
Springflow Habitat Protection Work Group
Meeting 7 Minutes
August 6, 2020
2:00-4:00pm

1. Confirm attendance

All Work Group members were present except Ryan Kelso.

2. Meeting logistics

Jamie Childers provided an overview of virtual meeting logistics, meeting points of contact, and Work Group logistics. RSVPs will no longer be required for future meetings as the meeting link will be shared within the agenda and meeting announcements.

3. Public comment

There were no public comments.

4. Approve meeting minutes

A motion was made by Cindy Loeffler, seconded by Myron Hess to approve the meeting minutes from Meeting 4 (June 3, 2020). In the absence of objection, the minutes were approved by consensus.

A motion was made by Cindy Loeffler, seconded by Patrick Shriver to approve the meeting minutes from Meeting 5 (June 18, 2020). In the absence of objection, the minutes were approved by consensus.

5. Menti meter Issue 1 prioritization poll results

Jamie presented an overview of the Issue 1 prioritization results. Previously, members and meeting attendees submitted suggestions on how to focus consideration of broad Issue 1 of the SHP Work Group Charge. The suggestions were themed into 9 topic areas and the topic areas were prioritized by work group members using the Menti meter polling application. Jamie explained the ranking and point system used by Menti meter to generate the results. Overall, 11 of the 12 members responded to the poll and some prioritized all 9 themes while others prioritized just a few of the topics. Detailed results from the prioritization process are available within the presentation materials for this meeting posted on the SHP Work Group portion of the EAA website.

6. Overarching Issue 1 discussion regarding prioritization

Myron Hess asked the group how they would like to proceed in using the results in making prioritization decisions. Charlie Kreidler noted that, regarding theme 5, "evaluate the flow path and flow split at the Old Channel", options for addressing the potential for springflow bypassing the Old Channel were

previously considered during the construction of the culvert at the Old Channel. The elevation of the intake was lowered to account for lower surface water elevation during low flow. Moreover, there was talk about installing a temporary, inflatable dam so that most of the flow would be routed to the Old Channel. It's a relevant issue to him to understand the potential for flows bypassing the Old Channel but addressing what to do about it may not be as applicable to the charge of this Work Group.

Members agreed to go through the topics from the lowest prioritized and discuss which addressed the charge of the Work Group and were a priority.

“Stormwater sampling” (9th and lowest priority): Cindy Loeffler offered that it may not be as important since they are considering low flow conditions. Patrick Shriver added that stormwater could be a big issue during low flow conditions because they are likely to have higher concentrations of pollutants during or after dry periods. Melani concurred but offered that it could be refined to assessing water quality conditions associated with a stormwater pulse after an extended period of low flows. Myron then reiterated that the charge is focused on the 80cfs pulse and the functions it is intended to serve.

Chad Norris commented that if the 80cfs pulse is not attainable, then the real concern is with extended periods of flow in the 30-80cfs range. Myron agreed with Chad's comment. Melani suggested an option that some of the themes be combined under a broader theme and look at eliminating some specific topics. Myron acknowledged the potential for that approach but offered that there would be a lot to topics to consider.

The group agreed to work in reverse order of priority ranking to hear rationales for and against carrying themes forward. Tom Arsuffi and Jacquelyn Duke agreed that the stormwater sampling is not as important as the higher ranked themes.

“Evaluate the COI for the impacts on water quality” (8th ranked theme): Patrick commented that COI (certificates of inclusion) are part of the EAHCP and something that has not been implemented. He noted that previous presentations did emphasize the impacts from recreation and that COIs potentially could be applied more broadly. but that may not be as relevant to the Work Group charge as the other issues. Members agreed to remove it from the prioritized list of themes

“Evaluation of Springflow in Spring Lake” (7th ranked theme): Melani commented that, while important, this theme could be combined with some of the other themes. She then elaborated that during low flows, the same springs stop flowing and that it would be beneficial to better understand those trends. Kimberley Meitzen agreed about combining but offered that without that data it would be hard to assess, a potential recommendation from the Work Group

could be monitoring of the flow from specific springs during low flow conditions and assessing how it impacts the Covered Species within Spring Lake.

“Evaluate temperatures and decreasing springflow” (6th ranked theme): Kimberly commented that it could potentially be combined with the highest ranked theme of validating the Hardy model with the 2014 data. Charlie noted that it could also be combined with the second ranked theme. Further discussion occurred about detailing this topic, and concerns about eliminating it entirely including the need to better understand spring flow sources during low flows particularly for CSRB and association with the upthrown block formations, until a motion was made by Dr. Tom Arsuffi, which, with the acceptance of a friendly amendment, was seconded by Patrick Shriver. The Work Group discussed the motion and agreed that it seemed to present an acceptable path forward. The Work Group further agreed that Myron Hess would work with EAHCP staff to capture the motion, as reflected in the discussion, in writing, which, after review by Dr. Arsuffi and Mr. Shriver, would be brought back to the Work Group for further consideration and action. That written Motion is reproduced immediately below.

Motion to Define Prioritization for Further Work Group Consideration Under Issue 1

Issue 1: The Implementing Committee should ensure a technical evaluation is undertaken of water quality impacts of predicted extended periods of flow below 80 cfs in both spring systems, either using the Hardy water quality model but calibrated and validated using data from recent low-flow periods or using an alternate approach

Motion by Tom Arsuffi, second by Patrick Shriver (made orally during August 6, 2020 meeting and later formalized in writing for consideration for formal action):

Move that the Work Group carry forward the following topics under Issue 1 for consideration in Part 2 of the Work Group’s charge related to water quality below 80 cfs: 1) Calibrate, evaluate, and validate the Hardy Model using 2014 data; 2) Address dynamics of habitat, dissolved oxygen, and vegetation loss during low springflow; and 3) Review the outcomes of the 2016 Expanded Water Quality Work Group. These and other topics were summarized in the discussion documents for the Work Group meeting on August 6, 2020. The topic, “Evaluate temperatures and decreasing springflow (<80cfs)” are understood as being included under the three topics listed above.

Although this Motion prioritizes specific topics under Issue 1, it is not intended to suggest that other topics discussed pursuant to Issue 1 do not merit consideration in other processes or at other times, including through

recommendations, potentially by this Work Group, for future monitoring during periods of extended low flow.

7. Brief Presentation on the Comal Springs riffle beetle (CSRB) Work Group and CSRB in the San Marcos system

Chad Furl presented an overview of the CSRB Work Group charge, a list of EAHCP funded and non-EAHCP funded research related to the CSRB, as well as historical results of CSRB surveys conducted in the San Marcos Springs system. System-wide population surveys of CSRB in Comal system will be undertaken. He also reported that CSRB sampling in Spring Lake found CSRB associated with the springs emanating from the wall of the lake next to the old hotel (Meadows Center for Water and the Environment) and not with the deeper springs. CSRB initially discovered in Spring Lake in early 1990s, are found when they look for them but never in high numbers relative to Comal system.

8. Continuation of overarching Issue 2 (CSRB) discussion from Meeting 6

Jamie presented the themed submissions previously received for Issue 2 and gave meeting attendees time to submit additional comments and suggestions for Issue 2. These submissions will be combined and themed with the previous submissions. Work Group members will prioritize and rank the themes prior to the next meeting.

9. Public comment

There were no public comments.

10. Future meetings

The SHP Work Group Meeting 8 will be held on Friday, August 21 at 9:00am.