

BIOLOGICAL ADVISORY TEAM “BAT” MEETING
Hays County Regional Habitat Conservation Plan

MINUTES

WHEN: February 28, 2008

WHERE: Texas Rivers Center, Room 107
951 Aquarena Springs Drive, San Marcos, TX 78666

Attendance:

BAT Members

- Craig Farquhar – Chair
- Terri Siegenthaler
- Lee Elliott
- Linda Laack
- Randy Gibson

HCP Consultant Team

- Loomis Austin, Inc. (LAI): Clifton Ladd, Amanda Aurora, Jean Krejca (Zara Environmental)
- Smith/Robertson: Melinda Taylor and Rebecca Hays

BAT Members Not Present:

- Garry Stephens
- Cal Newnam

1. Call to order. BAT Chair Craig Farquhar called the meeting to order at 9:15 am.
2. Approve minutes from January 8, 2008 BAT meeting. BAT members reviewed and approved the minutes from the January 8, 2008 meeting with no changes.
3. Citizens’ comments. No citizen comments were made.
4. Review options for species coverage in the Hays County RHCP. BAT reviewed January 8, 2008 draft of the “Recommendations for Species Inclusion in the Hays County Habitat Conservation Plan.” Clif Ladd and Jean Krejca presented information on a possible range extension for the San Marcos salamander (*Eurycea nana*) to include portions of north-central Hays County. BAT discussed possible alternatives for how to address the species and other federally listed aquatic species in the plan, including “no take” scenarios and limited incidental take coverage. Several comments by BAT members suggested that all federally listed aquatic species should be treated similarly under the plan. The BAT voted to table the issue and continue discussion at the next meeting.
5. Review project schedule and major milestones. Clifton Ladd presented an updated schedule of major plan milestones and decision points. The BAT identified March 28 and June 3 as possible dates for future meetings.

Approved March 28, 2008

6. Receive presentation regarding draft Hays County RHCP alternatives. Rebecca Hays presented a set of draft alternatives for the structure of the RHCP. The BAT discussed the basis for several of the “common elements” of each alternative (including land development and take projections, minimum preserve size criteria, and mitigation fees), the adequacy of preserve systems proposed for each alternative, and the preserve acquisition cost estimates. No action was taken.
7. Review progress on habitat maps and proposed habitat determination process. Clifton Ladd and Amanda Aurora presented a draft proposal including various options for determining the amount of habitat on a property during the plan participation process. The BAT discussed some of the pros and cons of map-based, on-site, and/or hybrid habitat determination approaches. No action was taken.
8. Review preserve design criteria. Clifton Ladd and Amanda Aurora presented a draft proposal with options for preserve design that incorporated concepts of core habitat, buffer zones, habitat quality, and preserve size. The BAT discussed issues of core habitat and the amount of mitigation credit generated by core and buffer habitat, issues related to the distribution of habitat in the county and the potential for much of the preserve system to include a large amount of on-habitat, and the distribution of preserve blocks across the county. No action was taken.
9. Discuss and take appropriate action on agenda items for next meeting. The BAT agreed that agenda topics for the next meeting would include discussion and possible action on how to address listed aquatic species under the plan. The BAT also agreed that the next meeting would include discussion and possible action on specific aspects of the habitat determination and preserve design processes. The BAT requested a list of priority issues related to habitat determinations and preserve design from the consultant teams to focus the discussion.
10. Adjourn. BAT Chair Craig Farquhar adjourned the meeting at 11:55 am.