

Section 6 (Texas Non-traditional) Report Review

Attachment to letter dated JAN 05 2005

Project Title: Houston Toad Habitat Conservation Plan

Nontraditional Program (check one):

Final or Interim Report? Final

☐ Recovery Land Acquisition

☐ HCP Land Acquisition

☒ HCP Planning Assistance

☐ Safe Harbors / CCAAs

Job #: WER86

Grant #: E-26

Reviewer Station: Austin ESFO

Lead station was contacted and concurs with the following comments:

☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ Not applicable (reviewer is from lead station)

Interim Report (check one):

Final Report (check one):

☐ is acceptable as is

☒ is acceptable as is

☐ is acceptable as is, but comments below
need to be addressed in the next report

☐ is acceptable, but needs minor revision
(see comments below)

☐ needs revision (see comments below)

☐ needs major revision (see comments below)

Comments:

FINAL REPORT

As Required by

THE ENDANGERED SPECIES PROGRAM

TEXAS

Grant No. E – 26

Endangered and Threatened Species Conservation

State Project WER: 86

Houston Toad Habitat Conservation Plan

Prepared by:

Clara Beckett

Bastrop County Commissioner, Pct. 2



Robert Cook
Executive Director

Ronnie George
Program Director, Wildlife Diversity

Mike Berger
Division Director, Wildlife

November 2004

PERFORMANCE REPORT

STATE: Texas

GRANT NUMBER: E-26

GRANT TITLE: Houston Toad Habitat Conservation Plan

REPORTING PERIOD: 01 September 2003 through 31 August 2004

OBJECTIVE:

To complete and implement a regional Habitat Conservation Plan for the Houston toad, in cooperation with the Bastrop County, Texas Agricultural Extension Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other local conservation partners.

Proposed Timeline:

1. Hire a project coordinator to provide oversight and coordination of the HCP planning effort. (Year 1)
2. The project coordinator and members of the citizen's workgroup will meet with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service officials to discuss the current draft HCP and obtain recommendations from Service staff. (Year 1)
3. The project coordinator will revise and complete the habitat conservation plan and begin required Section 10A consultation. HCP specialists and consultants will be hired as needed to assist the project coordinator and community workgroup in completing the HCP. (Year 1)
4. Partners will coordinate with the USFWS in developing a draft HCP. (Year 1)
5. Submit HCP to USFWS for consideration. (Year 1)
6. Hire a biologist to administer and supervise implementation of the HCP. (Years 1 and 2)
7. Begin implementation of HCP plan. (Years 1 and 2)
8. Submit final report on project. (Year 2)

ACCOMPLISHMENTS (See CD's for Habitat Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment Documents):

2001-2002

The County Hired a Project Coordinator to continue the Houston Toad Project, initiated in July of 2000. The Project Coordinator was tasked with facilitating the Community Stakeholders Workgroup appointed by the County Judge, develop a website, administer grant and procure services as necessary. **(Task 1 & 2 completed)**

The County hired an HCP Consultant, Loomis Austin and a NEPA specialist; PBS&J to further developed a Regional HCP and conduct an environmental review pursuant to NEPA. The Workgroup continued to meet with the Service, Project Coordinator and consultants. **(Task 3 begun)**

The County hired a biologist, Dr. Michael Forstner with Texas State University to consult on the biological sections of the HCP. **(Task 3 continued)** The County was awarded a grant by the EPA, to conduct surveys in early 2003 in order to gather needed

data/research relative to the development of the HCP. (Additional tasks identified as necessary but not required under the grant)

2002-2003

A *Draft* HCP & NEPA document where developed. (Task 4 in progress)

The *Draft* HCP & EA where submitted to the Bastrop County Commissioners Court in July 2003; however, legal review was still pending. Attorney Robert Kleeman was hired. 14 issues where identified by the Stakeholder Workgroup as "unresolved" and the County was asked to address these issues prior to submitting the HCP to the USF&WS. (Task 4 in progress and additional necessary tasks identified)

Texas Parks & Wildlife requested a grant extension in 2003 and an Interim Report was submitted.

2003-2004

The Draft HCP and EA were reviewed by legal counsel and the following tasks where identified and completed:

1. The inclusion of the 46-Subdivision HCP into the Lost Pines HCP and EA was deemed necessary (Significant additional tasks identified)
2. Inconsistencies discovered and rectified between the Agricultural, Wildlife and Forestry guidelines (Additional tasks)
3. The 14 "unresolved" issues where addressed as deemed necessary by legal counsel (Additional tasks)

Dr. Michael Forstner, Loomis Austin, Robert Kleeman, Bastrop County Commissioners Clara Becket & Lee Diddy, contributed to the completion of tasks. Stakeholder Workgroup members who served on Guideline development committees were also asked to attend meetings to address inconsistencies.

The Bastrop County Commissioners Court unanimously approved the HCP and EA and a Section 10 Permit application was signed by the County Judge.
(Tasks 3, 4 & 5 Completed)

SIGNIFICANT DEVIATIONS;

Proposed Timeline items 6 & 7 included in the Approach Section of the Project Statement have not been completed within the timeframe or funding available under this grant, due to the additional costs associated with Task 4 and the identification of additional tasks during the HCP development. The development of a complete HCP which included the 46-subdivision HCP took considerable work during the third year of the project and was not an identified task in the Scope of Work or Project timeline; however, both the USF&WS and the County agreed that the overall comprehensiveness and effectiveness of the HCP would be greatly enhanced. The overall objective of submitting a Section 10 Permit Application, HCP and EA has been completed. The HCP and EA where unanimously approved by the Bastrop County Commissioners Court and the Application was signed by the County Judge and hand delivered to Bob Pine of the

USF&WS.

Location: Bastrop County, Texas

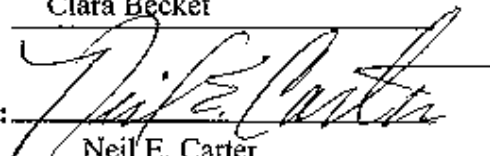
Cost:

Federal -- \$300,000

Prepared by: Clara Becket

Date: November 19, 2004

Approved by:


Neil E. Carter
Federal Aid Coordinator

Date: November 22, 2004