EAHCP is now represented. Mr. Pence described the main idea of the HCP Coalition as a multi-faceted approach that brings Program Managers, regulators, developers, industrial and agricultural interests, together with environmental organizations.

There was a brief discussion regarding climate change and rolling over the ITP after 2027. Todd Votteler and Mr. Pence discussed the roles the committees will have in developing the next ITP. Mr. Votteler mentioned that USFWS would not approve a second short-term permit but rather expect a long-term permit after 2027.

Mr. Pence continued by discussing how the EAHCP is unique in regards to the aquatic nature of our permit as well as the multifaceted approach to protect the Covered Species.

10-minute break

Mr. Pence introduced John Boggess as the one who helps the EAHCP develop and distribute our bi-monthly newsletter. Mrs. Barron-Bradsby complemented the newsletter and how it helps communicate the story of the EAHCP and its goals and efforts.

7. Receive an update on the 2017 Refugia operations.

Dr. Furl presented a detailed update on the current Refugia operations in 2017. Dr. Furl presented details about construction and sampling information that are currently underway or in development. Dianne Wassenich mentioned that she remembers in the past she has volunteered to participate in sampling events. She mentioned that this has been on hiatus for some time but has been reinstated more recently and suggest any who are interested to volunteer should reach out to the SMARC.

There was discussion regarding the significance of the operations versus the research budget as well as how much cost is associated with maintenance. Dr. Furl and Mr. Pence commented that much of the operational costs are associated with day-to-day work required to keep the species in captivity and funding the necessary positions.

8. Update on the Hydrologic Model and Ecological Model and their use in Phase II.

Mr. Pence and Dr. Furl presented an update on the hydrologic and ecological model. Mr. Pence began by giving a background on what went into developing the models and the rationale to structure our process the way it was structured during the EARIP process.

Mr. Pence provided an example of some preliminary validation/calibration exercises. Todd Votteler made a statement that the concern for the EAHCP is not necessarily predicting flow in normal conditions but rather in extreme low-flow conditions and having confidence in the model scenarios when making decisions.

Dr. Furl presented an update to the committee specifically regarding the Ecological Model and that the demonstration on July 28th is an important time for the committees to get a full understanding of the finished model.

Mr. Pence concluded with a presentation regarding the role of the models in Phase II decisions. He reminded the committee that Phase II is specifically defined by achieving the 2 cfs that is lacking through springflow protection measures if we were to experience a repeat of the drought of record. Other changes are targeted through Adaptive Management.

Jim Bower mentioned that the difference we are concerned with is when we make predictions and what we observe. Ron Walton asked how we could pursue gathering additional data to make more informed decisions. Mr. Pence responded that we currently have a lot of data; this was recognized by the National Academy of Sciences in Report 2 and in order to gather additional data the EAHCP must spend more money.

9. Consider future meetings, dates, locations, and agendas.


Todd Votteler provided an update on the zebra mussels being found in Canyon Lake. Mr. Votteler and Carl Adkins discussed how there should be additional information gathered on the direct impact zebra mussels could have on the San Marcos and Comal systems and how the EAHCP should be involved in the regional effort to prevent further infection.

Mrs. Wassenich asked Mr. Adkins if there is anything we can start communicating to recreators. Mr. Pence referred the committee to the TPWD website to get information regarding best practices to prevent the continued spread of into the San Marcos and Comal system.

10. Questions from the public.

No comment

11. Adjourn – 12:25 pm.

X 

Dianne Wassenich
Secretary

