

**MEETING OF THE NUECES RIVER AND CORPUS CHRISTI BAY AND
BAFFIN BAY BASIN AND BAY AREA STAKEHOLDERS COMMITTEE
(NUECES BBASC)**

APRIL 20, 2011, 10:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.

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

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Con Mims. A quorum was present for the meeting. The minutes of the January 19, 2011 meeting were approved.

The voting status of state agency members who were members of the Nueces BBASC was addressed. The bylaws will be amended to say that state agency staff will be non-voting members.

Jace Tunnell was nominated and elected to replace Wayne Gardner, who resigned, on the Nueces BBEST.

A presentation on Railroad Commission (RRC) Activities was given by Bill Miertschin. Mr. Miertschin spoke about RRC functions, regulations, and activities in the Nueces basin. A drilling completion video shown at: <http://www.northernoil.com/drilling.php> was presented. Primary directives are related to geothermal operations and include protecting the environment, preventing waste, and promoting conservation. TAC rules for RRC include water protection and protection of birds. RRC monitors drilling operations to ensure compliance with drilling regulations. RRC has 264 staff working on field operations, responsible for 395,000 wells, in 232 of 254 counties. 31,517 wells have been plugged since 1984 for \$182 million. Statewide, drilling permits ranged from 9716 in 2002, 24,073 in 2008, to 3,180 so far in 2011. Drilling and completion requires about 10 ac-ft of water per well. Eagle Ford might require 11,540 a-f total, or 7.5% of total groundwater use relative to 2007. There was a suggestion for TCEQ to discuss their role in drilling activities at the next meeting.

The presentation on the History of the Agreed Order for operation of the Choke Canyon-Lake Corpus Christi Reservoir System was skipped until the next meeting.

Paul Montagna, the SAC liaison, discussed that TCEQ had published final rules for the Sabine and Trinity basins. He indicated that the Lavaca-Colorado and Guadalupe-San Antonio have submitted their BBEST reports to their BBASCs. He indicated the SAC has put out guidance documents on attainment frequencies and implementation, and on work-plan development.

The BBEST update was provided by Sam Vaughn, Nueces BBEST chairman. He indicated that the BBEST is accelerating its activities in light of the possibility of no funding after August 31 and will try to complete their report by early September 2011. The BBEST had field reconnaissance meetings in the upper basin and at Choke Canyon and the Nueces Delta. He indicated that Wayne Gardner resigned and was replaced with Jace

Tunnell. The BBEST has identified 20 gages throughout the basin at which recommendations will be developed. The HEFR model is being used to develop initial flow regimes based on historical flow statistics. Perennial streams were defined as those that flow 95% of the time. The BBEST is contracting for the development of flow/habitat relationships for the streams, with TWDB and TPWD providing technical support. Analyses will be conducted at 6 sites (3 on the Nueces, one each on Frio River, Atascosa River, and Seco Creek). Water quality (DO, temperature, nutrients), geomorphology, and riparian overlays will also be considered. Estuary analyses focused on Nueces Bay. Preliminary opinion is that Nueces Bay is “not presently representative of a sound ecological environment” based on historically declining abundances of eastern oysters and rangia clams and on hypersaline conditions in the Nueces delta. The BBEST is planning a review of the Nueces Estuary history, correlation of nutrient data with freshwater inflow, and application of statistical analysis of flows to TPWD fishery abundance data.

Herman Settemeyer discussed the draft rules for Sabine and Trinity before the Commission today (4/20) as well as the TCEQ sunset legislation which was passed out of the House on 4/19, and will come before the Senate next week.

The next meeting is scheduled for July 20, 2011 in Uvalde.

Meeting Adjourn.