



*The Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan e-newsletter, "Steward," is published to highlight the efforts underway to protect the Comal and San Marcos Springs and ensure a healthy habitat for the threatened and endangered species.*

## Banking on Stabilization Project for Enhanced Habitat



Mark Enders studies plans for stabilizing the steep river bank pictured in the background.

It has been a few years in the making, but the bank stabilization project, planned for downstream of Landa Lake in New Braunfels, is nearing startup.

"We are excited and ready to get rolling," Mark Enders, City of New Braunfels watershed coordinator said enthusiastically. "We will be reworking about 1,000 feet of river bank between the Landa Park pool and the Landa Park Golf Course. About two years ago, we came in and removed a sediment island which had taken over the middle of a section the channel. That was caused by the sloughing off of sediment from the river bank over the years. This project will put in

place well-designed and environmentally sound solutions to prevent problems in the future."

Enders explained that the top of the bank will receive a new berm to send stormwater into the channel while preventing erosion. At the bottom of the bank, contractors will place an anchor system of "gabion baskets," which are wire enclosures filled with rock. On top of the baskets, a stone cap will be tied into the slope for anchoring and aesthetic purposes. In the middle of the bank, "waler walls" will be added for enhanced stability. Additionally, the current vertical bank will be graded to a more angled slope.

"Another key aspect of the bank stabilization project is the removal of non-native plants and trees and replacement with native species on both sides of the channel," Enders said. "While it could be a bit of a challenge, we are planning to work around the native oak and pecan trees in the steep embankment."

The much anticipated project will take five months to run from the engineering phase through construction and the plant restoration at the end. Once that work is completed, the riparian planting of native species will continue for the two miles below the bank stabilization project.

"The combination of the recently completed flow split project and this bank stabilization will enhance the habitat for the endangered fountain darter and help the stream quality as it flows south for about two miles. Plus, with the fact that there is no recreation along this stretch of the Old Channel of the Comal River, this project will only make life for the endangered species a whole lot easier for many years."