

**January 19, 2010 Sabine and Neches Rivers and Sabine Lake
Bay Basin and Bay Stakeholder Committee Meeting Minutes**
Sabine River Authority Gulf Coast Division Conference Room
Orange, Texas / 1:00 – 4:00 pm

Members Present: Jerry Clark (Chair), Robert Stroder (Vice-Chair), David Alford, Joe Arnold, Keith Bonds, Greg Carter, Ken Dickson, Bruce Drury, Kelley Holcomb, Kathleen Jackson, Rodney Newman, Jerry Nichols, Fr. Sinclair Oubre, Jody Puckett, David Roemer, Monty Shank, Dick Sherron, Bob Staton, Jeanie Turk

Call to Order

Chairman Jerry Clark called the meeting to order.

Approval of November 3, 2008 Meeting Minutes

Members reviewed and unanimously approved the minutes from the November 3, 2008 meeting.

Introductions

All committee members and other attendees briefly introduced themselves.

Public Comment

None.

Consideration of Meeting Agenda

The draft meeting agenda was proposed to the committee and approved with no changes.

Review of SB3 Stakeholder Charge

Jim Brown with the Sabine River Authority reviewed the Senate Bill 3 stakeholder charge using a handout entitled "*Sabine and Neches Rivers and Sabine Lake Bay Basin and Bay Area Stakeholder Committee Charge*". Highlights included: stakeholder recommendations due by June 1, 2010; meetings must be open to the public; BBEST recommendations cannot be changed; stakeholder recommendations must consider additional factors such as present and future water needs; recommendations include flow standards and strategies to meet them; and the development of an adaptive management work plan with the assistance of the BBEST. In response to a question, it was stated that the work plan does not have a specified due date.

Presentation and discussion of the Sabine-Neches BBEST Recommendations Report

Jack Tatum with the Sabine River Authority and chairman of the BBEST presented an overview of the BBEST's work and final recommendations. He reiterated the BBEST goal of maintaining a sound ecological environment, which the team agreed that current conditions of the rivers and estuaries are sound, and outlined the steps taken by the BBEST to arrive at their recommendations. Jack discussed the BBEST's final recommendations which included a general description of the proposed instream flow matrices and the considerations that factored into their development, as well as the

conclusion that the instream flow recommendations would be sufficient to maintain the condition of the estuary.

Dr. Matthew McBroom with Stephen F. Austin State University and BBEST member presented an overview of the work of the biological subcommittee of the BBEST and their views on the final flow recommendations. Regarding subsistence flows, the subcommittee supported the 5th percentile approach, instead of the lower, HEFR-derived numbers backed by the majority of the BBEST, but recognized that the recommended subsistence values are placeholders pending future studies. Similarly, the recommended high flow pulses calculated from HEFR are starting points from which future refinement can take place, particularly with reference to total pulse volumes and durations. Overbank flow values, though not recommended to be produced, were quasi-validated through work linking extent of floodplain inundation reflected in aerial photos to measured flows. Dr. McBroom also described biologically-based work that was done to loosely evaluate the sufficiency of freshwater inflows to Sabine Lake that would result from the instream flow recommendations.

Lastly, BBEST member Sam Vaughn with HDR Engineering presented an example application of an instream flow regime that was discussed in the final BBEST recommendations report. The application was done for a proposed (in the past) reservoir on Big Sandy Creek so that some understanding can be gained of potential effects on instream flows and their frequency of occurrence. The HEFR matrix for Big Sandy Creek was discussed as well as the different hydrologic condition scenarios, and the results of the flow regime application exercise were presented. The instances of decreased flows and frequencies of occurrence were not deemed to be detrimental to the maintenance of a sound ecological environment, though future studies would be integral in making those determinations.

Discussion of path forward to develop recommendations by June 1, 2010

The committee discussed the next steps for moving toward final recommendations. It was acknowledged that there are no funds available to the committee for additional analyses. The resource agencies can provide help where they have expertise. It was requested that more time be given to committee members to evaluate the BBEST final report. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department comments on the BBEST report will be coming out soon, and the Science Advisory Committee will have theirs out in March. Chairman Clark directed each member to come up with questions and suggestions on proposed recommendations and send them to him by February 15th. Sabine River Authority staff will then compile and organize these suggestions into a draft document that can be further refined at the next meeting.

Next Meeting: agenda and schedule

It was decided that the next meeting will take place on Tuesday, March 16th in Nacogdoches, probably at the library. Members expressed a preference for meeting earlier in the day rather than later. The specific time and location will be announced in the near future. The primary activity will be the further development and enhancement of the draft recommendation document.