

Review of the Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Program— Report 2
Statement of Task

An ad hoc committee of the National Research Council (NRC) will conduct a study and issue three reports that review the many different scientific initiatives underway to support the Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). The Committee will focus on the adequacy of information to reliably inform assessments of the HCP's scientific initiatives, ensuring that they are based on the best-available science. Relationships among proposed conservation measures (including flow protection measures and habitat protection and restoration), biological objectives (such as specified flow rates), and biological goals (such as maintaining populations of the Covered Species) are central to the HCP, and will be evaluated during the NRC review, which spans from 2014-2018. The Committee issued its first report in early 2015, which focused on hydrologic modeling, ecological modeling, water quality and biomonitoring, and the Applied Research Program. The Committee will issue its second report in late 2016 and its third and final report in 2018.

In its second report, the Committee will:

1. evaluate progress and modifications implemented as a result of the Committee's first report,
2. continue to assess the methods of and data collected through the water quality monitoring and biomonitoring programs,
3. identify those biological and hydrological questions related to achieving compliance with the HCP's biological goals and objectives that the ecological and hydrologic models should be used to answer, specifically including which scenarios to run in the models. These questions shall help generate information needed to make the HCP Phase II strategic decisions about the effectiveness of conservation measures.
4. provide an evaluation of how the Phase I conservation measures in the HCP (including flow protection measures and habitat restoration measures) are being implemented and monitored. Specifically, the committee will discuss if the proper method of implementation is being utilized to achieve the maximum benefit to the Covered Species.