

## **CHARGE TO THE SCIENCE COMMITTEE REGARDING THE REVIEW OF THE 2014 BIOLOGICAL MONITORING WORK PLAN**

The Funding and Management Agreement that governs the implementation of the Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan (EAHCP) provides that the Science Committee will “consult with, advise and make recommendations to the Program Manager, the Implementing Committee and the Stakeholder Committee on any AMP Decision upon request.” FMA § 7.9.2. Section 6.2 of the EAHCP provides that the “[Edwards Aquifer Authority] will continue [the] comprehensive sampling plan [in the EAA’s Variable Flow Study] for the term of the [Incidental Take Permit] with modifications as identified through the AMP process.” EAHCP § 6.3.1. The EAHCP also includes for a critical period monitoring component that is part of the Variable Flow Study. *Id.* Section 6.4 of the EAHCP sets out the AMP actions, largely sampling and monitoring, that will be implemented in the event certain low flow triggers are reached.

The Implementing Committee at its January 17, 2013 meeting asked that the Science Committee review the Biological Monitoring Work Plan for 2014 and make recommendations to the Implementing Committee for its consideration as the Implementing Committee reviews the work plans this spring. I have attached a draft of the 2014 Biological Monitoring Work Plan. It is based on the Variable Flow Study scope of work for 2013 and the requirements in the EAHCP § 6.4.

Because the Variable Flow Study has been approved by USFWS as part of the HCP, and because, as described in the Introduction to the Work Plan, it was prepared originally with significant input from the science community and modified before it was incorporated into the EAHCP, we hope that your recommendations will focus on improvements to the draft Work Plan rather than an attempt to create a new biological monitoring program from scratch. This is particularly important because wholesale revisions to the plan could constitute a major amendment that would require reopening the permit.

Your recommendations must be in writing and approved by consensus of the Science Committee. If a consensus cannot be obtained majority and minority views must be presented. We would like to have your recommendations to present to the Implementing Committee for its meeting on March 21, 2013.