

Charge of the San Marcos Water Quality Protection Work Group

EAHCP Adaptive Management Science Committee

Overview

The Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan (EAHCP) calls for the City of San Marcos (COSM) “to establish a program to protect water quality and reduce the impacts of impervious cover” under the “Impervious Cover/Water Quality Protection” (HCP §5.7.6) Measure. The EAHCP also calls for the COSM and Texas State University (TXST) to remove sediment from the river bottom at various locations along the upper San Marcos River through “Sediment Removal below Sewell Park” (HCP 5.3.6) and “Sediment Removal in Spring Lake & Spring Lake Dam to City Park” (HCP 5.4.4) Measures, respectively.

This document lays out the background, creation, charge, and administration of a Work Group created to provide input concerning the selection of a subset of water quality protection projects identified in the *Water Quality Protection Plan for the City of San Marcos and Texas State University* (2015) for implementation, both in fulfillment of the COSM’s “Impervious Cover/Water Quality Protection” commitment, as well as in satisfaction of the objectives of COSM and TXST’s sediment removal commitments cited above.

Background

Since the start of the EAHCP in 2013, the COSM has carried out the “Impervious Cover/Water Quality Protection” (HCP §5.7.6) Measure in developing a water quality protection planning document. In 2015, the *Water Quality Protection Plan for the City of San Marcos and Texas State University* (WQPP) was published. The WQPP lays out a comprehensive array of structural, design, and planning mechanisms associated with water quality protection for implementation across the upper San Marcos River watershed.

As a comprehensive document, the WQPP identifies many more water quality protection projects than can be realized through the funds dedicated to this Measure in EAHCP Table 7.1 alone (§5.7.6), meaning projects will need to be prioritized. In addition, critical attention is also needed to ensure that the prioritized projects will also satisfy COSM and TXST’s sediment removal commitments, which are the subject of a possible Nonroutine Adaptive Management Process (AMP) action to subsume sediment removal under a more proactive upstream water quality protection program, to prevent excessive sediment loads from entering the upper San Marcos River in the first place.

Creation

To provide a focused deliberative body with the appropriate subject matter expertise for scientific review and input on questions related to the COSM’s implementation of the EAHCP “Impervious Cover/Water Quality Protection” Measure, the HCP Program Manager and the Implementing Committee jointly determined to create a Science Committee Work Group (“San Marcos Water Quality Protection Work Group”) comprised of members drawn from the Science Committee (FMA §7.9.3.b), as well as external experts with expertise related to water quality protection projects, for this purpose.

Charge

The Work Group’s charge consists of: (1) considering the EAHCP staff recommendation of the Sessom Creek watershed as the top priority for implementing projects; and (2) reviewing and prioritizing the proposed list of water quality protection projects identified in the WQPP for the chosen watershed.

Administration

It is expected that the Work Group will hold its first meeting in April 2017. The Work Group is anticipated to meet only once. The recommendations of the Work Group will be reported at the next full Science Committee meeting scheduled. The Work Group will be constituted of the following individuals: Glenn Longley, Charlie Kreidler, and Jackie Poole (Science Committee); Shaun Condor (COSM), Aarin Teague (San Antonio River Authority), and Ben Schwartz (TXST). The Work Group will operate by consensus, and will heed the scope designated in the EAHCP for the Measures under consideration.