

The City of New Braunfels Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan Year 1 Workplan includes the following:

Native Riparian Habitat Restoration (Comal Springs Riffle Beetle)

The City of New Braunfels will restore native riparian zones, where appropriate, to benefit the Comal Springs riffle beetle by increasing the amount of usable habitat and food sources (i.e., root structures and associated biofilms). The method of riparian zone establishment will include the removal of non-natives and replanting of native vegetation representative of a healthy, functioning riparian zone. Trees and plants with extensive root systems will be given preference to create the maximum beetle habitat. Fine sediment covering exposed roots and springs will also be removed. The riparian zone will be monitored (at least annually) for continued success and removal of reestablished non-natives. Riparian zones will be protected until the preferred riparian zone is established. Riparian habitat zones will be created along Spring Run 3 and along the portion of the western shoreline that is owned by City of New Braunfels. In addition, riparian restoration also benefits the system through bank stabilization and nutrient and sediment processes.

During development of the scope of work for Native Riparian Habitat Restoration focused on the Comal Springs Riffle Beetle, the idea of a permeable walking path was introduced. When River Systems Institute was assisting the City in development of the Solicitation, Offer and Award document for this plan, Dr. Hardy suggested it would be a good idea to include a permeable walking path for multiple reasons. First, the path allows access to the area for inspection and maintenance. Second, it may channel public access to the riparian zone by providing a walking path that ensures people follow a specific route instead of threatening the restored riparian zone. The addition of the walking path ensures that the benefits of improved riparian habitat are realized without requiring continuous replanting due to destruction caused by un-channeled pedestrians. Additionally, the flat surface of the walking path will provide some additional sediment control reducing the need to ongoing sediment removal in future years of HCP implementation. The amount bid for the walking path was \$13,000. Table 7.1 of the HCP designates \$100,000 in 2013 with a decreasing amount for all subsequent years. Ensuring the sustainability of the work completed in 2013 will help support a decreasing budget for future years.

It was decided at the 11/15/2012 Implementing Committee meeting, that the Science Committee should weigh in on the necessity for the permeable walking path. The City of New Braunfels requests that the Science Committee consider access for pedestrian and maintenance purposes, sediment control, and the long term financial benefit when making their decision.