

RECOMMENDATION OF THE BIOLOGICAL MODELING WORKGROUP

1. The Biological Modeling Workgroup strongly recommends that the EARIP, by action of the Steering Committee, authorize the development of the biological information for informing the “take” and “jeopardy” analysis in conjunction with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.
2. The Biological Modeling Workgroup further recommends USGS should be requested to develop by May 23, 2008, a brief scope of work and cost estimate for review by the Biological Modeling Workgroup and EARIP. The scope of work should propose specific steps that can be completed by March 31, 2009, in developing the biological analysis necessary for FWS to make the “take” and “jeopardy” determination for the fountain darter at both the San Marcos and Comal Springs and the “jeopardy” determination for Texas Wild Rice. The USGS scope of work should include a description of specific deliverables achievable by March 31, 2009, the costs for those deliverables, and should include a description of the complexity of any such deliverables. In developing the scope of work, USGS should assume that a structured decision-making process will be used to document the process and elicit input.
3. The Biological Modeling Workgroup finally recommends that regardless of whether or not USGS is the contractor and regardless of whether or not the final product is more or less quantitative, the process used to develop biological information for the “take” and “jeopardy” analysis must be open and transparent at all steps in the process consistent with a strategic decision-making process