



Implementing Meeting April 17th - Meeting Minutes

Members of this committee include: Roland Ruiz (EAA), Steve Ramsey (New Braunfels), Tom Taggart (San Marcos), Chuck Ahrens (SAWS), Andrew Sansom (Texas State University), and Todd Votteler (GBRA). At this meeting, the following business was considered and recommended for committee action:

1. **Call to order**--Established all Committee members were present with Melani Howard substituting for Tom Taggart- 9:05 a.m.
2. **Public Comment.**
No Comment.
3. **Approval of minutes from the March 20, 2014 Implementing Committee meeting**
Corrections: Chuck Ahrens indicated the correct amount of water coming from Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) is 40 million gallons per day from San Antonio Water System (SAWS)
Approval-motion by Andy Sansom, seconded by Chuck Ahrens. No objections.
4. **Receive report from the Program Manager on general topics related to the implementation of the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and operation of the Implementing Committee.**
Nathan Pence, HCP Program Manager, provided the following updates:
 - River Flows and Water Levels:
 - San Marcos- 125 cfs (down 5 cfs)
 - Comal- 140 cfs (down 5 cfs)
 - J-17: 639 (EAA Stage 3 this week)
 - J-27: 832 (continues in Stage 5)
 - Voluntary Irrigation Suspension Program Options (VISPO) and Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) Leases – There is currently 24,000 Acre-Feet in VISPO without much movement from last month's update and similar to the same time last year. Also reported, there is currently 5,100 Acre-Feet in ASR Leases as of April 16th. Other updates included: there was a well-attended informational breakfast in Medina County and lunch in Uvalde on April 16th. The 2013 USGS report has been released and included the latest Edwards recharge numbers (183,000 Acre-Feet). A presentation on the official aquifer recharge numbers will be included in next month's agenda. The Edwards Aquifer Authority (EAA) is still taking one year leases for ASR. Any potential contributors can turn in their applications by June.

- March Budget- Information can be found on the EAA website.
- Science Committee Update- the Science Committee met on April 8th. In their meeting they spoke about 2015 Applied Research and received a presentation by HDR about the bottom up package. The Science Committee had additional requests for hydrologic data information. Additionally, the Science Committee's by-laws were approved.
- Drought Outreach Workgroup Update - as directed by the Implementing Committee this group has met and is moving very quickly. The professional contracting budget has been used to secure professional services to assist the workgroup. Chuck Ahrens spoke about avoiding confusion on outreach messaging. Discussion followed.
- EAHCP Gantt Chart and Flow Diagram – per the Implementing Committee's request a comprehensive timeline and flow chart was developed to give a better understanding of all HCP processes. Nathan Pence stated it will be updated to include Refugia work.
- U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Streamflow Gauges- EAHCP staff will be meeting with USGS soon.
- Freeman Aquatic Building Renovation Completion- an update and photo presentation on building renovation was given by Mr. Pence for informational purposes. Andy Sansom did comment about cost benefits and that Texas State is “very proud of the results.”
- Biological Monitoring Update – during the month of April, biological monitoring started due to Low-Flow Critical Period triggers in the Comal Springs system.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Receipt Letter for the Annual Report– A letter of receipt for the 2013 Annual Report by USFWS has been received by the EAHCP Program Manager. Any additional information will be provided to the Implementing Committee once received.
- 2015 Workplans – Nathan Pence has received all workplans and will be presenting these to the Implementing Committee next month. Many of the workplans will not be changing from last year. Presentations to the Science Committee and the Implementing Committee will be given on workplans significantly different than last year.
- Update on the Regional Water Conservation Program (RWCP) – EAHCP Director, Alicia Reinmund- Martinez, gave a quick update on the March 24th RWCP meeting. Additionally, an update about a meeting with the Department of Defense for possible participation in this program was given.

- Update on the Stakeholder Committee- discussions will take place soon with the chair and vice-chair regarding a meeting in May due to impending drought conditions. More information to follow. There was concern and discussion about finding an agreeable date that both Implementing Committee and Stakeholder Committee members would be able to attend.

5. Presentation of and possible action related to the proposed design plans for the New Braunfels Bank Stabilization Project.

A presentation from Bio-West Inc. about the importance of bank stabilization to protect recently completed habitat restoration areas was provided. Freese and Nichols then gave a presentation on the stabilization project. Three reports were done for this project; geomorphic assessment, riparian vegetation, and bank stabilization design. There was additional discussion regarding the Science Committee's review and approval and how additional information for vegetative plantings needs to come back to the committee. Mr. Ruiz recommended approval of the New Braunfels Bank Stabilization Project. Mr. Ahrens made the motion for approval. Mr. Sansom seconded the motion. No objections.

6. Presentation and possible action for approval of the Predictive Ecological Model Scope of Work through 2016.

Mr. Ahrens (SAWS) asked to table this item in order to allow more time for review. Mr. Pence discussed the timeline and how a delay will affect the projects long-term goals. Discussion followed. Mr. Pence continued with the presentation and provided information on the updated scope of work. He clarified the Funding Application Amendment did not affect the bottom line budget but just the distribution of the funds. Three Implementing Committee approvals are needed to move forward; approval of the new scope of work, approval of the amended Program Budget, and a request from the EAA Board to consider an amended Funding Application. Mr. Ahrens then indicated there was no need to table the item. Mr. Ramsey moved for approval, Mr. Sansom seconded the motion. No objections.

7. Presentation of VISPO overview and possible action for committee consideration in response to drought conditions.

Nathan Pence provided a presentation about the development and critical elements included in the VISPO program. The Adaptive Management process was also described in consideration of the ongoing drought. This information was presented to the Implementing Committee to determine if any changes to VISPO implementation should be considered. Mr. Ruiz spoke briefly about the Stage V program and how premature amendments to VISPO may not be necessary. SAWS anticipated ASR has saved approximately 35,000 Acre-Feet of pumping to date. Two representatives from the agricultural community spoke briefly about their perspectives and how confidence may be affected if the VISPO program elements were changed. Discussion followed. Mr. Sansom requested examples of Non-Routine Adaptive Management. It was then indicated changing VISPO trigger dates or levels would be an example of Non-Routine Adaptive Management. As a result of the information provided and subsequent discussion, there were no suggestions to change to the VISPO program.

8. EAHCP Staff Report: Incidental Take Forecast

Because this item was requested by Mr. Taggart (The City of San Marcos) a delay of this agenda item until next month was requested. There were no objections to delaying this item.

9. EAHCP Staff Report: 2013 Audited Budget

A presentation of the 2013 Audited Budget was given by EAA staff person Mrs. Hendrix. The reserved balance did increase a small amount from the unaudited report presented at the last meeting. This report will be available online no later than end of business Friday, April 18th.

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


The next Implementing Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, May 15th at the New Braunfels Civic Center. A follow-up meeting will be held on May 29th, also at the New Braunfels Civic Center.

Mr. Pence discussed what will be included in next month's ASR presentation. Based on comments from the audience, the presentation will show how earlier modeling compares to drought conditions. Mr. Sansom mentioned the possibility of accessing some of the State's budget allotted towards water conservation programs. Discussion followed.

11. Questions from the public.

A comment about finding additional ways to use the EAHCP website to better reflect what is happening in the program was made. This would enhance public outreach. Discussion followed including using the Drought Outreach Workgroup in the process.

12. Adjourn - 11:05 am



Steve Ramsey
Implementing Committee Secretary