

APPROVED November 18, 2008

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

MINUTES

When: September 16, 2008; 9:00 a.m.

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

Attendance:

BAT Members

- Craig Farquhar (Chair)
- Lee Elliott
- Linda Laack
- Randy Gibson
- Garry Stephens
- Terri Siegenthaler

HCP Consultant Team

- Clifton Ladd, Amanda Aurora (Loomis Partners)
- Jean Krejca (Zara Environmental)
- Melinda Taylor (Smith/Robertson)

Other Attendants:

- Henry Brooks (Hays County RHCP CAC member)

1. Call to order – BAT Chair called the meeting to order at 9:10 am.
2. Approve minutes from June 3, 2008 BAT meeting – BAT members reviewed draft minutes from the June 3 meeting. BAT approved the minutes unanimously with no changes.
3. Citizens’ comments – Henry Brooks requested the BAT review issues relating to Ashe juniper and water resources, and how protection and management of juniper-oak woodlands as habitat for the warbler might affect water resources in Hays County.
4. Review project schedule and major milestones – Clifton Ladd reviewed the project schedule and major milestones. He reported that it may still be possible to stay on schedule (as updated in February 2008), but issues related to the development of the funding plan could delay final draft submittal to the Service.
5. Review items requested by Citizens Advisory Committee – BAT members discussed how they could provide input on the issue brought up by Henry Brooks regarding Ashe juniper and water resources, and how to incorporate any potential recommendations into the RHCP and the EIS. BAT agreed to review the issue and provide comments on the Second Draft RHCP that would reflect their opinions and recommendations. Loomis agreed to assist the BAT by compiling studies and other relevant documents on the topic

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from BAT members (and prepare brief summaries of such work, if applicable) and provide the compiled document list to the BAT.

6. Review progress on habitat mapping – Clifton Ladd reported on updates to the Loomis warbler habitat model and the minutes of a July workshop sponsored by the USFWS regarding warbler population estimates and habitat mapping. Mr. Ladd reported that the recommendation from the workshop was to avoid using habitat models to estimate population sizes at this time. Mr. Ladd also reported on the preliminary habitat modeling work by Dr. Sahotra Sarkar and others from the University of Texas at Austin and asked BAT members to review the studies and provide comment on the preliminary results.
7. Review comments and responses on Preliminary Draft Hays County RHCP, and review second draft Hays County RHCP – Melinda Taylor provided a summary of the comments received on the May 2008 Preliminary Draft RHCP and how those comments were addressed in the September 2008 Second Draft RHCP. Clifton Ladd and Ms. Taylor identified some potential issues that could result in additional changes to RHCP in the next draft of the RHCP, specifically related to the funding plan and policy decisions to close funding gaps in the plan and potential differences between the draft Comal County RHCP and the Hays County RHCP, in addition to any issues brought forth by the CAC and BAT during review of the Second Draft RHCP. BAT members agreed to provide comments on the Second Draft RHCP by September 30th.
8. Discuss and take appropriate action on agenda items for next meeting – BAT members agreed to schedule the next meeting for November 18, 2008. Possible agenda items for the November meeting would be discussion of the next draft of the RHCP and discussion of the preliminary draft EIS.
9. Adjourn – BAT Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:15 am.