



Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan

The Implementation Plan for the National Academy of Sciences
Report 1

August xx, 2015

DRAFT

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The Edwards Aquifer Authority contracted with the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), to act as an independent Science Review Panel (SRP), in order to evaluate select components of the Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan (EAHCP). NAS is required to produce three reports. The first of these reports has been released and is entitled; “*Review of the Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan: Report 1.*”

An official process for reviewing and implementing the NAS Report 1 was approved at the January 15, 2015, Implementing Committee Meeting. A component of this process included the creation of the NAS Recommendation Review Work Group: Report 1 (RRWG), in order to provide Stakeholder and Implementing Committees representation during the development of an implementation plan by EAHCP staff - (*Report 1 Implementation Plan*). The specific charge of the RRWG was to, by consensus, review the staff drafted *Report 1 Implementation Plan*, modify it as necessary, and if appropriate recommend the Plan to the Implementing Committee for adoption and implementation.

The Implementing Committee officially created the RRWG at their meeting on March 19, 2015. Members included: *Cindy Loeffler* (Texas Parks and Wildlife Department), *Melani Howard* (City of San Marcos and Texas State University), *Roger Biggers* (New Braunfels Utilities), *Darren Thompson* (San Antonio Water System), and *Mark Hamilton* (Edwards Aquifer Authority).

Add section on the # of meetings and dates.

Add section on final recommendation: date of vote, vote outcome, general summary of recommendation, etc.

Add section explain and detailing the matrix, column definitions, etc.

Hydrological Modeling

Add text relevant to the discussions by the NAS WG.

Ecological Modeling

Add text relevant to the discussions by the NAS WG.

Biological and Water Quality Monitoring

The NAS RRWG advised the EAHCP to take a holistic review of both the Biological Monitoring program and the Water Quality Monitoring program. As so much has been learned about these two monitoring programs since the HCP began in 2013, this approach would consider the NAS recommendations in the report, recommendations and input developed by the Science Committee, ITP Permittee input, and solicited input from subject matter experts. Towards this end, the NAS RRWG recommended to create both a Biological Monitoring Work Group and a Water Quality Monitoring Work Group. It was contemplated by the NAS RRWG that at some point, these two work groups would meet jointly, to specifically address the NAS recommendation to “*Increase coordination and integration*” of the programs.

Biological Monitoring

Specific to Biological Monitoring, the NAS RRWG generally supported the idea that:

1. The currently sampled reaches are appropriate, as they are tied to the Biological Objectives and Goals of the HCP.

The NAS RRWG recommended that the following issues be addressed by the Biological Monitoring Work Group:

- Determine if the Covered Species are impacted from anthropogenic parameters.
- In the context of a holistic review of the Biological Monitoring program, determine the need for additional Fountain Darter special studies. Specifically determine if we are collecting data that has no purpose, whereas freeing up budget to add special studies.
- Determine if expanding Macroinvertebrate sampling could provide better information about the health of the rivers.

Water Quality

Specific to Water Quality, the NAS RRWG generally supported the ideas that:

1. Nutrients play an important role in the Comal system.
2. The WQ program should focus parameters sampled and detection limits used at the Covered Species rather than mimicking standard water quality sampling programs.
3. Passive Diffusion Samplers might be a cheap alternative to comprehensive grab sampling techniques.

The NAS RRWG recommended that the following issues be addressed by the Water Quality Monitoring Work Group:

- Increase coordination between the Water Quality and Biological Monitoring programs.
- Ensure the Water Quality Monitoring program supports the biology -biological goals- and not human health/water quality standards.
- Determine if the approach to the Water Quality Monitoring program should be watershed-based.
- Determine if enhanced sampling for nutrients and household and personal care products is needed.

Applied Research

Add text relevant to the discussions by the NAS WG.

Overarching Issues

Add text relevant to the discussions by the NAS WG.