



Biological Objectives Subcommittee Charge

The Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan (EAHCP) is currently in the process of renewing U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Incidental Take Permit TE63663A-1, which expires March 31, 2028. As part of the permit renewal process, existing components of the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) will be reassessed and potentially modified. The purpose of this Biological Objectives Subcommittee is to develop recommendations for updating species biological objectives for consideration in the HCP permit renewal application.

Charge Topics:

The Subcommittee will conduct the following tasks:

- Review USFWS guidance on developing biological objectives provided in the *Habitat Conservation Planning and Incidental Take Permit Processing Handbook* (HCP handbook).
- Examine existing biological objectives and develop updated draft biological objectives adhering to the HCP handbook recommendations while incorporating best available science surrounding the current EAHCP Covered Species.
- Produce a report detailing recommendations for updating biological objectives as part of the renewal effort.

Members:

The Subcommittee is subdivided into three species topical areas to ensure adequate expert coverage on the range of species included in the EAHCP Incidental Take Permit. The three species areas include submerged aquatic vegetation/fish, salamanders, and macroinvertebrates.

The EAHCP Chief Science Officer, in consultation with the EAHCP Science Committee chairs, will develop recommendations for membership in each of these three areas. Members will consist of individuals serving on the EAHCP Science Committee and other regional experts with specific knowledge on the Covered Species.

Meeting Organization:

The Subcommittee will meet to develop biological objective recommendations between March and August 2023. All meetings will be open to the public and held in-person and virtually via Microsoft Teams.

A final report to the EAHCP permit renewal contractor, Program Manager, EAHCP Committees and the Conservation Measures Subcommittee is anticipated no later than August 15, 2023.