



ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS

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**BIOLOGICAL ADVISORY TEAM (“BAT”)
TO THE
COMAL COUNTY
REGIONAL HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN (“RHCP”)
DRAFT
MEETING MINUTES**

A meeting of the BAT to the Comal County RHCP was held as follows:

WHEN: February 25, 2008

TIME: 2:30 p.m.

**WHERE: Comal County Courthouse, Commissioners Court Board Room
199 Main Plaza, New Braunfels, Texas 78130**

In Attendance:

BAT Members

- John Baccus
- Michael Barrett
- Valerie Collins
- Hal Herbelin
- Mike Quinn
- Randy Simpson
- Sandra West

Comal County

- Tom Hornseth

Consultants

- Smith|Robertson: Alan Glen
- SWCA Environmental Consultants: Steve Carothers, Kemble White, Gary Galbraith

Agency Representatives

- Bill Seawell, USFWS

*Comal County Regional Habitat Conservation Plan
Biological Advisory Team Meeting
February 25, 2008*

Others

- Alan Stahlman

1. Call to Order. Chair Mike Quinn called the meeting to order at 2:37 p.m.
2. Approve Minutes from February 4, 2008 BAT Meeting. The BAT voted unanimously to approve the minutes from the February 4, 2008 meeting.
3. Citizens Comments. No citizen's comments were received.
4. Receive Presentation on options for species coverage by the Comal County RHCP. Dr. Steve Carothers (SWCA) discussed the 21 February 2008 Memorandum to the BAT from SWCA and presented the reasoning for including the golden-cheeked warbler and black-capped vireo as "Covered Species" under the RHCP. Dr. Carothers also discussed the rare karst invertebrates and salamanders that occur in the County and suggested that they be treated as "Evaluation Species" and that the conservation measures that would be afforded to these species under the RHCP might preclude the need to list these species in the future. Evaluation Species would not be provided coverage for incidental take under the RHCP, but their status would be monitored and evaluated under the RHCP. "Evaluations Species" can be considered as "watch list" species for the RHCP. There are other rare or listed aquatic species occurring in the County and Dr. Carothers proposed that these species would be treated as "Additional Species" in the RHCP. "Additional species" include both listed and unlisted aquatic species occurring in Comal County for which coverage for incidental take is not being requested because the need for take is not anticipated, or they are being protected by other plans such as the Edwards Aquifer Recovery Implementation Plan (RIP).

Following Dr. Carothers presentation there was a general discussion among the BAT and consultants regarding the concept of having "Evaluation Species" and "Additional Species" included in the Plan. In response to a question posed by Mike Quinn, Dr. Kemble White (SWCA) briefly discussed the geology of Comal County and discussed the speciation of the Comal County karst invertebrates. There was considerable discussion regarding the value of including the karst invertebrates in the RHCP since they are not currently listed as threatened or endangered. Dr. Carothers explained that the benefit of including "Evaluation Species" in the Plan was that the conservation measured that would be provided

under the Plan may be sufficient to keep them from being listed in the future. Additionally, it was questioned why the consultants have recommended not to include the listed aquatic species as “Covered Species.” Bill Seawell (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) added that the listed aquatic species are being covered by the RIP and there is also an option for coverage using the Edwards Aquifer optional rules.

Tom Hornseth (Comal County) asked what would happen if any of the troglobites were to get listed during the life of the Plan. Dr. Carothers indicated that the terms of the RHCP would need to be amended if this were to happen.

Dr. Randy Simpson (Texas State University) suggested that the committee might consider adding Cagle’s map turtle to the list of evaluation species since it was previously a Federal candidate for listing.

5. Discuss and take appropriate action regarding options for species coverage by the Comal County RHCP. It was moved by Dr. Barrett and seconded by Dr. Simpson that the BAT recommend to the CAC, that the Comal County RHCP include the black-capped vireo and golden-cheeked warbler as “Covered Species;” and that the RHCP include the karst invertebrates petitioned by the Forest guardians, other rare karst invertebrates known from Comal County, and the Cagle’s map turtle as “Evaluation Species;” and that the listed aquatic species and petitioned aquatic species be treated in the plan as “Additional Species.” There was a brief discussion concerning the wording of the motion and making a clear distinction that “Covered Species” were the only regulatory species in the Plan, meaning that they were the only species for which coverage of “take” was being requested, and the “Evaluation Species” and “Additional Species” would be considered during land acquisition for covered species preserves.

Following the discussion the BAT voted unanimously to approve the motion.

6. Discuss and take appropriate action regarding date and agenda items for next meeting. The BAT agreed to schedule the next meeting for March 24, 2008 from 2:30-4:30 P.M. Agenda items will include discussing the amount of take for the “Covered Species” and mitigation ratios for take coverage.
7. The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 P.M.