

Legislation Text

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Receive report from EAA staff regarding EAA's 2018 Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan (EAHCP) Annual Work Plan.

STAFF RECOMMENDED MOTION:

None. This item is for informational purposes only.

SUMMARY:

The purpose of this agenda item is for the Aquifer Management Planning Committee to receive a presentation from EAA staff regarding EAA's 2018 Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan (EAHCP) Annual Work Plan, recently submitted by the EAA.

In accordance with the HCP Funding and Management Agreement (FMA), all parties to the EAHCP are required to submit work plans and budgets for each of the conservation activities for which it is assigned by the EAHCP. All work plans are due to the HCP Program Manager on April 15. Work plans are then submitted to the Implementing Committee in May and approval is expected at the June 15th Implementing Committee meeting. The EAHCP Program Manager will submit the final approved work plan budgets to the EAA General Manager for consideration in the development of the 2018 HCP budget.

The primary purpose of the work plan development process is to serve as the initial planning tool for the upcoming year's budget and implementation, and therefore, contain the specific detail not found in the Funding Applications. Ultimately, the work plans become the basis for competitive procurement processes used by the Parties to secure contractors.

The EAA is responsible for ten work plans in 2018, which are summarized below. The draft work plans are also attached to this summary.

Program Administration

The Program Administration work plan will outline the activities and budget for EAHCP staff for 2018, including facilitation and support for all EAHCP Committees and Work Groups, the Science Review Panel, adaptive management, permitting, annual reporting, and other assigned duties.

Biological Monitoring

The Biological Monitoring work plan will include all work incorporated into the program as identified in the EAHCP and conducted historically by the EAA. Specifically, this work plan will include the Biological Monitoring of both Spring systems, and Critical Period Monitoring.

Applied Research

The Applied Research work plan will contain descriptions of research projects whose total cumulative budget will not exceed \$425,000. The Science Committee is involved in the development of the projects and will review the final experimental design and methodology of the research projects.

Ecological Modeling

The Ecological Model will be completed in April 2017. The “Bottom-Up” program model run was completed as part of this project. No Contractor deliverables or expenditures are expected in 2018. The completed Model is intended to assist in the Adaptive Management process of Phase II.

Voluntary Irrigation Suspension Program Option (VISPO)

The VISPO work plan details staff activities for 2018 to administer the 40,921 acre-feet enrolled through irrigation forbearance agreements.

Regional Water Conservation Program (RWCP)

With the execution and implementation of the contract with SAWS in 2016, the RWCP will have effectively met its conservation goal by 2020. The Regional Water Monitoring Committee submitted a letter to the Implementing Committee communicating the finalization of the RWCP in the Fall of 2016.

With the payment of \$950 per acre-foot of water conserved that has been used as a standard for other RWCP participants, the contract will cost \$18,631,400 while sharing the remaining 9,800 acre-feet into the Groundwater Trust necessary to complete the 10,000-acre-foot goal.

As part of this contract, SAWS is obligated to transfer to the EAA groundwater trust half of the water saved under this program. SAWS will provide a total of three summary reports capturing and quantifying yearly milestones.

Refugia

The Refugia work plan will outline the design and construction of additional infrastructure to support Refugia operations, establish the level of Refugium efforts, and identify research to be conducted to ensure the viability of the species in the refugia.

Water Quality Monitoring

The Water Quality Monitoring work plan describes the monitoring program created in 2014. SWCA, Inc. was contracted to conduct and implement the water quality monitoring program while EAA staff provide program oversight and technical assistance to the contractor and manage the real-time water quality monitoring equipment in both springs systems.

Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR)

The ASR contract between EAA and SAWS will continue to be implemented. EAA will become the primary leasing agent for ASR leases and will continue providing SAWS with notices of availability of HCP groundwater as these rights are acquired. In 2018, staff will continue to implement strategies, to encourage greater participation in the leasing/forebearance program.

Stage V Critical Period Management (CPM)

The CPM workplan will cover activities associated with the implementation of Stage V reductions of 44% to municipal, industrial and irrigation permit holders in both pools of the Edwards Aquifer who are authorized to withdraw more than 3 acre-feet per year.

M/WBE PARTICIPATION:

This agenda item does not involve the procurement of goods or services by the EAA and, therefore, this section is not applicable.

STRATEGIC PLAN REFERENCE:

This agenda item supports the EAA's policy direction as set forth in the EAA 2016-20 Strategic Plan: Goal A. Sustain Federally Protected Aquifer-Dependent Species.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None at this time. Although staff will seek the board's authorization to submit work plans to the Implementing Committee, the fiscal impact of these plans will be known when the board ultimately approves the contracts and 2018 Funding Applications associated with the work plans.