

Biological Goals Subcommittee

Meeting #2

Meeting Minutes

February 16, 2023

1. Confirm attendance

Mark Enders, Charlie Kreitler, Rachel Sanborn, Kimberly Meitzen and Kevin Mayes attended the meeting in-person. Jacquelyn Duke attended virtually via Microsoft Teams.

2. Meeting logistics

Mark Enders, Biological Goals Subcommittee Chair, noted that the meeting materials are available online and acknowledged EAA I.T. support should anyone need technical assistance.

3. Overview of Meeting #1 discussion.

Mark Enders provided a review of the first meeting's discussion regarding subcommittee introductions, the current biological goals, and the HCP handbook.

4. Consider staff recommendation to develop new biological goals for the next EAHCP.

Charlie Kreitler noted that since the current biological goals were approved by USFWS, was there a need to change them. USFWS staff responded that it is recommended that the EAHCP biological goals be updated to reflect lessons learned and reiterated that the current goals are written as objectives.

Kevin Mayes suggested adding "revise current biological goals" to the action item. A revision was made to the action item presented to the subcommittee.

A motion was made by Rachel Sanborn, seconded by Charlie Kreitler, to approve of the revision of current biological goals and/ or the development of new biological goals for the next EAHCP. The Subcommittee approved this upon consensus. There were no objections.

5. Discussion on the development of Biological Goals.

Olivia Ybarra reminded the Subcommittee of the HCP Handbook guidelines on the elements of a biological goal and provided examples of broad biological goals from HCPs that were recently approved by USFWS.

Kevin Mayes noted that although San Marcos Gambusia was not included in the list of species to consider in the development of the biological goals, it should be noted it was not included due to its pending delisting from the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The Comal Springs salamander was also not considered due to the recent removal of the petition for the species to be added to the ESA.

EAHCP staff provided ten suggested biological goals for the Subcommittee to review and discuss. Olivia Ybarra noted that these suggested goals were based on the current biological goals and lessons learned throughout ten years of EAHCP implementation.

Goal 1: Maintain resilient Texas wild-rice populations in the San Marcos River and Spring Lake.

Goal 2: Provide and maintain native habitat to support fountain darter populations in the Comal and San Marcos spring systems.

Goal 3: Maintain covered macroinvertebrate species populations in the Edwards Aquifer, and the Comal and San Marcos spring systems. (Macroinvertebrates: Comal Springs riffle beetle, Comal Springs dryopid beetle, Peck's Cave Amphipod, Edwards Aquifer diving beetle, and Texas troglobitic water slater)

Goal 4: Maintain healthy salamander populations in the Edwards Aquifer and San Marcos spring systems. (San Marcos Salamander and Texas blind salamander)

Goal 5: Maintain healthy populations of each of the Covered Species, within the Permit Area, through habitat conservation, enhancement, and management.

Goal 6: Contribute to maintain springflow in the Comal and San Marcos spring systems for the Covered Species.

Goal 7: Maintain good water quality in the Comal and San Marcos spring systems for the Covered Species.

Goal 8: Promote the importance of habitat conservation in the Edwards Aquifer region.

Goal 9: Support land conservation in the Edwards Aquifer region.

Goal 10: Manage recreational impacts to the Covered Species and their habitat.

In their discussions, the Subcommittee considered grouping several suggested goals into one broad goal. Another Subcommittee consideration was to develop a very broad goal that reflects the vision of the EAHCP and could potentially encompass several biological objectives that would not be appropriate in a goal focused on a specific species. Kevin Mayes noted that goals that reflect human mediated concepts and have recreation components should be considered as a biological goal. The general purpose of the Subcommittee was to develop an overarching, broad goal with several additional goals related to each species or habitat grouping.

The Subcommittee discussed doing some homework to revise the suggested biological goals or develop new proposed goals to email out or bring to the next subcommittee meeting for further discussion.

The Subcommittee will continue their discussion on revisions and groupings of the suggested biological goals at the next meeting.

6. Questions from the public

There were no questions from the public.

7. Future meetings

Meeting #3 will be held on March 2, 2023, from 2:00PM - 4:00PM at the Pauline Espinosa Community Hall.

8. Adjourn

Pending Approval