

5.5.1 Edwards Aquifer Authority and San Antonio Water System Aquifer Storage and Recovery Work Plan

Section 5.5.1 of the Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan (EAHCP) assigns acquiring leases and options of water permits for use in the San Antonio Water System (SAWS) Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) to the Edwards Aquifer Authority (EAA). SAWS will operate the ASR infrastructure and retain control of day-to-day operations of the ASR facility related to EAHCP water injection and recovery. The EAA will ensure compliance with EAHCP requirements through management of the Interlocal Contract between the EAA and SAWS for the Use of the Twin Oaks Aquifer Storage and Recovery Project for Contribution to Springflow Protection, which became effective August 14, 2013. The contract outlines the responsibilities of both parties, including administration and implementation.

Long-term Objective:

To acquire 50,000 acre-feet of Edwards Aquifer unrestricted agricultural, municipal, and industrial permits to be made available to SAWS for the purposes of physical storing or crediting the Regional ASR balance; or as forbearance options.

Target for 2017:

The ASR contract between EAA and SAWS will continue to be implemented. EAA is the leasing agent for ASR leases and will continue providing SAWS with notices of availability of HCP groundwater. To encourage greater participation, EAA staff pursued two initiatives in 2015. First, EAA secured a rate adjustment and then worked aggressively to inform permit holders of the new prices and determine interest; even scheduling targeted small group meetings. Second, EAA staff closely reviewed 2013 and 2014 authorization and annual groundwater use reporting to identify additional leasing opportunities, and debuted a program to enlist permit holders to pool together un-pumped authorization to make additional ASR regional contributions. The 10-year recharge average triggered Tier 2 acquisition situation for 2016. The EAA began development of a Tier 2 product in 2015; however, the vagaries of triggering and payment conditions limited acceptance of the Tier 2 and Tier 3 agreements. The success of 2015 and 2016 in acquiring ASR leases merits consideration of a different strategy that still includes a goal of 50,000 acre-feet, but may include utilization of forbearance options.

ASR Program:

Description of the SAWS ASR: The SAWS Twin Oaks ASR is an underground storage reserve in the Carrizo sand aquifer in southern Bexar County. As a SAWS water management project, it is designed to store Edwards water when demand is less than available supply. The stored water is returned to San Antonio for use when demand is high and Edwards supply is restricted by Critical Period Management and other drought-related limitations.

The capacity and capabilities of the SAWS ASR are such that it can be used to meet SAWS ratepayer expectations and, if operated as described in the EAHCP, will play a significant role as a Phase I activity to protecting the Covered Species at Comal and San Marcos Springs.

Operations: The significant action of approval of the Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan Program Interlocal Contract between the Edwards Aquifer Authority and The San Antonio Water

System for the Use of the Twin Oaks Aquifer Storage and Recovery Project for contribution to Springflow Protection Interlocal Contract effective August 14, 2013 takes elements of the HCP's ASR flow protection strategy into an operations contract.

Injection: Storage of HCP groundwater shall be at the discretion of SAWS and will be dependent on operating conditions. All HCP groundwater made available to SAWS before June 30th, 2016 will be physically stored or credited as in storage, with the accompanying forbearance from the Aquifer, should triggers defined in the Interlocal Contract occur in 2017.

Forbearance and Recovery: Forbearance, and possible recovery from ASR, of Edwards Aquifer pumping from certain wells will occur when the ten-year rolling recharge average is less than 500,000 acre-feet and the ten-day average of aquifer levels measured at the J-17 index well drop below 630 feet mean sea level (MSL). The annual amount of water recovered during a repeat of the drought of record is outlined in Exhibits E & F of the Interlocal Contract. Changes to the Presumptive Forbearance Schedule outlined in Exhibit E may be approved as outlined in Section 5.3 of the Interlocal Contract.

Leasing: The EAA will continue to acquire Tier 1 leases for the ASR program in 2017. with the acquisition goal of aggressively filling the ASR. As the ASR storage goal nears fulfillment, and current market conditions are assessed, operational strategies will be developed and discussed with the Implementing Committee for the remaining acre-feet required by the HCP; either as leases or forbearance options.

Monitoring:

The EAA will actively manage the Interlocal Contract with SAWS. Status reports and updates will be provided regularly to the Implementing Committee.

ASR Regional Advisory Group: Per section 5.5.1 of the HCP, a 12-person SAWS ASR Regional Advisory Group will meet to advise SAWS as it makes decisions relating to the operation of the ASR facility relevant to the EAHCP. Membership on the Regional Advisory Group will include: four representatives from the San Antonio Water System, the EAHCP Program Manager; one representative each from the EAA, EAA permit holder for irrigation purposes, small municipal pumpers, the spring cities, environmental interests, industrial pumpers, and downstream interests.

Budget:

Table 7.1

\$4,759,000 – lease options

\$2,194,000 – O&M

\$6,953,000 – total

Estimated 2017 budget*

\$ 4,700,000– leases

\$ 1,300,000 – O&M (this amount may vary)

\$ 6,000,000 – total

*Actual expenditures for 2017 will be determined by the terms of the Interlocal Contract depending on the quantity of HCP groundwater physically stored, the amount of active water leases, and the cost of eligible operation and maintenance activities. Budgeted money that is not spent will be placed in the reserve fund.