

Charge of the Research Work Group

EAHCP Adaptive Management Science Committee

Overview

The Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan (EAHCP) calls for research to be conducted by the Edwards Aquifer Authority under two separate programs: (1) the *Applied Research Program* (HCP §6.3.4), enhances understanding of the Comal and San Marcos aquatic ecosystems, supports the development of the EAHCP Ecological Model, and provides scientific information to program management concerning success in meeting EAHCP's Biological Goals and Objectives; and (2) the *Refugia Program* (HCP §5.1.1), provides for research activities, as necessary, to develop practical knowledge for housing adequate populations of Covered Species and to expand knowledge of their biology, life histories, and reintroduction.

This document lays out the background, creation, charge, and administration of a Work Group created to provide scientific review and input concerning research under the Applied Research and Refugia programs.

Background

Applied Research Program: Initially, the Applied Research Program conducted studies prescribed in the EAHCP to fill critical gaps in data. As this data was acquired, additional research questions were identified by the EAHCP Adaptive Management Science Committee ("Science Committee"), and by the National Academy of Sciences, to constitute future research. These recommendations underwent a comprehensive review in 2015 by the Applied Research Work Group, which produced the *EAHCP 2016-2019 Applied Research Project Schedule*. The schedule provides guidelines for future research; however, the program's dynamic nature, including new progress made since 2015, merits continued scientific review and input.

Refugia Program: In 2017, a contract for the EAHCP Refugia facility was executed with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service with dedicated funds for a comprehensive Refugia research program. Although the basics of this program are defined by contract, as questions arise related to the development and methodology of research projects, and due to research's dynamic nature, continued scientific review and input is merited.

Creation

To provide a focused deliberative body with the appropriate subject matter expertise for continued scientific review and input on questions related to the EAHCP Applied Research and Refugia research programs, the HCP Program Manager and the Implementing Committee jointly determined to create a Science Committee Work Group ("Research Work Group") comprised of members drawn from the Science Committee (FMA §7.9.3.b) for this purpose.

Charge

The Work Group's charge consists of: (1) suggesting specific Applied Research projects to be conducted during 2018 and 2019 as part of the Applied Research Program; and (2) suggesting refinements to the methodology proposed for Refugia research projects.

Administration

The Work Group will begin in 2017. The Work Group will meet on an as-needed basis as determined by the HCP Program Manager and the Science Committee Chair and Vice-Chair. Final recommendations resulting from a given meeting, or meetings, of the Work Group will be presented for discussion and possible endorsement of the Science Committee at the next full committee meeting scheduled. The Work Group will be constituted of the following individuals: Chad Norris, Tom Arsuffi, Floyd Weckerly, and Conrad Lamon. The Work Group will operate by consensus, and will heed of the scope designated in the EAHCP for the Measures under consideration. It is anticipated this Work Group will exist for the duration of the ITP. However, there is a recognition that the group will need to adapt and be flexible as new issues are identified. Therefore, this charge and membership is to be revisited annually, and, if needed, may be modified with Science Committee endorsement.