

Texas Environmental Flows Science Advisory Committee

Wednesday, August 11, 2010

8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Headquarters

Smith School Road

Austin, Texas 78744

MINUTES

Call to order and Approval of meeting minutes from July 14, 2010

Chairman Huston called the meeting to order. The minutes from the July meeting were approved by consensus.

Liaison Reports (San Antonio, Colorado, Nueces)

Member George Ward gave an update on the progress of the Guadalupe/San Antonio BBEST. He explained that the full BBEST had not met since the last SAC meeting, but the various subcommittees (instream, estuary, and hydrology) had met and were continuing to make progress. Each subcommittee is focusing on the various aspects of developing an environmental flow regime and will bring their recommendations to the BBEST as a whole for approval to move forward.

Member Paul Jensen discussed the Colorado/Lavaca BBEST. He noted that the group had made consensus decisions on various components, in particular the definition of a sound ecological environment, and approaches to developing recommendations for Lavaca, Matagorda, and East Bays. He noted that 28 gages had been selected for hydrologic analysis, and that the group would develop “fact sheets” for each of these sites that discuss various aspects such as fish communities, geomorphology, hydrology, water quality, etc.

Chairman Huston gave an update on the Nueces BBEST activities. He noted that their last meeting was primarily organizational in structure, and that the group had elected chairs and had begun forming various subcommittees: estuary, hydrology, and instream. Presentations that were given at the meeting focused on the SAC’s geographic extent document, the HEFR methodology, and lessons learned from the previous BBEST groups. The group also discussed their timeline for development and submittal of recommendations. It was noted that this group is unique in that it has formed ahead of the approved SB3 schedule, but the members had agreed by consensus to adopt a timeframe for development of recommendations, to be completed by October 1, 2011, rather than March 2012.

TCEQ Rulemaking update

Todd Chenoweth, TCEQ, gave an update on the activities of his agency in developing a method for translating environmental flow recommendations into environmental flow standards for use in water rights permitting. He indicated that a stakeholder meeting to obtain input from the public on the rulemaking required by SB3 would be held on Thursday, August 12, 2010. It was noted that there would be a public hearing and an additional open comment period later in the year.

Budget Update

Carla Guthrie, TWDB, gave an update on the SAC budget for fiscal year 2010 and noted that not all tasks assigned to members had been invoiced. She stated that the group will likely have money that will carry forward into fiscal year 2011.

Revised FY2010 and 2011 Budget discussion

The budgets for the Guadalupe/San Antonio and Colorado/Lavaca BBESTs have been submitted to the EFAG for approval. Both allocate \$228,000 for each group which is approximately the funding level of previous BBESTs.

The SAC members discussed the current biennial budget estimates, noting the potential surplus which will be carried into fiscal year 2011, but not available beyond fiscal year 2011. The FY2011 budget includes modest funding for development of the work plans. BBEST members will work with the BBASCs to develop the work plan as described in SB3.

Members also discussed the draft budget for fiscal years 2012 and 2013, noting that the projected budgetted expenditures for 2012 were very close to the prior year's annual appropriation.

Update - WAM/Flow Regime Translation subcommittee

Vice-chairman Bob Brandes gave an update on this subcommittee's activities, noting that the group had not met recently, but planned to do so in the near future. He explained that the group had previously used Big Sandy Creek on the Sabine River as an example site and had recently looked at Allen's Creek on the Brazos. He noted that ultimately, the work of this subcommittee will be written into a guidance document, with October as a projected release date. He indicated that the work this group is doing will be important to the TCEQ, as well as the BBESTs and BBASCs.

HEFR Workshop update

Dan Opdyke, TPWD, discussed the logistics of the 2nd HEFR workshop to be held on Wednesday, August 25, 2010 in Austin. He explained that the workshop will be very "hands on" and that participants will work through several real world scenarios. This workshop will very much be at the practitioner level.

Work Plan Development guidance draft

Member Ed Oborny discussed the efforts to incorporate comments from the SAC members and agency staff into the work plan development guidance document. Members held a thorough discussion which addressed the comments provided and suggestions for revision and will modify document as discussed. Revisions will be reflected in final draft to be submitted to members for consideration and approval for release.

Discuss potential modifications to Hydrologic Methods Guidance

Vice-chairman Brandes explained that he and Dan Opdyke have reviewed this guidance document and had identified several areas for modification, mostly pertaining to the use of HEFR. Both agreed it would be appropriate to bring this document up to date and include revisions to identified sections and incorporate comments provided by the SAC members. It was noted that the last chapter, the conclusion, would likely need careful review. Comments and suggested revisions will be discussed in the interim and the members will consider these changes in the September meeting. While it was agreed that this document does need to be updated, it was noted that the current BBEST groups had been informed and updated on the current version of HEFR and its use.

Discussion - Market Approaches to meet EFlows objectives

This discussion item was postponed until the September meeting. **Other Discussion Items**

No additional items were discussed at this time.

Public comments

No public comment was received at this time.

Next Meeting – Schedule (September 8 – TCEQ) and Agenda

The next meeting is scheduled for September 8, 2010 and will be held at the TCEQ offices, building F, room 2210. Topics for discussion include:

- Cypress Basin Environmental Flow Recommendations
- WAM Flow Regime Translation Subcommittee update
- Trinity/San Jacinto BBASC Facilitation presentation\
- Market Approaches

Meeting adjourned