
Springflow Habitat Protection Work Group

Meeting 1 Minutes

April 22, 2020

9:00am-10:30am

1. Confirm attendance

Kristy Kollaus confirmed that all work group members had joined the meeting.

2. Meeting logistics

Jamie Childers provided an overview of virtual meeting logistics, meeting points of contact, and work group logistics.

3. Public comment

There were no public comments.

4. Review and discussion of Work Group Charge

Myron Hess provided an overview of the Work Group charge and how the Work Group is going to work through the four overarching issues in a multi-part process. The first part of the charge will be focusing in on these issues to define more specific inquiries.

Chuck Ahrens questioned if the group is to determine if water quality is an issue or if water quality was already identified as an issue. Myron Hess indicated that there was an assumption when the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) was developed that there were water quality impacts at extended periods of low flow and that, if new information exists to support a different determination, the Work Group may find that water quality is not an issue of concern. Cindy Loeffler agreed that more recent data may inform the discussion.

Myron Hess replied to Kimberly Meitzen's request for a qualifying descriptor of "extended." He indicated that the HCP recommends that a 6-month period of low flows be followed by an 80 cfs pulse. He referenced 2019 modeling that illustrates low spring flow levels as summarized in the Voluntary Irrigation Suspension Program Option Adaptive Management Scientific Evaluation Report.

Finally, Chad Furl responded to Patrick Shriver's question by confirming that the previous models only consider temperature and dissolved oxygen.

5. Presentation on completed EAHCP research related to the issues to be addressed

Chad Furl gave a brief overview of program research completed under the EAHCP relevant to the Work Group's efforts. There were no questions.

6. Discussion to identify presenters for Part 1 to help inform refinement of the following issues to be addressed in Part 2

Water quality suggested presenters included Thom Hardy, Ed Oborny, Al Groeger, Benjamin Schwartz, and Patrick Shriver suggested that someone with a broader perspective on water quality modeling present. Several participants, including Jacquelyn Duke, asked for the current water quality model to be validated with 2014 data. Chad Furl explained that a module of the EcoModel could be forced with the 2014 hydrograph to extract maximum dissolved oxygen and temperature. There was discussion of the potential for a simplified comparison of 2014 data to model outputs.

Comal Springs riffle beetle presentations proposed included Weston Nowlin, Chad Norris, Chris Nice and Eric Benbow who participated in the National Academy of Sciences review panel. Charlie Kreitler expressed interest in seeing a summary on what is known about the riffle beetle, particularly about their hydrologic setting.

Presenters on the San Marcos salamander were suggested from the San Marcos Aquatic Resources Center and a request was made to understand how their habitat changed following recent work on the dam; Ed Oborny was suggested following the meeting.

Finally, Myron Hess indicated that the status of other adaptive management study commitments may be premature to discuss and establish presenters. He indicated that the Work Group may want to ask Chad Furl to come back to the group to provide more detail on the studies he presented at Meeting 1.

Myron Hess asked that suggestions for future presenters/presentations be provided by May 1.

7. Public comment

Dianne Wassenich clarified that the depiction shared by Chad Furl of San Marcos Salamander habitat showed habitat in the Spring Lake dam eastern spillway (in the San Marcos River downstream of Spring Lake).

8. Future meetings

Equal response indicated that 1.5-hour or 2-hour meetings are preferred but 2 additional verbal comments were made that 2-hour meetings would be appropriate for future meetings to allow for presentations and discussion.