

FINAL REPORT

As Required by

THE ENDANGERED SPECIES PROGRAM

TEXAS

Grant No. E -38-HP

Endangered and Threatened Species Conservation

**Habitat Conservation Planning for the Development of the Edwards Aquifer
Authority Habitat Conservation Plan**

Prepared by:

Bob Hall



Robert Cook
Executive Director

Matt Wagner
Program Director, Science, Research & Diversity

Mike Berger
Division Director, Wildlife

6 February 2006

FINAL REPORT

STATE: Texas GRANT NUMBER: E-38-HP

GRANT TITLE: Habitat Conservation Planning for Development of the Edwards Aquifer Authority Habitat Conservation Plan

REPORTING PERIOD: From November 1, 2002 through December 31, 2005

OBJECTIVE(S):

- 1) To develop a HCP with measures to protect the Comal and San Marcos spring ecosystems and mitigate any incidental take of listed species that would occur as a result of low spring flows.
- 2) To complete and EIS that would include the HCP of Objective 1 as the preferred alternative.

Summary of Progress:

Please see Attachment A.

Significant Deviations:

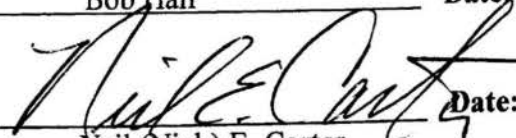
None.

Location: All, or part, of Atascosa, Bexar, Caldwell, Comal, Guadalupe, Hays, Medina and Uvalde Counties, Texas

Cost:

Financial Status Report not available at time of report submission.

Prepared by: Bob Hall Date: February 6, 2006

Approved by:  Date: February 10, 2006
Neil (Nick) E. Carter
Federal Aid Coordinator

- 1) Inclusion of the results of additional biologic modeling and evaluation studies that were completed in 2003 and 2004. A revised Draft January 2004 HCP/EIS was completed and delivered to the Authority for internal review.
- 2) Holding a meeting with the USFWS staff on April 9, 2004 to discuss status of the HCP and to describe and discuss the concept of intensive management areas that would be developed on site to support the spring ecosystem species during periods of severe drought.
- 3) Holding a meeting with the Consultants on June 8, 2004 to discuss changes and revisions to the Draft January 2004 HCP/EIS. The changes and revisions were completed to the Draft January 2004 HCP/EIS by July 2004.
- 4) Reviewing the Draft July 2004 HCP/EIS by the Authority's Research and Technology Committee and the Authority's Board during meetings held in July, August and September 2004. Several amendments by Authority Board members were incorporated into the Draft July 2004 HCP/EIS.
- 5) Submitting the Draft July 2004 HCP/EIS, as Amended, to the USFWS, TPWD, other stakeholders and the general public for comment. Four public meetings were held by the Authority to receive public comments. These meetings were held in Victoria (November 1, 2004), New Braunfels (November 8, 2004), Uvalde (November 16, 2004), and San Antonio (November 17, 2004). In addition, a Biological Advisory Team meeting was also held on November 17, 2004 to discuss and receive comment and two facilitated meeting with major stakeholders were held February 9 and February 17, 2005.
- 6) Responding to comments on the Draft July 2004 HCP/EIS, as Amended. Withdrawal limits were removed from the document and the HCP was separated from the EIS. This was done because the issue of withdrawal limits are outside the control of the Authority and are not resolved at this time. Separating the HCP from the EIS was done to facilitate the review of the HCP. The EIS will be revisited, revised and included as either an integral part of the final HCP/EIS or as a stand alone document when the issues connected with withdrawal limits are resolved.

Task #4 is completed with this report. CD's of the draft HCP reports and comments are attached.

Major Task	Estimated Completion Date	Completion Date
Complete Draft HCP/EIS for EAA Board Approval	Mar-04	Jul-04
USFWS Review of Draft HCP/EIS	Sep-04	Sep-04
Public Review of Draft HCP/EIS	Sep-04	Nov-04
Submission of Draft HCP/EIS to USFWS	Mar-05	May-05

Summary

Forces outside the control of the Authority have hampered the development of the HCP/EIS. The Authority submitted the Draft July 2004 HCP/EIS, as Amended to the USFWS and the public for comment in September 2004. In response to the comments, the Authority continues to work toward a resolution of total withdrawal amounts from the Edwards

Aquifer and Demand Management/Critical Period. In addition, the HCP was separated from the EIS and submitted to the USFWS as the Draft March 2005 HCP.

The Authority considers the HCP and EIS developed at this time and will continue to refine them until their final acceptance and the issuance of the incidental take permit by the USFWS.

Attachments

Electronic copies attached include:

- One (1) copy Draft November 2002 HCP/EIS
- One (1) copy Draft January 2004 HCP/EIS
- One (1) copy Draft July 2004 HCP/EIS
- One (1) copy Draft July 2004 HCP/EIS, as amended
- One (1) copy Comments on Draft July 2004 HCP/EIS, as amended
- One (1) copy Draft March 2005 HCP