

Texas Environmental Flows Science Advisory Committee

Friday, May 8, 2009
8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Texas Water Development Board
1700 N. Congress, Room 170
Austin, Texas

Meeting Minutes

Call Meeting to Order

Approval of Meeting Minutes

The Science Advisory Committee (SAC) approved the meeting minutes from the April 7, 2009 SAC meeting.

Bob Huston, SAC Chair, announced that Frank Heitmuller has taken a teaching position out of state and will no longer be able to serve as member of the SAC after June, 2009.

Liaison reports on BBEST meetings

Bob Brandes and Fred Manhart

Bob Brandes, SAC Vice Chair, summarized the events of the Trinity and San Jacinto Rivers and Galveston Bay Basin and Bay Expert Science Team (BBEST) meeting held on April 8, 2009. Fred Manhart, SAC member, spoke of the events at the Sabine and Neches Rivers and Sabine Lake Bay BBEST meeting held on April 28, 2009. The next Sabine and Neches Rivers and Sabine Lake Bay BBEST meeting will be held on May 28, 2009.

Budget Update

Barney Austin, TWDB

Barney Austin, Texas Water Development Board (TWDB), updated the SAC on their balance remaining for the 2008-2009 fiscal year. He stated that the TWDB has drafted a letter for members to present to hotels/motels in order to ascertain accommodations at state rates. Mr. Austin commented that a travel voucher form should be submitted for each trip and that members can seek assistance from Gayla Ray in reserving lodging in the Austin area.

Discuss results from HEFR Mods Workgroup

Dan Opdyke and Bob Brandes

Bob Brandes discussed progress being made by the HEFR Refinement Subgroup. Version 6.1 of the HEFR deliverable was distributed on April 20, 2009. Cory Horan, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), is setting up an email distribution list for people to receive HEFR updates which should be ready on May 11, 2009. Dan Opdyke, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), recommended a forum for the BBESTs to meet and discuss HEFR progress. Chairman Huston encourages dialogue between the BBESTs and their HEFR practitioners and will help facilitate such discussion.

ACTION ITEM: Chairman Huston and Dan Opdyke will draft a cover memo to accompany the HEFR deliverable.

The SAC discussed developing tools to help HEFR users evaluate HEFR outputs. Chairman Huston indicated that he wants the SAC to explore this further, with an initial focus on converting the HEFR output to a hydrograph.

ACTION ITEM: Bob Brandes will send an email to organize a subcommittee to work on this.

Progress Report - Biological Overlay Workgroup formation

Jim Wiersema

Jim Wiersema, SAC member, and Kevin Mayes, TPWD, discussed progress made by the biological overlay workgroup on a biological overlay document. Three handouts were provided and workgroup members discussed their next course of action with the SAC.

ACTION ITEM: The biological overlay workgroup will draft a document to be made available to the SAC 10 days before the next SAC meeting.

Progress Report on Sediment Loading Overlay

Frank Heitmuller

Frank Heitmuller, SAC member, updated the SAC on progress being made to the sediment loading overlay deliverable. The SAC discussed document revisions.

ACTION ITEM: Dr. Heitmuller will revise the sediment loading deliverable and distribute it to the SAC by May 15, 2009. The SAC will provide comments and suggestions to Dr. Heitmuller by May 25, 2009.

Consideration of Working Draft of SAC B&E Deliverable

Bob Brandes

The SAC discussed revisions to be made to the B&E deliverable.

ACTION ITEM: Bob Brandes will distribute a clean version of the B&E deliverable to the SAC by May 9, 2009. SAC members and agency staff will submit comments and suggestions to Dr. Brandes by May 15, 2009. Dr. Brandes will revise the document and identify issues with comments, then distribute the document back to the SAC by May 20, 2009. SAC members will address open issues by May 27, 2009 and may distribute the deliverable to the BBESTs by June. Chairman Huston will draft a cover memo for the deliverable by May 15, 2009.

Progress Report on Water Quality/Nutrients Overlay

Paul Jensen

Discussion on the water quality/nutrients overlay deliverable was postponed due to time constraints.

Report on TxBLEND Workshop

Ruben Solis

Ruben Solis, TWDB, provided an overview of a TxBLEND workshop held on April 27, 2009. The SAC requested that Mr. Solis review Section 3 in the B&E deliverable and incorporate relevant information regarding TxBLEND into the guidance document.

Presentation on TWDB Research Program/SAC Consideration

Mark Wentzel

Mark Wentzel, TWDB, presented a PowerPoint presentation "Texas Instream Flow Program," its activities and upcoming proposed research projects. The SAC commented that they will not review the study designs as proposed by Mr. Wentzel.

Next Meeting (Schedule and Agenda)

The next SAC meeting is scheduled for June 5, 2009 at TCEQ headquarters in Austin. Agenda items will be discussed via email before the next meeting.

The SAC discussed funding for potential projects before the end of the fiscal year. These included funding for hydrograph generation, future HEFR workshops, water quality workgroup, nutrient balance, and enhancement of literature reviews currently under contract by TCEQ.

ACTION ITEM: Cory Horan, TCEQ, will obtain information about extending the current contract for electronically scanning documents and report back to Chairman Huston and Barney Austin by ~May 13, 2009.

Public Comments

Myron Hess commented that SB3 instruction is to develop inflow regimes for estuaries. Tony Smith asked for SAC guidance in defining "maintain" as discussed in Senate Bill 3.

Meeting Adjourned