



WELCOME

to the

Southern Edwards Plateau Habitat Conservation Plan Environmental Impact Statement Scoping Meetings

June 6, 2011

Bandera, TX

June 7, 2011

Boerne, TX

June 9, 2011

Blanco, TX

June 13, 2011

Kerrville, TX

June 14, 2011

Helotes, TX

Why are we here tonight?

- To discuss the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process
- Explain the proposed action (Incidental Take Permit-Habitat Conservation Plan)

Request your input on:

- Issues that should be considered in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
- Alternatives that should be considered
- Any other items you would like us to be aware of as the NEPA process moves forward



National Environmental Policy Act Requires an Environmental Impact Statement

“...major federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment...”

What is the Federal Action?

- Incidental Take Permit (ITP) from USFWS

An ITP requires a Habitat Conservation Plan



USFWS Section 10a Permit Issuance Criteria

1. The taking will be incidental
2. Impacts are minimized and mitigated
3. Adequate funding is in place
4. Taking will not reduce the likelihood of survival and recovery
5. USFWS may include other measures, as necessary (such as monitoring).
6. Applicant must ensure that the plan will be implemented



What roles do the USFWS and the permit applicant play in the NEPA process?

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Lead Agency/Decision Maker/Issues Permit)
- Bexar County (Permit Applicant)

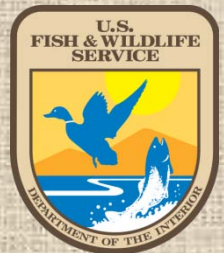


What is the Endangered Species Act?

- Endangered Species Act of 1973 (as amended)
 - Protects Species Listed as “Threatened” or “Endangered”
 - Prohibits “take” of listed species without a permit.
 - Violations are punishable with fines and imprisonment

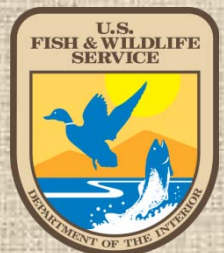


Similar to the driving within the speed limit, if you choose to drive faster there are consequences.

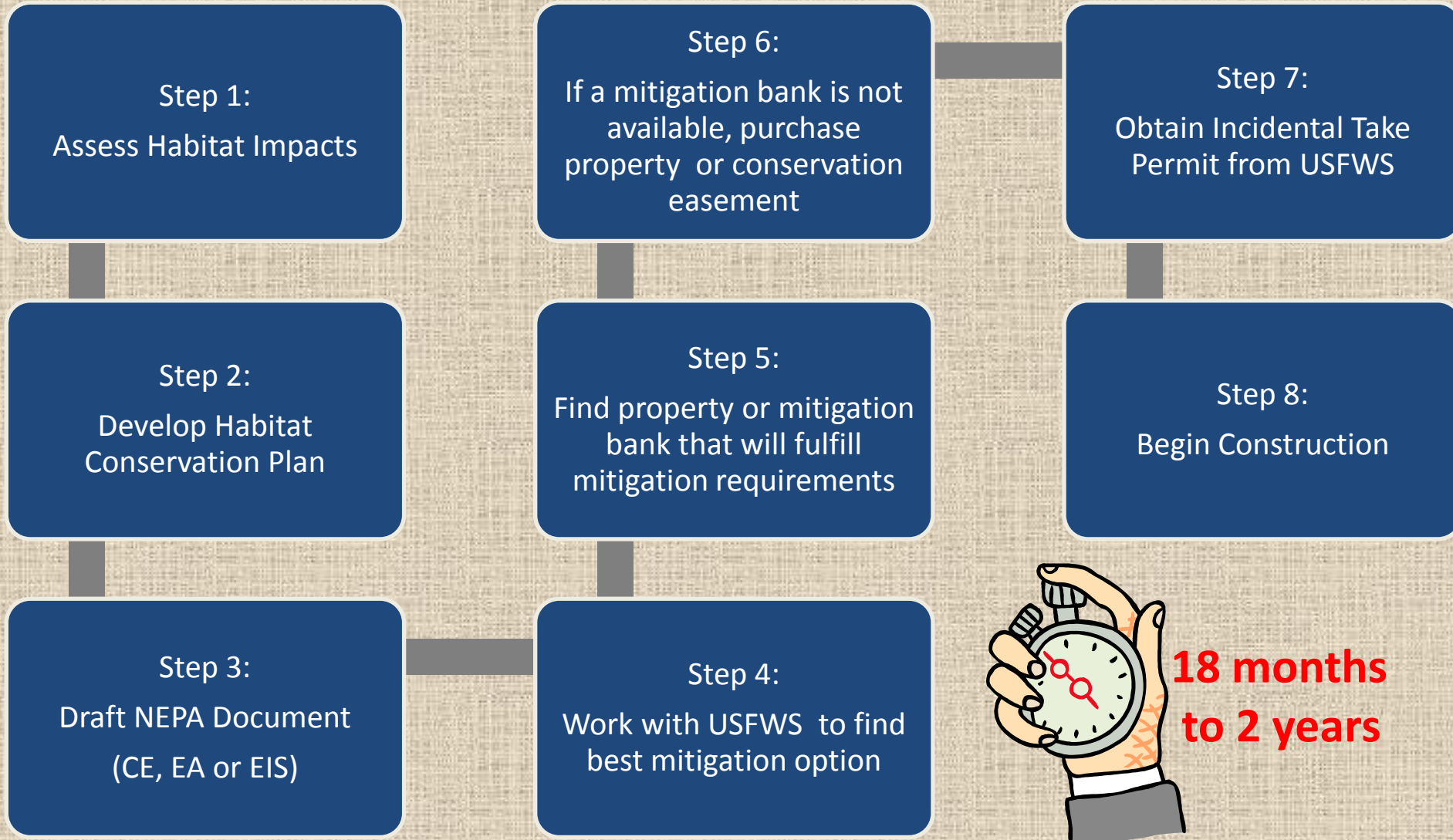


“Take” means to harass, harm, pursue,
hunt.....

- The ESA allows “incidental take” of an endangered species **with a permit** from the USFWS
- “Incidental take” is incidental to carrying out otherwise lawful activities, such as an impact resulting from the construction of a roadway.
- The permit application must be accompanied by a **Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)**

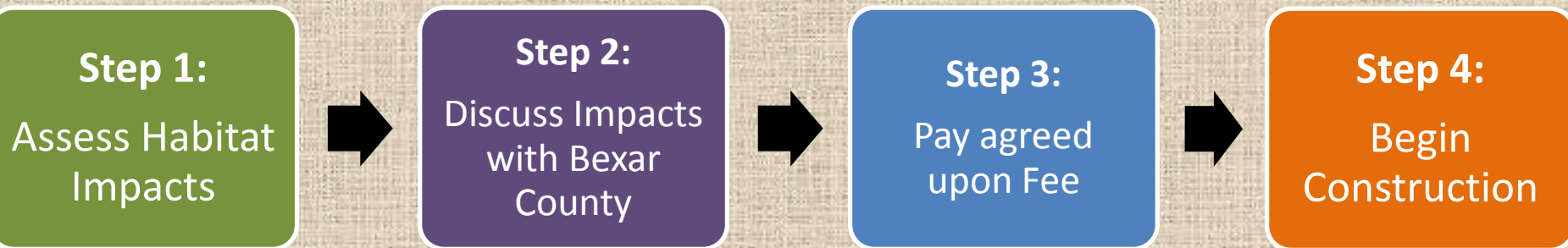


USFWS Permitting Process without a Regional Habitat Conservation Plan



USFWS Permitting Process with a Regional Habitat Conservation Plan

- Simplified, locally managed and voluntary option to comply with the Endangered Species Act
- Permits incidental take of endangered species habitat



Saves Time & Money



1 month

HCP Covered Activity Examples

- Public or private land development;
- Homes, residential subdivisions, certain farm and ranch improvements;
- Local government offices and park infrastructure;
- Roads, bridges, and other transportation infrastructure;
- Utility infrastructure (pipelines, oil electric transmission lines, water lines, sewerage, etc.);
- Schools, hospitals, prisons, and community service projects;
- Any RHCP activities that could temporarily result in incidental take; and,
- Quarries, gravel mining, etc.



Elements of an HCP

- Assessment of potential impacts to listed species
- Identify measures to monitor, minimize, and mitigate impacts and funding for implementation
- Identify alternative actions to the taking of listed species, including habitat loss

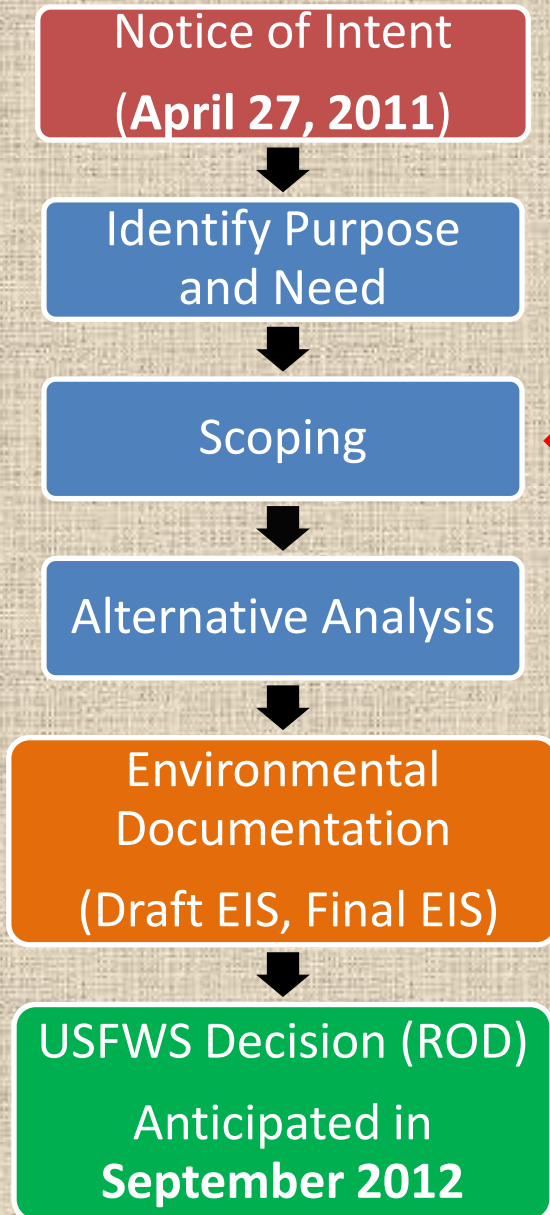


What is the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969?

“...it is the continuing policy of the Federal Government...to create and maintain conditions under which man and nature can exist in productive harmony (for) future generations of Americans.”



NEPA Process



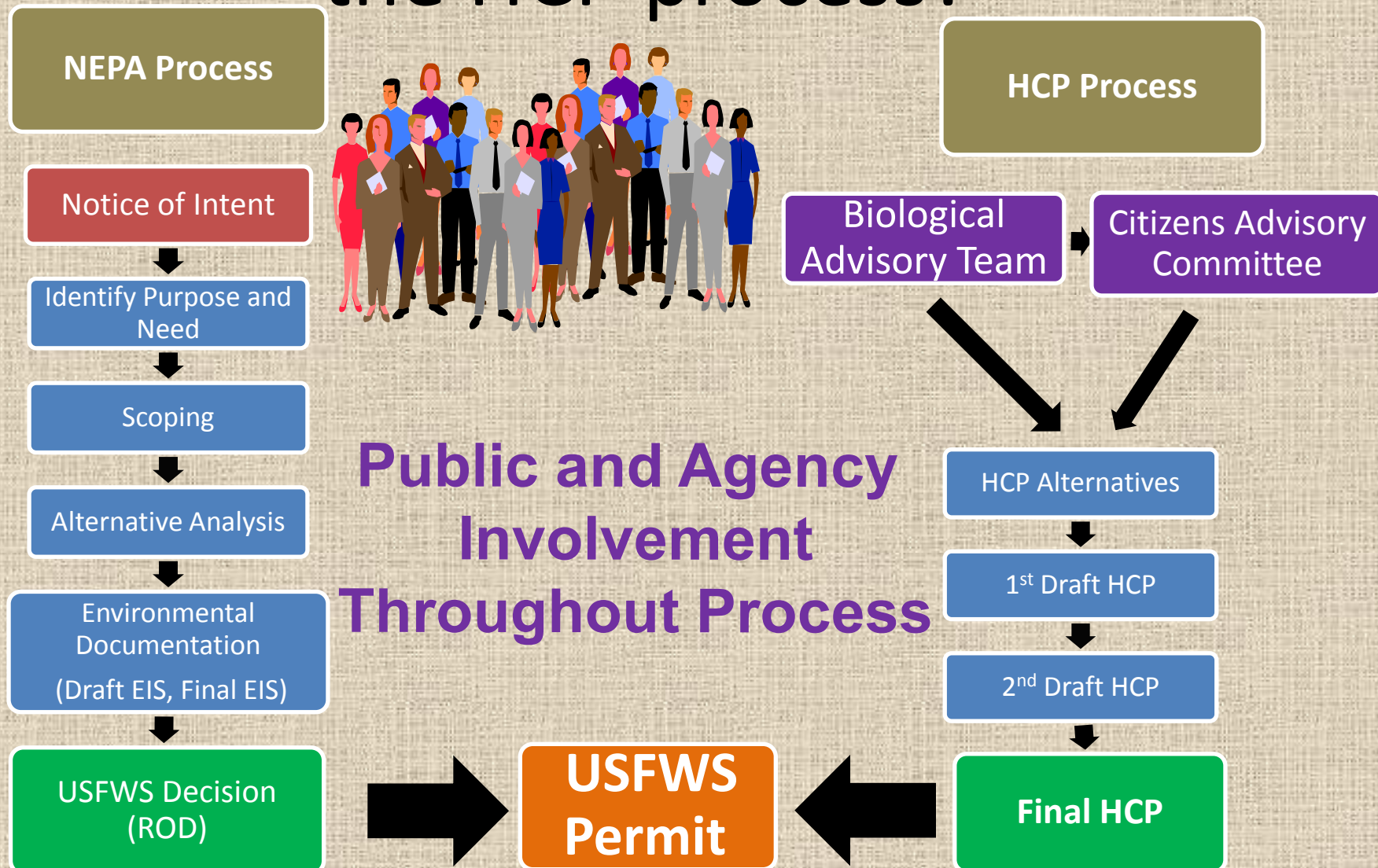
We are Here

What is scoping?

-Identifying issues and different options through public and agency involvement



How is the NEPA process related to the HCP process?



What items make up an alternative for the HCP?

Covered Species

Plan Area

Incidental Take Levels Requested

Mitigation Measures

Funding



Covered Species

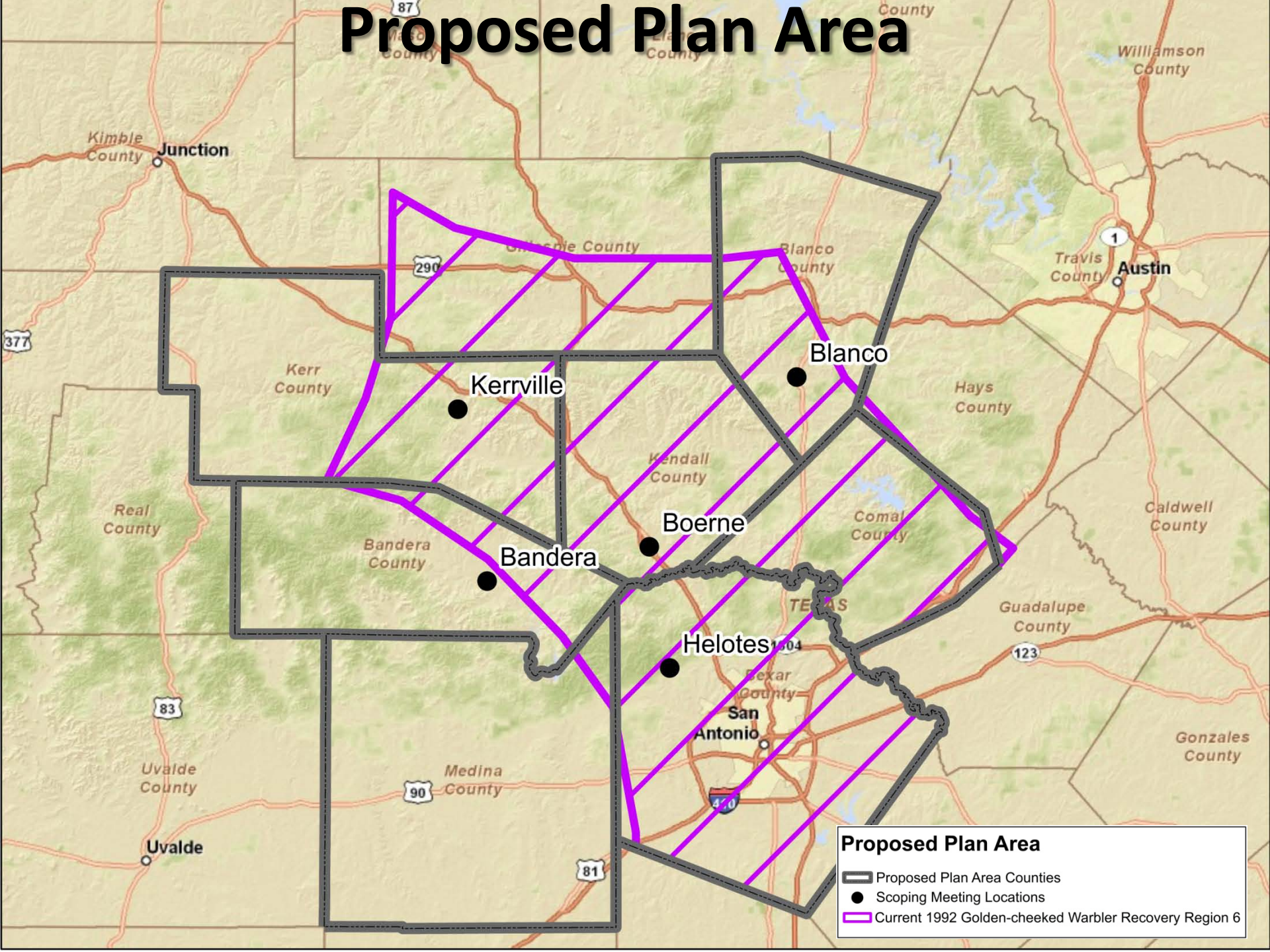
Which animals should be covered by
this plan?



Golden-cheeked Warbler
Black-capped Vireo
Karst Species

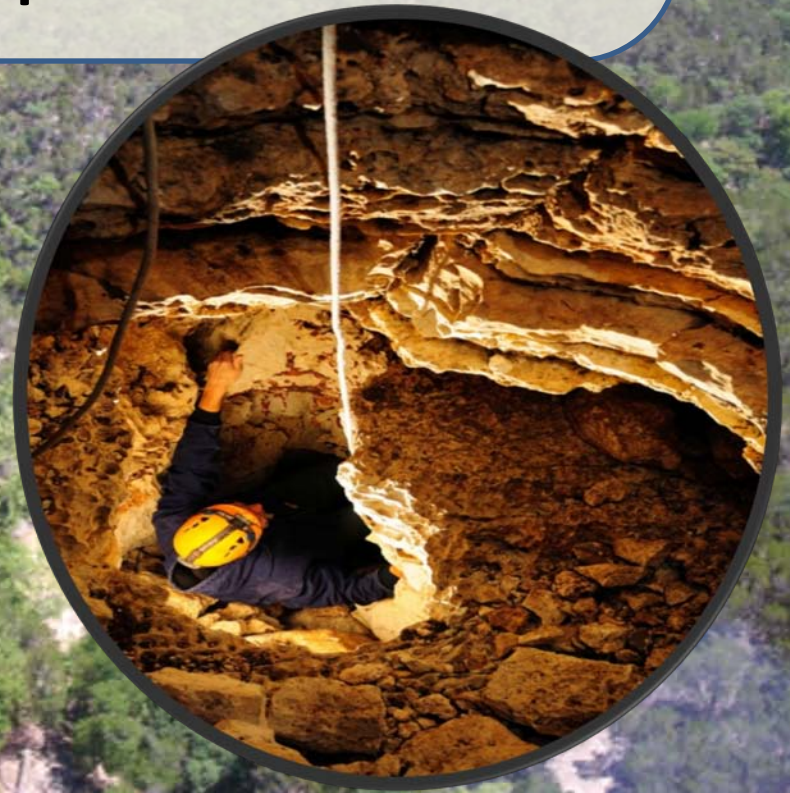


Proposed Plan Area



Incidental Take Level Requested

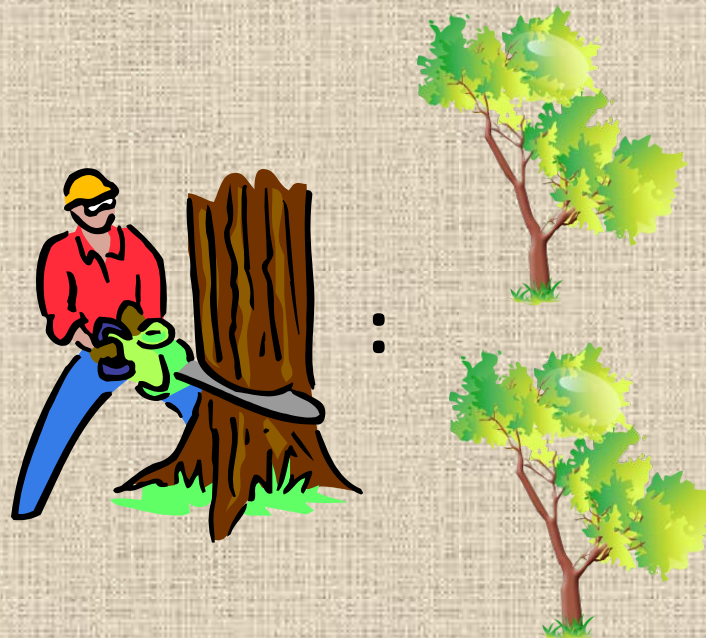
How much habitat loss or degradation should be addressed under this plan?



Mitigation Measures

What should be considered to off-set habitat loss or degradation?

- Mitigation Ratios (Example - 1 acre of habitat impact/2 acres of protected habitat, or 1:2)
- Preserve Size
- Preserve Distribution

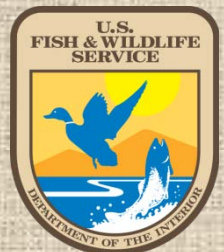


Funding

What are the options?

Participation Fees

Local Funding (Non-Federal)



What's Next in the NEPA process?

- Identification of alternatives
- Preparation of the Draft EIS
- Public and Agency comments on Draft EIS
- Public Hearing
- Preparation of the Final EIS
- USFWS Record of Decision



Your comments are very important to the NEPA process. Please let us know your thoughts, concerns and suggestions about:

- Issues that should be considered in the EIS
- Alternatives that should be considered
- Any other items you would like us to be aware of as the NEPA process moves forward



First Draft Southern Edwards Plateau HCP Available at www.SEPHCP.com



How to Submit Comments

At the Meeting:

Fill out a comment card and drop in the comment box or post it on the wall

Give your comments verbally to the Court Reporter

After the Meeting (post-dated Tuesday, July 26, 2011):

Submit comments by fax to (512) 490-0974

E-mail to fw2_aues_consult@fws.gov

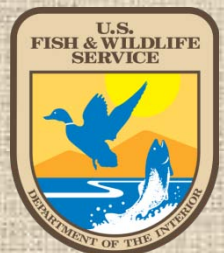
Mail written comments (post-dated Tuesday, July 26, 2011)
to:

Field Supervisor

Austin Ecological Services Field Office

10711 Burnet Road, Suite 200

Austin, TX 78758-4460



Please Post Any Questions to the
Comments Wall and Join Us for the
Question/Answer Session
at 7:00pm

