



Edwards Aquifer Authority

900 E. Quincy
San Antonio, TX 78215
EdwardsAquifer.org

Meeting Minutes

EAHCP Science Committee

Wednesday, November 9, 2022

9:00 AM

The Meadows Center

A meeting of the Science Committee of the Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan will be held on the date, time, and location stated above.

AGENDA

1. Call to Order

Committee Chair, Dr. Jacquelyn Duke, called the meeting to order at 9:03 AM. All Committee members were present except Janis Bush who was unable to attend.

2. Public Comment

There were no citizens who requested to address the Science Committee.

3. Program Announcements

- *New Science Committee Members:*

Dr. Jason Martina, aquatic plant expert, and Megan Bean, fish conservation expert, were introduced as new Science Committee members. Melani Howard, San Marcos HCP Manager, announced her retirement effective at the end of November. Mark Enders is now the new San Marcos HCP Manager and will manage implementation of the City of San Marcos and Texas State University EAHCP activities.

- *Hydrologic Update:*

Flows are still below average conditions (121 cfs Comal and 87 cfs in the San Marcos).

- *VISPO Update:*

VISPO triggered in October 2022, irrigators enrolled in the VISPO program will suspend groundwater pumping in 2023.

- *National HCP Coalition Meeting:*

Olivia Ybarra, HCP Coordinator, presented an overview of the NHCP Coalition Meeting which included a tour of Spring Lake and the USFWS Refugia program. Overall, 197 attended the meeting with individuals from across the United States. Presentations are provided on the National HCP Coalition website.

- *Spring Communities Update:*

Mark Enders provided updates for the City of San Marcos including new restricted access signage in the Eastern Spillway below Spring Lake to help minimize human impacts from recreation. Mark discussed the upcoming US Army Corps of Engineers project that will fund riparian restoration work downstream of IH-35. A total of 4.6 million dollars will be invested in this project that will start in December 2022. Melani Howard provided an update on the Sessom Creek restoration project. Stream stabilization started in October 2022 and is anticipated to be complete by May 2023.

4. Approval of Minutes

4.1 Approval of previous Committee meeting minutes.

- September 14, 2022

A motion was made by Butch Weckerly, and was seconded by Chad Norris, to approve the meeting minutes from the September 14, 2022 Science Committee meeting. There was no opposition.

5. Reports

5.1 Receive report from Adrienne Wootten, Research Scientist with the South Central Climate Adaptation Science Center, to the Science Committee on the ongoing future climate downscaling effort that will be used in hydrologic predictions for the renewal of the EAHCP Incidental Take Permit.

Paul Bertetti, EAA Director of Aquifer Science Research and Modeling, introduced the proposed climate change modeling framework the EAA is pursuing as part of the EAHCP Permit Renewal. Dr. Adrienne Wootten presented specific aspects of the climate model downscaling effort she is completing for the Edwards Aquifer region. Dr. Wootten explained how climate models are being used in decision making and impact assessments similar to what is being completed for the Edwards Aquifer region. Global climate models (GCM) divide the planet into a grid and equations represent physical processes over time. Dr. Wootten explained that they use different scenarios (shared socioeconomic pathways) to generate climate model predictions based upon each scenario input. These scenarios are based upon a range of human influence on the climate. Dr. Wootten will then use downscaling, which translates a large-scale change to local scales, so it takes a global climate model and puts it into context of the Edwards Aquifer area. It is meant to preserve local physical effects and correct biases that can get lost in a large scale model. She will focus her model on the Southern Great Plain region of the United States, which will represent the EAR. The model will project daily precipitation change along with daily high and daily low temperature changes.

5.2 Receive report from Chad Furl, EAHCP Chief Science Officer, to the Science Committee on the proposed Biological Objectives Work Group as part of the EAHCP Incidental Take Permit Renewal.

Dr. Chad Furl, EAHCP Chief Science Officer, discussed the Biological Objective Subcommittees that will meet in 2023 as part of the EAHCP Permit Renewal process. A Subcommittee is being formed to examine the existing Biological Objectives in the current HCP and propose new Biological Objectives to the Permit Renewal consultant team. The Subcommittee is anticipated to take place March – August 2023.

6. Future Meetings

The next meeting will be a joint meeting of the Implementing, Stakeholder, and Science Committees on December 15th, 2022 at 10:00 AM at EAA.

7. Questions from the Public

Virginia Parker, Executive Director of the San Marcos River Foundation, thanked Melani Howard for her years of conservation and contributions to the San Marcos River and the EAHCP program.

8. Adjourn

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 11:50 AM.

Kristina Tolman
Habitat Conservation Plan Coordinator

This meeting of the Science Committee of the Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan complies with Section 7.9.3 of the Funding and Management Agreement (FMA), an interlocal agreement made pursuant to Texas Government Code Chapter 791 by and among the Edwards Aquifer Authority (EAA), the City of New Braunfels (New Braunfels), the City of San Marcos (San Marcos), the City of San Antonio acting by and through its San Antonio Water System (SAWS), Texas State University, and the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA).