



MEMORANDUM

October 18, 2013

Kevin Connally
United States Fish and Wildlife Service
Austin Ecological Services Field Office
10711 Burnet Road, Suite 200
Austin, Texas 78758

RE: Informational Memo related to the Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan (EAHCP) for Incidental Take Permit #TE-63663A-0 (ITP)

Mr. Connally,

Implementation of the Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan (EAHCP) approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) on March 18, 2013, is underway. This memorandum, submitted on behalf of the Edwards Aquifer Authority (EAA), the City of New Braunfels (CoNB), the City of San Marcos (CoSM), the San Antonio Water System (SAWS), and Texas State University (TSU) (collectively the Permittees),¹ is being provided for informational purposes regarding minor variations from the EAHCP Appendix R, the Funding and Management Agreement (FMA), in relation to the Science Review Panel (Panel). These changes are the result of discussions with the National Academy of Science (NAS) and reflect efforts to provide the most efficient, scientifically objective, and fiscally responsible scientific review possible. Please review these modifications, and provide verification that implementing these minor variations is in compliance with our Incidental Take Permit.

Section 7.10.1 of the FMA describes the membership of the Panel as including five members. In order to more sufficiently address the broad scientific nature of the requested scientific review, NAS requires a Panel with expertise in all related disciplines. Therefore, the Panel will be composed of 12-15 members.

Section 7.10.2 of the FMA describes the Panel as meeting on a quarterly basis until the determinations have been made under Subsection 7.13.7. Based on discussions with NAS, it was determined that having the Panel meet on an as-needed basis would be more efficient and productive. While EAHCP staff will maintain communication with the NAS throughout the intervals of time between meetings, providing regular updates and information as requested, to prevent unnecessary expenditure of funds and prevent unproductive meetings, the Panel will only convene when there are substantive items to be discussed. This variation allows for the most efficient operation and fiscally responsible use of the Panel.

¹ The Implementing Committee (representing the five Permittees and the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority as a non-voting member) unanimously approved this memorandum at their meeting on [INSERT DATE].

Approval of these minor variations will allow the EAHCP to benefit from the prestige and expertise available at NAS, while operating in the most efficient manner possible. We appreciate your time and consideration of these items.

Thank you,

Nathan Pence
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