



WELCOME
to the
**Southern Edwards Plateau
Habitat Conservation Plan
Environmental Impact Statement
Public Meetings**

Helotes – February 3, 2015

Kerrville – February 4, 2015

AGENDA

5:00 p.m. - Registration/Sign-In/Open House

5:30 p.m. – Presentation

6:00 p.m. - Open House

7:00 p.m. – Adjourn

Comments may be submitted throughout meeting



Why are we here tonight?

- Provide an overview of the federal:
 - Endangered Species Act
 - Section 10 Permitting Process
 - National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Provide an overview of the draft Environmental Impact Statement (dEIS)
- Present the Final Draft Southern Edwards Plateau Habitat Conservation Plan (SEP-HCP)
- Explain Next Steps



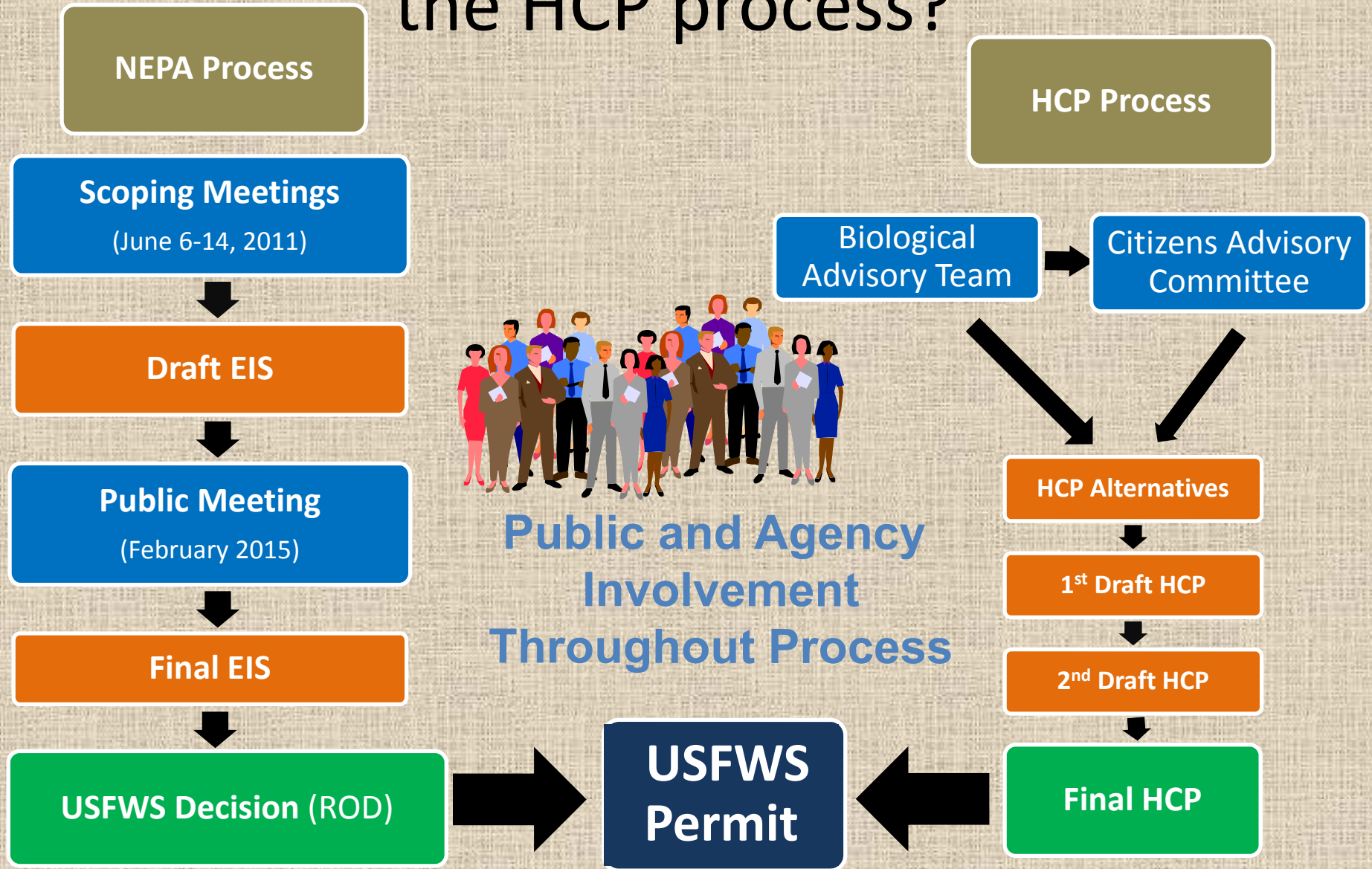
The Endangered Species Act (ESA)

- Provides a means to conserve the ecosystems upon which threatened and endangered species depend
- Provides a program for the conservation of threatened and endangered species
- The ESA prohibits the “taking” of endangered and threatened species without a permit
 - “Take” means to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or attempt to engage in any such conduct.
 - “Incidental take” is take that is incidental to carrying out otherwise lawful activities, such as take resulting from construction of homes and buildings

ESA Section 10 Permits

- A Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) must accompany an application for an incidental take permit
 - Project-specific HCP
 - Regional HCP (RHCP)
 - Chapter 83 of the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department Code describes the authority and limitations of an RHCP applicant
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process must be followed
- A Section 10 Permit is issued by the USFWS

How does the NEPA process relate to the HCP process?



Purpose & Need for the Permit

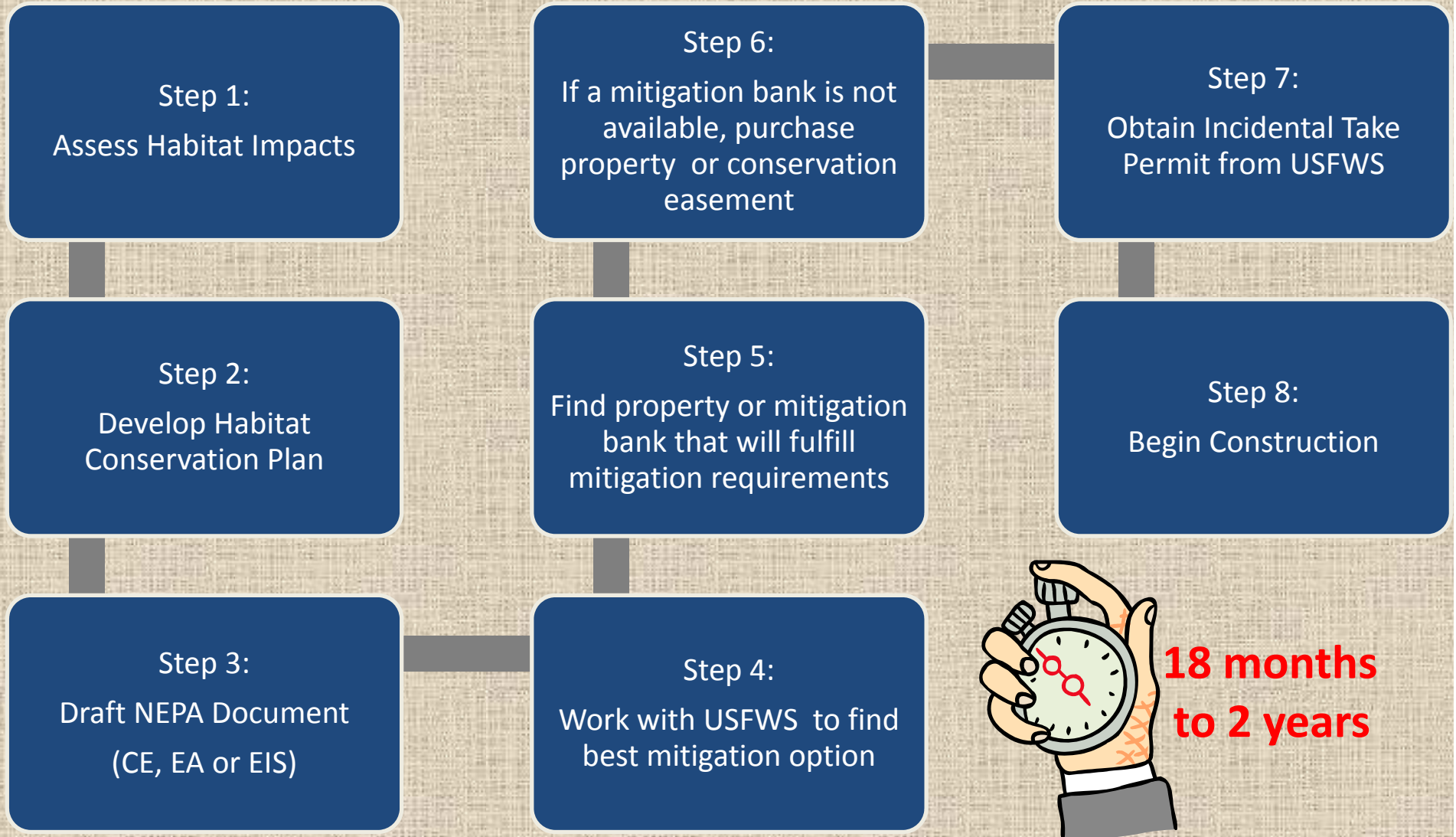
- **Purpose**

- The purpose of issuing an ITP is to authorize the Applicants to “take” the Covered Species in the Enrollment Area while conserving their habitat.

- **Need**

- The need for issuing the permit is to conserve the covered species and the ecosystems upon which they depend and to ensure ESA compliance while allowing economic development to move forward.

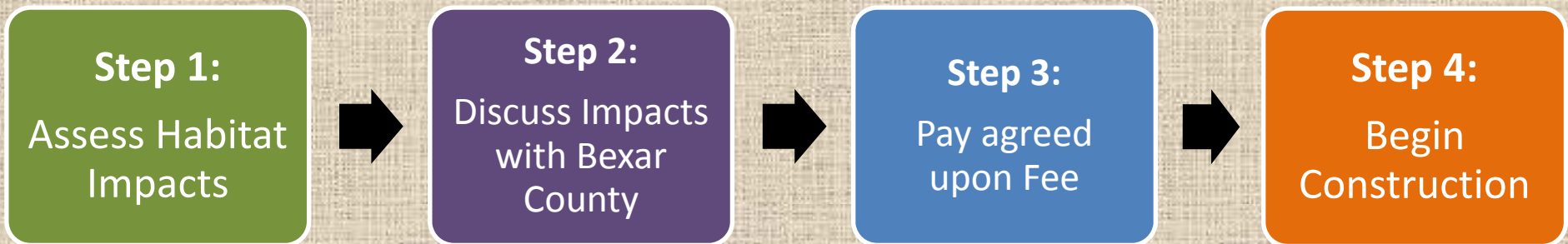
USFWS Permitting Process without a Regional Habitat Conservation Plan



Endangered Species Act Section 10(a) Permit Process (Individual Non-Federal Projects)

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



Alternatives Analyzed in the DEIS

- **No Action Alternative**
 - Section 10(a) Permits would be issued by USFWS on a project-by-project basis
- **10% Participation Alternative**
 - 10% of the activities requiring a permit would be covered by the Plan
- **Single-County Alternative**
 - The preserve system limited to Bexar County and within 10 miles
- **Increased Mitigation Alternative**
 - Higher habitat conservation for the Covered Species
- **Proposed SEP-HCP Alternative**
 - 50% of the activities requiring a permit would be covered by the Plan

Comparison of Alternatives

Resource	No Action	Proposed SEP-HCP	10% Participation	Single-County	Increased Mitigation
Land Development	--	++++	++	++	+
Water Resources	----	++	+	++	++
Vegetation	-----	+++++	+++	+++++	+++++
General Wildlife	-----	+++++	+++	+++++	+++++
Golden-cheeked Warbler	-----	+++++	+++	+++++	+++++
Black-capped Vireo	+ / -	++++	+++	+++	++++
Karst Invertebrates	-----	++++	+++	+++	+++++
Socioeconomics	-	-	-	-	----
Climate Change	---	+++	+	+++	+++++
Funding	N/A	\$299 million	\$131 million	\$564 million	\$1.1 billion
+ = Beneficial - = Adverse	+/- = Negligible	++/- = Negligible to Minor	+++ / ---- = Minor	++++ / ---- = Minor to Moderate	+++++ / ---- = Moderate

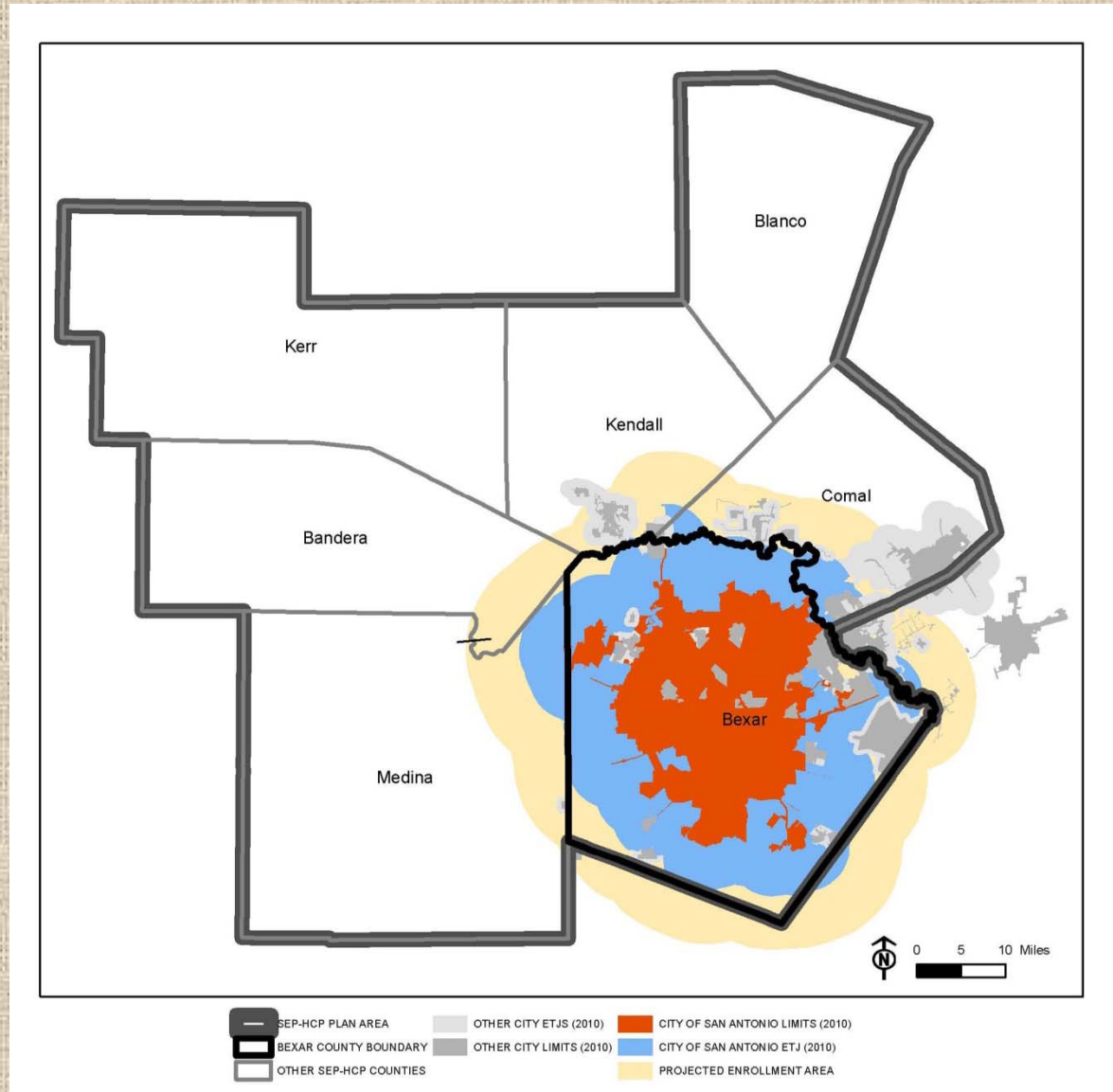
SEP-HCP Plan Area & Enrollment Area

Plan Area:

- 7-County Region

Enrollment Area:

- Bexar County
- City of San Antonio
- San Antonio's 30 year ETJ
- Where jurisdictions overlap covered species' habitat
- Excludes Comal County, other cities and counties outside the Plan Area



Covered Species

Golden-cheeked Warbler

Black-capped Vireo

7 Karst Species



Covered Activities

- Construction, operation, and maintenance of:
 - Public projects (schools, hospitals, etc.)
 - Utility and transportation infrastructure
 - Private residential, farm and ranch, commercial and industrial development
 - Quarries and mines
 - Activities necessary to manage habitat for the Covered Species

Incidental Take Authorization

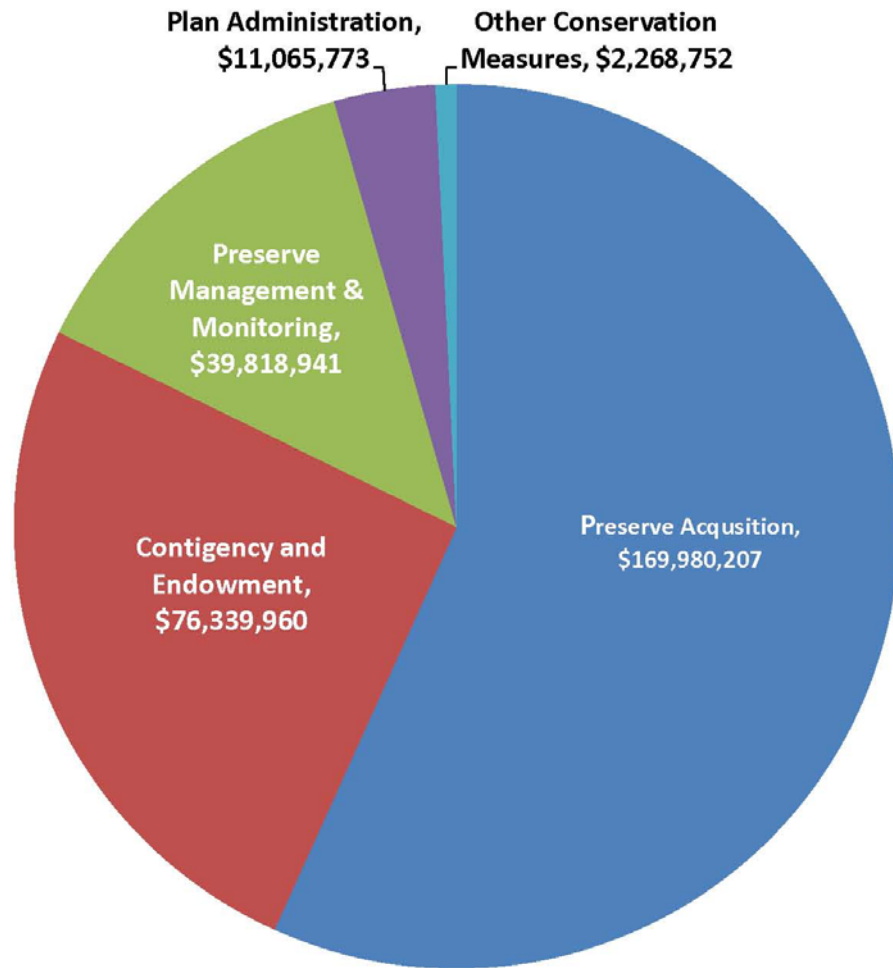
- **Golden-cheeked Warbler** - 9,371 acres of habitat loss or degradation in the Enrollment Area
- **Black-capped Vireo** – 2,640 acres of habitat loss or degradation in the Enrollment Area
- **Karst Species** – 10,234 acres in karst zone 1 & 2, 10,852 acres in karst zone 3 & 4, or 49 occupied features

Mitigation Measures

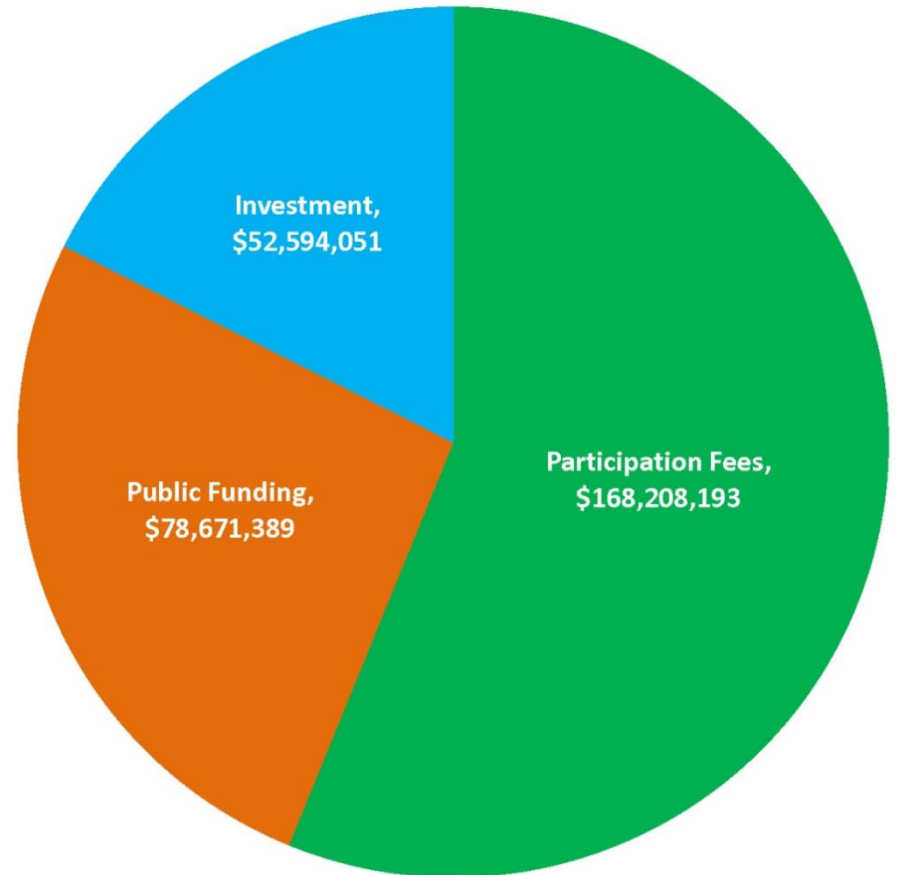
- **Golden-cheeked Warbler** – 23,430 acres of preserved habitat in the Plan Area
 - 2 preserve credits for 1 acre of direct take (\$4,000 per credit)
 - 0.5 preserve credit for 1 acre of indirect take (\$4,000 per credit)
- **Black-capped Vireo** – 6,600 acres of preserved habitat in the Plan Area
 - 2 preserve credits for 1 acre of direct take (\$4,000 per credit)
 - 0.5 preserve credit for 1 acre of indirect take (\$4,000 per credit)
- **Karst Species** – 1,000 acres of Occupied Cave Zone (OCZ)
 - Avoid OCZ (\$40,000 to \$400,000 per acre depending on proximity to an OCZ and only after caves have been protected according to the Karst Invertebrate Recovery Plan)

SEP-HCP Funding

**30-year Plan Cost
(\$299,473,633)**



**30-year Funding Plan
(\$299,473,633)**



Roles and Responsibilities

- US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)
 - Lead Federal Agency/NEPA Decision-maker
 - Issues Incidental Take Permit
 - Oversees the Permit Compliance
- Bexar County & City of San Antonio (Applicants/Permittees)
 - Plan Administration and Maintenance
 - Adaptive Preserve Management and Monitoring
 - Secures Public Funding
 - Annual Reporting to USFWS
- SEP-HCP Participants
 - Those that voluntarily enroll a property in the SEP-HCP for the purpose of obtaining ESA compliance for the Covered Species and must comply with the permit.

Your Comments are Very Important

Document Availability:

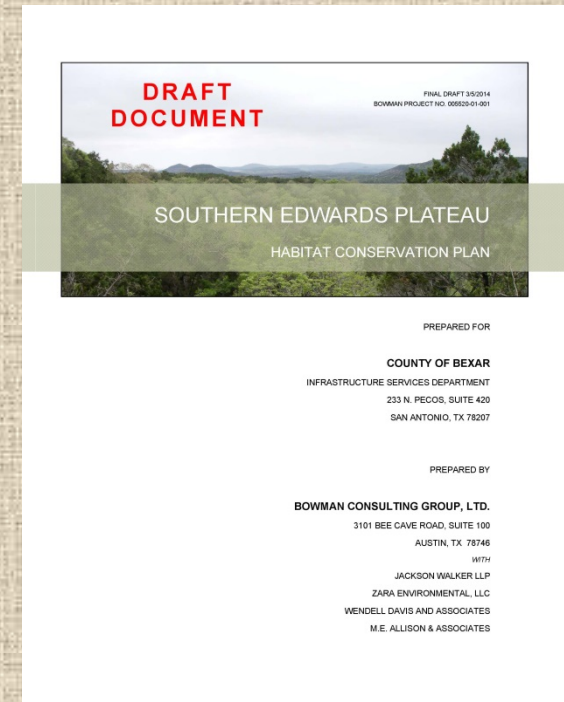
- Copies available for review at public meetings
- Copies are available at the following libraries:
 - Bandera County Library
 - Blanco Library
 - Boerne Public Library
 - Hondo Public Library
 - Kerr Regional History Center
 - San Antonio Central Library
- Copies are available online at www.sephcp.com and <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/AustinTexas/>

At the Meeting:

- Fill out a comment card and drop in the comment box
- Give your comments verbally to the Court Reporter

After the Meeting (post-dated March 19, 2015):

- U.S. Mail
- Website: www.regulations.gov.



What's Next?

- Public Comments on the Draft EIS & SEP-HCP
- Preparation of the Final EIS & Final SEP-HCP
- USFWS Record of Decision

**Please see Project Staff or USFWS
personnel for any questions**

