



News Release

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SERVICE APPROVES COMAL COUNTY REGIONAL HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has approved the Comal County Regional Habitat Conservation Plan (RHCP) and associated incidental take permit for the County. The Notice of Availability of the final Environmental Impact Statement (fEIS), the RHCP, and the Service's Record of Decision will publish in the *Federal Register* on January 17, 2014.

The Comal County RHCP includes conservation measures to minimize and mitigate incidental take of the golden-cheeked warbler and black-capped vireo associated with proposed road construction, maintenance, and improvement projects; utility construction and maintenance; school development and construction; public or private construction and development; and land clearing within Comal County, Texas. Issuance of the 30-year incidental take permit will enable Comal County to continue their projects and operations, while preserving the two species and their habitat.

“Approval of the Comal RHCP will enable Comal County to continue to grow and develop while ensuring long-term habitat protections for the golden-cheeked warbler and black-capped vireo,” stated Adam Zerrenner. “The Service looks forward to working with the County to conserve the golden-cheeked warbler and black-capped vireo and their habitat.”

You may obtain copies of the EIS and RHCP online at <http://www.co.comal.tx.us/comalrhcp/default.htm> or <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/AustinTexas>. For further information on how to obtain or review copies of these documents, see the *Federal Register* notice at <http://www.fws.gov/southwest>.

Adoption of a multispecies, regional habitat conservation approach, rather than a species-by-species/project-by-project approach, reduces the cost of implementing activities to minimize the impacts to species and implement mitigation measures. The Regional Habitat Conservation Plan

provides affected landowners in Comal County a more efficient process for complying with the Endangered Species Act while conserving the golden cheeeked-warbler and black-capped vireo.

Our priority is to make implementation of the ESA less complex, less contentious, and more effective. We seek to accelerate recovery of threatened and endangered species across the nation, while making it easier for people to coexist with these species.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov. Connect with our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/usfws, follow our tweets at www.twitter.com/usfwshq watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws> and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwshq>.

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