



IMPLEMENTING MEETING MINUTES

October 16, 2014

1. **Call to order--Establish that all Committee members are present or represented- 9:00 am.**

In attendance were: Tom Taggart (Chair), City of San Marcos; Chuck Ahrens, San Antonio Water System (SAWS); Steve Ramsey, City of New Braunfels; Roland Ruiz, Edwards Aquifer Authority (EAA); Andy Samson, Texas State University and Todd Votteler, Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA).

2. **Public Comment.**

No comment.

3. **Approval of minutes from the September 18, 2014 Implementing Committee meetings.**

This item was postponed due to a lack of a quorum. Andrew Sansom and Todd Votteler arrived later in the meeting and a motion was made at that time. See item #11 below.

4. **Receive report from the Program Manager on general topics related to the implementation of the Habitat Conservation Plan and operation of the Implementing Committee.**

Nathan Pence, Program Manager, updated the Implementing Committee on the following topics:

- 2015 Implementing Committee Meeting Dates.
- Update on meeting with United States Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS) on October 1st.
- ASR Work Group Recommendations Update.
- Budget Update.
- Springflows and Index Well Levels.
- Aquifer Storage Recovery (ASR) Update.
- Regional Water Conservation Program (RWCP) Work Group Update.
- Implementation Permits Update.

Mr. Pence discussed the effort Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan (EAHCP) staff has initiated with HDR Inc. to rectify all permit issues experienced by the City of San Marcos/Texas State University and the City of New Braunfels.

- Submittal of a letter to USFWS regarding the change in methodology in San Marcos/Texas State University Sessom Creek Sediment Sand Bar Removal Project. Mr. Pence presented the draft Informational Memorandum. There was no action required by the Committee because they had approved the submittal at a previous meeting.
- Mr. Pence provided the Committee the submittal dates for the 2014 Annual Report and an update on the National Academy of Science expected completion of its first report.

5. Staff Report: Voluntary Irrigation Suspension Program Option (VISPO) implementation and status.

Rick Illgner presented an overview of the triggering of VISPO on October 1st. This presentation is available on the EAHCP website (eahcp.org). The Committee asked Mr. Illgner to explain the difference in the enrollment by county and the HCP goals for each county. Enrollment in Uvalde County exceeded its HCP goal by 177%, while enrollment in the eastern counties, collectively reached only 29% of their goal.

Mr. Pence discussed the success of the current VISPO program and if enrollment were able to continue, it could enhance meeting overall springflow protection program goals as a whole. Chuck Ahrens mentioned, due to ASR system capacity, the overall benefit experienced from the SAWS ASR program this year will continue in future years.

Tom Taggart mentioned the partnership the City of San Marcos and EAA is building for an ASR commitment. Mr. Taggart recognized the success of VISPO enrolment and program initiation this year and suggested a possible modeling exercise to determine benefits for continued enrollment.

6. Staff Report: Presentation of the benefits Edwards Aquifer programs have had on the Aquifer levels and Springflows.

This presentation was tabled until the next meeting.

7. Staff Report: Clarifications and Amendments acceptance/approval by USFWS.

Mr. Pence updated the Implementing Committee about written and verbal response on the following Clarification letters.

- i. Condition M Clarification Letter: September 23, 2014, Approval was received from USFWS on September 30, 2014.
- ii. NAS Clarification Letter: October 18, 2013. USFWS provided a verbal agreement. They conveyed that no written confirmation is necessary.
- iii. FMA Amendment: November 22, 2013. USFWS provided verbal agreement. They conveyed that no written confirmation is necessary.

8. Presentation and possible action to approve pursuing a contract with Boggess Communications to draft and distribute quarterly EAHCP newsletters.

This presentation was tabled until the next meeting.

9. Presentation and possible action to approve the City of New Braunfels amended 2015 Work Plan.

Mr. Pence introduced this agenda item and the rationale for the amended Work Plan. Mark Enders, the City of New Braunfels, presented the details of the amended Work Plan to the Implementing Committee. The presentation can be found on the EAHCP website (eahcp.org).

Ed Oborny expanded on the Gill Parasite initiative and the rational for completing the study and collecting additional data on parasites.

Andy Sansom moved to approve the City of New Braunfels amended Work Plan. Chuck Ahrens seconded. There was no objection.

10. Presentation and possible action to approve the 2015 Funding Applications to be submitted to the EAA Board.

Mr. Pence presented the 2015 Funding Application for all EAHCP programs to be submitted to the EAA Board.

Steve Ramsey pointed out that the funds allocated for the City of New Braunfels project as being neutral is appropriate for all items except for the Dissolved Oxygen Aerator projects. This item is an actual increase in funds. The change was noted.

Steve Ramsey moved to approve the 2015 Funding Application to be submitted to the EAA Board. Tom Taggart seconded. There was no objection.

Break

11. Approval of minutes from the September 18, 2014 Implementing Committee meetings.

Andy Sansom moved to approve the September 18th meeting minutes. Tom Taggart seconded. There was no objection.

12. Staff report: Update and possible action on the current status of Refugia implementation.

Mr. Pence gave a presentation on the Refugia program and where implementation is in relation to the goals of the EAHCP. The presentation can be found on the EAHCP website (eahcp.org).

Andy Sansom asked about the EAHCP's responsibility under the Endangered Species Act if the species held in the Refugia facility become extinct in the wild. EAHCP staff and USFWS will discuss this point and revisit the question at a later date.

Adam Zerrenner, USFWS, made a comment about the process to amend the contracted services for Refugia stated in the EAHCP.

Darcy Frownfelter, EAA General Counsel, expanded on the possible response from the Texas Attorney General regarding EAA's questions on entering into a contract with USFWS.

Andy Sansom motioned to direct the Program Manager to prepare an amendment to the EAHCP and Incidental Take Permit (ITP) to allow EAHCP staff to contract with someone else other than the USFWS. Tom Taggart seconded. There was no objection.

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

The next Implementing Committee Meeting is scheduled for November 20th at the Edwards Aquifer Authority. Items on the agenda could include:

- 2015 Refugia Work Plan.
- Options from various NAS reports.
- Approval to contract HDR to model for VISPO continuation.
- Edwards Aquifer Program Benefits
- Contract with Boggess Communications for a quarterly Newsletter.

14. Questions from the public.

Todd Votteler mentioned some details about the first Hill Country Water Summit on December 5th. An agenda will be distributed soon.

15. Adjourn – 11:49 a.m.



Steve Ramsey, Secretary