

Interim Report

State: Texas

Grant Number: E-38-HP

Grant Title: Habitat Conservation Planning for Development of the Edwards Aquifer Authority Habitat Conservation Plan

Grant Program: Section 6 Habitat Conservation Plan Planning Assistance

Reporting Period: January 1, 2004 to December 31, 2004

Objectives:

- (1) To develop a HCP with measures to protect the Comal and San Marcos spring ecosystems and mitigate any incidental take of listed species that would occur as a result of low spring flows.
- (2) To complete and EIS that would include the HCP of Objective 1 as the preferred alternative.

Project activities to be addressed this reporting period:

1. Complete Draft Habitat Conservation Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (HCP/EIS) for EAA Board approval
2. Subject to Board Approval, submit of HCP/EIS to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)
3. Make the Draft HCP/EIS available for public review
4. Subject to approval by USFWS, prepare Final HCP/EIS
5. Subject to Authority Board approval, make the Final HCP/EIS available for public review
6. Write and submit a final report describing the work accomplished during Year 1 and 2 based on USFWS Federal Aid Reporting guidelines

Summary of Progress

It is currently anticipated that a revised Draft July 2004 HCP, as amended will go to the Board by March, 2005 for approval to submit it to the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

Specific tasks addressed during 2004 included:

1. Substantial changes were made to the draft HCP dated November 2002, based on comments received during 2003 from Authority staff, the HCP Work Group, Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and Biological Advisory Team (BAT), and results of additional modeling and evaluation studies that were also completed in 2003 and 2004. A revised draft HCP/EIS was completed and delivered to the Authority for internal review in January 2004 (draft dated January 2004).
2. A meeting was held with USFWS staff on April 9, 2004 to discuss status of the HCP and to describe and discuss the concept of intensive management areas that would be developed on site to support the spring ecosystem species during periods of severe drought.
3. Consultants met with Authority staff on June 8, 2004, to discuss changes and revisions to the draft HCP/EIS dated January 2004, based on an intensive internal review by Authority technical and legal staff. In response to this intensive internal review additional changes and revisions were completed to the January 2004 draft HCP/EIS. This resulted in Draft July 2004 HCP.
4. The Draft July 2004 HCP was reviewed and discussed by the Authority Board of Directors and the Board's Research and Technology Committee during several meetings held in the months of July, August and September 2004. Several amendments by Authority Board members were incorporated that resulted in the Draft July 2004 HCP, as Amended (CD included). This draft was released by the Authority Board to the general public and stakeholders for review and comments. Four public meetings were held by the Authority to receive public comment on the Draft July 2004 HCP, as amended. These meetings occurred at Victoria (November 1, 2004), New Braunfels (November 8, 2004), Uvalde (November 16, 2004), and San Antonio (November 17, 2004). A BAT meeting was also held on November 17, 2004 to receive comment.
5. Public review on the Draft July 2004 HCP, as amended was still in progress at the end of 2004.

Significant Deviations

At the end of 2003, it was apparent that the complex nature of the project, the number of stakeholders with competing interests and the time required in the review and rewrite process would prevent the completion of this project in 2004. On March 16, 2004, Interlocal Agreement Contract between the Authority and State was extended through December 31, 2005. The new schedule of completion follows:

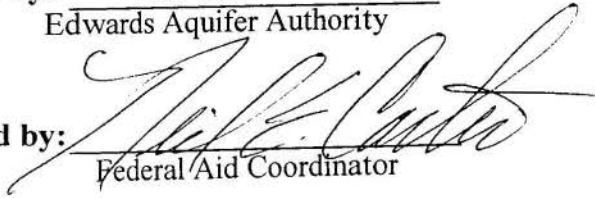
Major Task	Estimated Completion Date	Status
Complete Draft HCP/EIS for EAA Board Approval	Mar-04	Jul-04
Submission of Draft HCP/EIS to USFWS	Sep-04	Pending
FWS Review Process	Mar-05	--
Public Review of Draft HCP/EIS	May-05	--
Prepare Final HCP/EIS	Aug-05	--
Public Review of Final HCP/EIS	Sep-05	--
Record of Decision/Issuance of Permit	Nov-05	--

Costs:

Total \$188,599.13
Federal \$121,457.84

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Date: January 27, 2005

Approved by: 
Federal Aid Coordinator

Date: January 28, 2005