



FIRST DRAFT SEP-HCP
overview of major components

PRESENTATION TO THE
SEP-HCP Citizens Advisory Committee

APRIL 11, 2011

Amanda Aurora, Loomis Partners, Inc.

SEP-HCP History

- January 2010
 - CAC and BAT held first meetings
- February 2010
 - Committee recommendations for Plan Area
- June/July 2010
 - Committee recommendations for Covered Species, Covered Activities, and Plan Duration
- September 2010
 - CAC recommendations for overall Plan goals and objectives
- December 2010
 - CAC began discussions on balancing Plan elements and costs
- April 2011
 - First Draft SEP-HCP

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Next Steps

1. Review and comment on First Draft by County and City staff, committees, agencies, and public
 - Comment period through June 1, 2011
2. County will address comments and make appropriate revisions to the First Draft
3. County will seek recommendations from committees for using revised (Second) draft as basis for permit application to Service
 - Application currently scheduled for September 2011
4. Public will have opportunities for post-application, formal review and comment on HCP and EIS documents
5. County will work with Service to finalize HCP and EIS documents and complete permit processing
 - Permit issuance currently anticipated by September 2012

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Major SEP-HCP Components

1. Plan Administration and Plan Area
2. Covered Species
3. Covered Activities and Participation Process
4. Incidental Take Request and Species Impacts
5. GCW and BCV Conservation Program
6. Karst Conservation Program
7. Adaptive Preserve Management and Monitoring
8. Funding Plan

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Plan Administration

- Permit Holder
 - Bexar County only
- Plan Administrator
 - Bexar County will be ultimately responsible for Plan implementation
 - Bexar County may delegate administrative tasks to other entities
- SEP-HCP “Partners”
 - Other jurisdictions may elect to become formal SEP-HCP Partners and share in take authorization and Plan implementation. Would require an individually negotiated interlocal agreement with Bexar County.
 - For example, City of San Antonio is currently a SEP-HCP Partner to help fund Plan development.

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Plan Area

- **Plan Area** – the entire operating region of the Plan
 - 7 counties: Bexar, Medina, Bandera, Kerr, Kendall, Blanco, and Comal counties
 - Conservation actions may occur anywhere within the Plan Area
- **Permit Area** – the area where the permit’s incidental take authorization may be used
 - 6 counties; excludes Comal County since they are working on their own plan
- **Participation Area** – places administrative limits on where participation will be allowed
 - Initially includes: Bexar County and adjacent “high growth” SEP-HCP sectors outside of Comal County
 - May be amended later to include the jurisdictions of any future voluntary SEP-HCP Partners

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Covered Species

- Species Covered for Incidental Take
 - Golden-cheeked warbler (GCW)
 - Black-capped vireo (BCV)
 - 9 Listed Karst Invertebrates
 - including all “Category 1” and “Category 2” karst species

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Covered Activities

- Permit will allow Plan to cover incidental take associated with any otherwise lawful activity that causes the loss or degradation of habitat for a Covered Species.
- Plan establishes additional administrative limits on participation
 - General Participation Area restrictions (i.e., Partners must first “opt-in”)
 - Specific restrictions for karst participation based on the level of conservation achieved

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GCW and BCV Participation Process

- All participation is voluntary
- Participants identify the area for which they want coverage (“Project Area”)
- Participants submit an application to Administrator for review
 - Applicant and Project Area information
 - GCW and BCV habitat assessment

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GCW and BCV Mitigation Ratios

- On-site Habitat Impacts
 - Applies to all identified habitat within the Project Area boundary
 - Mitigated at 2:1 for GCW and 1:1 for BCV
- Off-site Habitat Impacts
 - Applies to all identified habitat up to 300 feet outside of a Project Area boundary
 - Mitigated at 0.5 : 1 for both species
- Initial Conservation Credit Fees
 - \$5,000 per credit

For example, each acre of GCW habitat within a Project Area is mitigated by the purchase of 2 GCW conservation credits (\$10,000 per acre of habitat impact) and each acre of GCW habitat adjacent to a Project Area is mitigated by the purchase of ½ conservation credit (\$2,500 per acre of habitat impact).

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GCW and BCV Special Conditions

- Only applies to SEP-HCP participants and enrolled Project Areas
- Seasonal clearing restrictions
 - No clearing GCW or BCV habitat during the species' breeding seasons (generally March 1 through August 31)
- Oak wilt prevention
 - Participants must follow precautions for preventing spread of oak wilt, including painting all cuts or wounds on oak trees

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Karst Participation Process

- All participation is voluntary and participants identify the area for which they want coverage ("Project Area")
- Submit application to Administrator for review
 - Applicant and Project Area information
 - Karst Biological Information
 - Mapped Karst Zones 1 through 4
 - Service designated Critical Habitat Units
 - Occupied Cave Zones for any other identified species-occupied caves within or adjacent to a Project Area
 - Occupied Cave Zones extend 345 feet from the footprint of a species-occupied cave

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Karst Conservation Levels

- Activities may be eligible for karst coverage depending on the level of conservation achieved in each Karst Fauna Region (KFR)
- Conservation Levels are based on the downlisting criteria specified in the Draft Karst Recovery Plan
 - Requires 3 to 6 high or medium quality cave preserves for each species in each KFR where it occurs.
- Conservation levels are evaluated independently for each species in each KFR
- Past and future conservation actions by other entities may contribute to a karst species' conservation level.

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Karst Conservation Levels

- Conservation Level 1
 - Draft downlisting criteria have not yet been achieved.
 - SEP-HCP is contributing to the management of unprotected caves
 - SEP-HCP is actively seeking to establish new karst preserves
- Conservation Level 2
 - 1x of the draft downlisting criteria have been achieved
 - SEP-HCP manages and monitors all acquired karst preserves
 - SEP-HCP is actively seeking to establish new karst preserves
- Conservation Level 3
 - 2x of the draft downlisting criteria have been achieved
 - SEP-HCP manages and monitors all acquired karst preserves

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Activities Eligible for Karst Coverage

Location of Activity	Conservation Level		
	1 (downlisting criteria not achieved)	2 (1x downlisting criteria achieved)	3 (2x downlisting criteria achieved)
Critical Habitat	Not Covered	Not Covered	Available
Occupied Cave Zone	Not Covered unless 1 high quality or 2 medium quality karst preserves are accepted in lieu of participation fees for each affected cave	Available	Available
Karst Zones 1 and 2 ¹	Available with special conditions for void surveys and additional Service consultation for voids occupied by Category 2 karst species	Available with special conditions for void surveys until Conservation Level 2 is achieved for all species in a KFR	
Karst Zones 3 and 4 ¹	Available	Available	Available

¹ Applies only to areas outside of Critical Habitat Units and Occupied Cave Zones.

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Karst Participation Fees

Fee Zone	Applicability	Initial Amount
Karst Zone 3 and 4	Portions of a Project Area over Karst Zones 3 or 4, but outside of an Occupied Cave Zone or Critical Habitat Unit.	\$250 per acre
Karst Zone 1 and 2	Portions of a Project Area over Karst Zones 1 or 2, but outside of an Occupied Cave Zone or Critical Habitat Unit.	\$500 per acre
Occupied Cave Zone "B"	Portions of a Project Area that are between 150 feet and 345 feet of a species-occupied cave. Assessed for any physical incursion within this zone. Zone "B" fee is waived if Zone "A" fees are paid for a feature.	\$40,000 per cave
Occupied Cave Zone "A"	Portions of a Project Area that are within 150 feet of a species-occupied cave. Assessed for any physical incursion within this zone.	\$400,000 per cave

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Karst Special Conditions

- Voids discovered accidentally during construction
 - Participants must **stop construction** activities within 345 feet of the feature and notify SEP-HCP Administrator
 - Assess feature for suitable karst habitat and conduct an abbreviated presence/absence survey
 - If feature contains very rare "Category 2" karst species, then additional consultation with Service is required prior to continuation of work
 - Void investigations may be discontinued once Conservation Level 2 has been achieved for all species known to occur in a KFR
- Best practices to minimize impacts to karst habitats
 - Fencing and erosion controls around Occupied Cave Zones or Critical Habitat
 - Encourage minimal clearing and revegetation with native plants

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Requested Incidental Take

- GCW *(excluding Comal County and Camp Bullis)*
 - Available Habitat = 543,000 ac
 - Projected 30-yr Habitat Loss = 28,000 ac
 - Requested Level of Take = 12,000 ac
 - approx. 50% of loss in Bexar County and 33% of loss in other counties
- BCV *(excluding Comal County and Camp Bullis)*
 - Available Habitat = 174,000 ac
 - Projected 30-yr Habitat Loss = 8,900 ac
 - Requested Level of Take = 4,000 ac
 - approx. 50% of loss in Bexar County and 33% of loss in other counties

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Requested Incidental Take

- Karst Invertebrates *(excluding Camp Bullis)*
 - Available Karst Habitat
 - Karst Zones 1-4 = 317,000 ac
 - Estimated 654 species-occupied caves
 - Projected Habitat Loss
 - Karst Zones 1-4 = 109,000 ac
 - Estimated 249 species-occupied caves
 - Requested Incidental Take
 - 16,500 ac over Karst Zone 1 – 4
 - Approx. 15% of estimated losses
 - Estimated 37 species-occupied caves

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GCW and BCV Preserves

- At full implementation, Plan would acquire
 - 30,000 ac of GCW preserves
 - 5,000 ac of BCV preserves
- Preserve Goals/Objectives
 - Create a large focal preserve in each Plan Area County, ideally 5,000 acres for GCW or 2,000 acres for BCV
 - Protect 5,000 acres of GCW habitat within Bexar County or within 5 miles of Bexar County
 - Protect lands adjacent to existing protected parks and preserves

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GCW / BCV Preserve Standards

- Minimum 500 contiguous acres (single tract or cluster of adjacent tracts)
- Legal protection in perpetuity with obligations for management
- Demonstrated occupancy by GCW and/or BCV, as appropriate
- Located anywhere within 7-county Plan Area
- Secondary uses of preserve system must be compatible with conservation of GCW and/or BCV and must be approved by Service in advance
- Generally, each acre of protected habitat creates 1 conservation credit for that species. Subject to Service approval.

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Other GCW / BCV Conservation Measures

- Provide limited access to SEP-HCP preserves for research on GCW and/or BCV
- Public Outreach and Education
 - Distribute species and habitat information
 - Promote SEP-HCP participation
 - Encourage voluntary landowner partnerships for conservation

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Karst Preserve Standards

- At full implementation, Plan would acquire approximately 2,400 acres of karst preserves
- Preserve Size and Quality
 - High Quality Preserves -- typically at least 90 acres
 - Medium Quality Preserves -- typically at least 40 acres
 - Low Quality Preserves -- typically includes the area within 500 feet of cave footprint
- Legal protections in perpetuity with obligation for management
- Demonstrated occupancy by one or more of the listed karst invertebrates
- Secondary uses of preserve system must be compatible with conservation of karst species and must be approved by Service in advance

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Other Karst Conservation Measures

- Karst Studies
 - Search existing protected lands and other accessible properties for new species-occupied caves
 - Conduct detailed biodiversity studies of currently known localities to detect additional species
- Management of Unprotected Caves
 - Work with willing landowners with known species-occupied caves (or landowners adjacent to known caves) to provide management of caves not in the SEP-HCP preserve system
- Public Outreach and Education

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Adaptive Preserve Management and Monitoring

- SEP-HCP Administrator is responsible for managing and monitoring preserves
- Adaptive management process
 - tailors management to the needs of individual preserves over time
- 10-year cyclical process of:
 - **Baseline Assessments** – review site conditions and threats
 - **Preserve Management Planning** – identify management needs and prioritize implementation
 - **Implementing Management Actions** – conduct needed management actions based on priorities and annually review results and progress
 - **System-wide Preserve Monitoring** – specifically assess habitat conditions and species trends

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General Funding Plan Assumptions

- Full amount of take authorization is used by voluntary Plan participants
- All biological goals and objectives are achieved, particularly with respect to sizing and distribution of preserves
- Preserve management and monitoring costs based on a typical set of activities
- Preserve acquisitions and Plan participation occurs at constant rate over 30 years
- Estimated costs and revenues inflate annually by 3 percent

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Preserve Acquisition Assumptions

	GCW	BCV	Karst	Total
Preserve Lands (acres)				
Rural Preserves	25,000	5,000	-	30,000
Suburban Preserves	5,000	-	1,200	6,200
Urban Preserves	-	-	1,200	1,200
Total	30,000	5,000	2,400	37,400
Land Prices (per acre)				
	Fee Simple Purchase		Conservation Easement (33% of Fee Simple Price)	
Rural Preserves	\$4,500		\$1,500	
Suburban Preserves	\$25,000		\$8,300	
Urban Preserves	\$45,000		\$14,900	
Distribution of Land vs Easement Purchases				
Rural Preserves	10% Land : 90% Easement			
Suburban Preserves	60% Land : 40% Easement			
Urban Preserves	90% Land : 10% Easement			
Real Estate Trans. Fees	3% of Land Purchase Price (based on fee simple costs)			

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SEP-HCP Funding Plan

- Includes sufficient funds to establish a **non-wasting endowment** to fund preserve management and monitoring after the Plan has expired (\$157 million by Year 30)
- Participation fees cover costs of acquiring GCW and BCV preserves
- Public revenues cover costs of acquiring karst preserves, Plan administration, preserve management and monitoring, other conservation measures, and contingencies/endowment

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TO LEARN MORE...

**A Complete Version of the
FIRST DRAFT SEP-HCP
is Available for Review at**
www.sephcp.com/documents

Written comments on the First Draft SEP-HCP will be accepted until **JUNE 1, 2011**.

Comments may be submitted by email to:
info@sephcp.com
or by mailing comments to:
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