

DRAFT

**MEETING OF THE NUECES RIVER AND CORPUS CHRISTI BAY AND
BAFFIN BAY BASIN AND BAY AREA STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE**

10:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.

OCTOBER 20, 2010

**HARTE RESEARCH INSTITUTE
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-CORPUS CHRISTI
CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS**

MINUTES

Call to order, roll call, and review membership and authorize changes as necessary

Chairman Mims called the meeting to order. Roll call was taken. Attendance did not reach a quorum. Rocky Freund announced that due to membership in the BBEST she was resigning from the BBASC.

Minutes

Corey Horan, TCEQ, had previously distributed to members copies of the draft minutes of all previous meetings for review. He suggested that since a quorum had not been reached the comment period for the draft minutes should be extended until Friday October 29, 2010. If substantial comments are received, the draft minutes will be revised and redistributed for review. Members agreed to an on line vote for minute approval.

Administrative Business

Attendance

Chairman Mims noted the lack of attendance of several members. He asked membership approval to send an email or letter to those members who have not attended a meeting, or have only attended one meeting, requesting their attendance at future meetings due to the importance of a quorum to conduct business. He also would ask those members who are not interested in serving as a stakeholder, to voluntarily resign. Since a quorum had not been reached, the motion to remove those individuals from the membership could not be accepted. It was noted that if those members were removed, membership would still be representative of each of the SB3 interest groups.

“Environmental Interests” Representative to Nueces BBASC

Since no quorum was reached, consideration of NWF subcommittee nominee John Adams as an addition to the Nueces BBASC to represent the environments interest was postponed until the next meeting.

Nueces BBEST update

Rocky Freund presented an overview of the charges and an update on the activities of the Basin and Bay Expert Science Team (Nueces BBEST). Ms. Freund presented a list of the members, and dates of past and future meetings. She stated that the BBEST has been meeting monthly since June and the next meeting will be held on Friday, October 22, 2010. She described the roles of and relationship between the SAC, BBEST, BBASC, TWDB and TCEQ. She stated that she and Dr. Stunz were elected as Co-Chair and Chair, respectively. Three subcommittees were formed: instream, estuary, and hydrology; and the subcommittees have met via conference calls. The subcommittees will bring

recommendations to the whole membership for final decisions. She discussed the draft budget. Funding is available for time and travel reimbursement, and professional services. After recommendations are made to the whole BBEST, the team will also provide assistance to BBEST with the work plan development. Ms. Freund also summarized two presentations made to the team on Geographic scope, and the HEFR methodology. She stated that their official charge is to have the recommendations to the entire committee by March 1, 2012. However, the team set an internal target date of October 1, 2011. She presented the draft timeline for necessary tasks and analysis highlighting decision making deadlines, and potential sites for assessment. She reviewed their charge of defining a Sound Ecological Environment and the needed studies: flow regime components, seasons for hydrographic separation, geomorphology, sediment transport and others. She also presented an update on the hydrology subcommittee; in particular, a hydro pilot project. Dr. Gregg Stunz presented an overview of the estuary subcommittee conference call meeting held September 2, 2010. He said members established goals and discussed deliverables. He added that most work will take place from now through the early part of next year.

Texas Environmental Flows Science Advisory Committee update

SAC member Dr. Ed Oborny was to make a presentation on the “Lessons Learned from Initial SB3 BBEST Activities”. However, Chairman Mims at the suggestion of Corey Horan, TCEQ, asked that the presentation be postponed until the BBEST committee had actually made their recommendations. Dr. Oborny presented an overview of the October SAC meeting. He discussed that revisions made to the hydrologic methods document which would be of more interest to the BBEST, and a document spearheaded by Dr. Bob Brandes based on the results of the first two BBASCs showing how the BBASC and BBEST recommendations would impact a real water supply project by applying the environmental flows and reviewing the impacts. Plans are to finalize the draft documents at the next SAC meeting October 27, 2010.

Presentation: Senate bill 3 Environmental Flows – What Have We Learned

Dr. Ed Oborny gave a brief overview of four SAC documents that could be used as tools for a better understanding of the overall process:

- “Lessons Learned” Document: The document presents a summary of what was learned from the first two BBESTs. It includes the charges of the members, relevant timelines, understanding of the terminology, and importance of good interaction between the BBEST and BBASC;
- Discussion Paper: The paper is an overview of the process used to go from instream flow recommendations to developing environmental flow standards;
- Work Plan Development Document: The work plan is the specific responsibility of the BBASC. However, it will require the interaction of both the BBEST and BBASC.
- Environmental Flow Regimes and Water Supply Projects Document.

Dr. Oborny discussed “Sound Ecological Environment” which is the charge of the BBEST to define. He added that the BBEST must determine what is good for the environment based on science while the BBASC is charged with balancing all the water needs. He presented a slide showing the basic components of environmental flows and explained the four main components of a flow regime: subsistence flows, base flows, high flow pulses and overbanking flows. He encouraged BBASC members to be prepared for the BBEST recommendations and know how the committee intends to proceed. He suggested that members document concerns throughout the process so those concerns can be addressed in the work plan. The work plan should include short term and long term studies as well as long term monitoring component to assess the success of the

recommendations and assess the standards put forth by TCEQ. Dr. Oberney recommended that future meetings continue to include updates by the BBEST and suggested that at the meeting prior to the October 1, 2011 deadline, the BBEST update include tentative recommendations at specific gages. He also suggested a presentation by Dr. Brandes on the WAM/Projected Water Supply document so members will have a better understanding of what the environmental flow recommendations mean.

Presentation: “Recent Freshwater Inflows and Pumping Events to Nueces Bay”

BBASC member Ray Allen presented a general overview of the watershed and the Nueces River delta. He noted that the location of the lower Nueces River adjacent to the shoreline allows discharge into Nueces Bay without going through the delta complex. He discussed the City of Corpus Christi’s agreement to put in a pumping system and pipeline that has the ability to deliver up to 3,000 acre-feet of water per month into the upper Recon Bayou (?). This water will ultimately flow through the delta and contribute to the critical habitat located there. Mr. Allen discussed salinity levels in the delta complex, the targeted salinity boundaries, indicator species chosen in 1994, and effects of extended droughts. Since the end of 2009, inflows have increased resulting in a drop in salinity, and studies have found that tides, river flows and wind driven events are critical to salinity levels. Members discussed how to improve the dispersion of water through the estuary and future study of the sediment accretions and losses in the area due to subsidence and multiple reservoirs upstream.

Schedule - Update

Corey Horan (TCEQ) discussed the future schedule and target dates. He stated that the Environmental Flows Advisory Group which provides direction throughout this process has extended the deadlines for the development of the BBEST recommendations until March 1, 2012, and felt that the BBEST committee would probably extend their self-imposed deadline of October 1, 2011, accordingly. Once the BBEST recommendations have been presented to the BBASC, members will have an opportunity to review and comment on the BBEST recommendations as well as provide their own recommendations on the environmental flow regime and environmental flow analysis for submittal to the SAC and TCEQ. He added that the BBEST and BBASC are fortunate to be able to make use of the lessons learned and experience gained from the previous groups. The stakeholder group will have until 6 months from that date, September 1, 2012 to submit their comments and recommendations. TCEQ will have one year until September 1, 2013 to develop the environmental flow standards and establish rules. He reminded members that work will continue after these dates on the Work Plan. Chairman Mims mentioned that meetings will be held quarterly until after the BBEST report has been received then meetings will be held more frequently.

Discuss time, location, presentation and actions for next (January 18, 2011) meeting

Chairman Mims announced that the next meeting will be held at 10 am on Tuesday, January 18, 2011 at the Research Center in Uvalde. Potential agenda items will include:

- Formalize membership
- BBEST update
- Presentation on HEFR and other tools
- Presentation on WAM under current rules and regulations
- Presentation on Technical Terminology (Jargon)

- Presentation on Environmental Flow Regimes and the Effects on Water Supply Projects by Dr. Brandes
- Update on Trinity and Sabine BBEST/BBASC Activities
- Update on San Antonio and Guadalupe BBEST/BBASC Activities
- Determine what BBEST will do once recommendations received (2nd or 3rd meeting)

Chairman Mims asked that a draft agenda considering the above items be distributed to members in late December.

Adjourn