



## MEETING MINUTES

June 5, 2015

### 1. **Call to Order and Introductions of Work Group members.**

Members of this workgroup include: 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).

Darren Thomson was unable to make the meeting. Steve Bereyso represented the San Antonio Water System in Mr. Thompson's absence.

### 2. **Public Comment.**

No comment

### 3. **Presentation of Work Group Charge.**

Alicia Reinmund-Martinez, EAHCP Director, presented a summary of the Work Group Charge as presented and approved by the Implementing Committee on May 21, 2015. Discussion followed.

### 4. **Possible nomination and election of the Work Group Chair.**

The Work Group decided not to select/elect a Chair of the Work Group.

### 5. **Determination of Work Group meeting strategy, schedule and locations.**

Mrs. Reinmund-Martinez presented the proposed meeting schedule. The Work Group agreed on the approach and proposed dates and times (except for the July 24 meeting will be held on July 31<sup>st</sup> if necessary). It was suggested by the Work Group to maintain full-day meetings in order to finish within 3 meetings.

Cindy Loeffler requested if the Work Group can discuss previously discussed items at following meetings. This will be added to the next agenda.

### 6. **Presentation of Draft Implementation Plan.**

Nathan Pence, EAHCP Program Manager, presented a summary of the Draft Implementation Matrix to the Work Group.

The Work Group was reminded that all recommendations found in the matrix will have financial implications. The Work Group must also identify ways to maintain a neutral budget. The definitions of the matrix columns were presented and there were no questions from the Work Group.

## **7. Discussion and possible modification of the Biological Monitoring and Water Quality Monitoring sections of the Draft Implementation Plan.**

Mr. Pence reviewed the monitoring recommendations with the Work Group. The committee covered each recommendation contained in the matrix provided line by line.

### Recommendation 25:

- Zara Environmental did an applied research study on the distribution of Comal Springs Riffle Beetles (CSRB) during low-flow conditions in the Comal. We got the distribution during low-flows. We could do this again during high-flows.
- Mrs. Loeffler commented that Chad Norris, TPWD, said that this task/study was not complete, but it was a good start. Mrs. Loeffler suggested to bring in Mr. Norris and Randy Gibson, USFWS, to discuss this subject further.
- Steve Bereyso stated that the Science Committee members were skeptical of the Zara study. Discussion followed.

### Recommendation 26:

- This recommendation is done through the existing Biological Monitoring program.
- Melani Howard, City of San Marcos/Texas State University, referred to page 106-107 of the NAS Report 1. NAS suggested to evaluate the data to determine were there may be repetition. Mrs. Howard proposed we may be able to save money if repetitive data collection is stopped.
- Mrs. Howard and Mrs. Loeffler agreed to take a holistic review of Biological Monitoring program and its data.
- Mrs. Howard recommended to integrate the Water Quality and Biological Monitoring efforts as NAS suggested.

### Recommendation 27:

- A discussion about creating another protocol other than the cotton lure approach through the Applied Research program.
- Cindy and Melani suggested deleting that the Science Committee supports the cotton lure approach.
- Roger asked about what we know about CSRB travel. What have we learned about the cotton lure approach? Why do we think cotton lures are attracting CSRB?
- Steve Bereyso was very skeptical of doing more research. It won't lead to anything.
- Myron Hess commented that NAS may be giving us this recommendation to assist them in completing Report 3.

### Recommendation 28:

- Are you sampling on the right dates and locations?
- Suggestion to put together a Water Quality and a Biological Monitoring Work Group.

- Mark Hamilton commented that the work group should also coordinate on what water quality data are needed to support the biology. Coordination needs to happen to improve the data.
- Mr. Bereyso mentioned that adding a PhD to the HCP staff is not an ongoing need. Mr. Pence mentioned that Refugia is about to get started and needs a project manager. Who will also facilitate these other Biological Monitoring and Water Quality Monitoring programs? Nathan will present a summary of the HCP staff roles and responsibilities at the next Implementing Committee meeting.
- Mrs. Howard said it could be grant funded. No real support for a contractor to provide the role.

#### Recommendation 29:

- Mrs. Howard mentioned that the Comal and San Marcos rivers are nutrient limited. Nutrients are critical to sampling. The work group should look at nutrients and for other things.
- Sample for the watershed and for the activities in the watershed.
- Mr. Hamilton said that a holistic approach is key to make the program more successful.

#### Recommendation 30:

- This could set the guidelines for the future work group. Evaluate the program to monitor the watershed, for the species. Tailor the program towards the species.
- What do we know about the relationship between CSRB and water quality parameters? Are the species impacted from these parameters?
- Personal care products are expensive but are anthropogenic. Don't need to do that all the time. You will see the anthropogenic influences. The work group decided that the Science Committee should weigh in on this.
- Mrs. Howard commented on doing a comprehensive sampling annually. Do we do sediment cores? Yes, we do sediment sampling and passive diffusive samplers.

#### Recommendation 31:

- Mr. Pence provided a summary of the Biological Monitoring program. He talked to BIO-WEST and Science Committee members about the program being tied to those reaches to determine if we meet the biological goals and objectives. The HCP does not have the money to add new sites for the entire river.
- Mrs. Loeffler mentioned that it would be nice to have full habitat sampling, unless we have a good reason not to. We can stop doing what we are doing but, should the Biological Monitoring work group address this issue?
- Roger Biggers, NBU, said he leans towards not supporting this recommendation.
- What are the pros and cons to continue what we are doing versus a randomized sampling design of Biological Monitoring?
- Myron Hess said this recommendation ties to #33. He asked if the reaches and the biological goals are appropriate.

- Mrs. Howard and Mrs. Loeffler said not to rethink the biological goals and objectives. Rather, we could add to them.
- Mr. Hess mentioned that NAS is asking us to look at how we are determining are achievement of the biological goals.

Recommendation 32:

- Mr. Pence defined the rationale of this staff recommendation. NAS suggested more frequently than every 5 years and more randomized sampling.

Recommendation 33:

- Mr. Pence provided a summary of the matrix.
- The description needs to be expanded to include more of the other 2 recommendations. Could be a cost savings to the program.
- This could be included in the Biological Monitoring Work Group.
- Steve Bereyso said this would be nice to know.
- NAS is saying to spend EAHCP money wisely.

Recommendation 34:

- Mr. Pence summarized the recommendation. We are studying the macro invertebrates because they are food source of the fountain darter. This would be a new approach to sampling the macro invertebrates. The Ecological Model does not need this data for the model.
- There was a lot of discussion. Cindy did not think it would cost that much. But, would not provide us with much more information.
- The Biological Monitoring Work Group could come up with different recommendations.
- Water quality constituents could be dropped and picked up on Biological Monitoring.
- What did the workshop participants say? Melani said we don't know the impacts of water quality on the macro invertebrates.
- Mr. Hamilton said the water quality Work Group needs to talk to the Biologists about why there is a dead spot in the system?
- Macro invertebrate sampling is cheaper than most other sampling.

**8. Discussion of next steps and request for any additional information needed by the Work Group members.**

The Work Group discussed a summary of the changes made will be presented at the next meeting. Have Randy and Chad at the next meeting. The Work Group can discuss to see if any changes need to be made.

Mr. Pence summarized the report, will include some text, summarizing the work groups and how they work together.

Mr. Biggers mentioned the EAHCP should not be duplicating efforts: What can we not do? What can we do? How can we collaborate to make a better program?

**9. Future Agenda Items:** June 26<sup>th</sup> in San Marcos, TX

**10. Questions from the Public.**

There was no comment.

**11. Adjourn.**