

**Colorado and Lavaca Rivers and Matagorda and Lavaca Bays  
Basin and Bay Area Stakeholder Committee (BBASC)  
and Basin and Bay Expert Science Team (BBEST)**

Wednesday, March 31, 2010 at 1:30 p.m.  
Lower Colorado River Authority, Hancock Building  
3700 Lake Austin Blvd, Austin, Texas

**MINUTES**

**BBASC Members Present:** Chair Ronald Gertson, Vice Chair Myron Hess, Patrick Brzozowski, Jim Dailey, Dan Hall (alternate for Deedy Huffman), Joe King, Frank Lewis, Teresa Lutes, Jack Maloney (alternate for Dick Ottis), Bob Pickens, L.G. Raun, Caroline Runge, Andrew Sansom, Clarence Shomberg, David Bolling (alternate for Bob Shoemate), Haskell Simon, Buddy Treybig, Suzanne Zarling. Quorum among the BBASC was reached. David Bolling, alternate for Bob Shoemate, and James Arnold, alternate for Buddy Treybig, were ratified as BBASC alternates.

**BBEST Members Present:** Melissa Romigh, Thom Hardy, Okla Thornton, Richard Hoffpauir, Kirk Kennedy, Cathy Wakefield, Dave Buzan, Joe Trungale, Bryan Cook, Steve Watters.

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**Call to order and introductions**

Chairman Ronald Gertson called the meeting to order. Suzanne Zarling welcomed the group to the LCRA facilities.

**Discussion and agreement on agenda**

The draft agenda was approved without changes.

**Public Comments (limit 3 min.)**

There were no public comments at this time.

**Ratification of alternates**

David Bolling, alternate for Bob Shoemate, and James Arnold, alternate for Buddy Treybig, were ratified as BBASC alternates.

**Approval of meeting minutes**

The draft minutes from the February 24, 2010 meeting were unanimously approved. It was suggested that copies of the sign-in sheets be included in member's packets. The group agreed to post the sign-in sheets on the group's website and to include a list of members present at each meeting in the meeting's minutes.

**History of River Changes**

BBASC member Haskell Simon gave an overview of the history of Matagorda County, the Colorado River, its mouth, and the changes that have occurred over the years in order to help the members understand the complexities of Matagorda Bay. He noted that Matagorda County was the 1<sup>st</sup> major port in Texas, that it was primarily a rice and cattle producing county, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest shrimping port in Texas. In particular he noted that only 10% of Matagorda County's watershed drains to the river, but several hundred miles of tributaries and lesser streams contribute to Matagorda Bay. He briefly discussed the exploration and discovery of Matagorda Bay. He then discussed the 1992 jetty project which changed the river discharge into Matagorda Bay and closed it at Parker's Cut. He noted

that this fact will be a challenging consideration for the BBEST in that many changes over a limited time period varied the river discharge and inflows to Matagorda Bay.

### **SAC/BBEST Relationship**

Environmental Flows Science Advisory Committee (SAC) Chairman Bob Huston addressed the group giving an overview of the environmental flows development process and specifically, the SAC/BBEST relationship. He noted that there were several types of groups established under SB3: the Environmental Flows Advisory Group, the Science Advisory Committee, the BBASC, and the BBEST, as well as the three resource agencies including the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB), the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). He discussed the role of the SAC, explaining that the SAC was responsible for overall coordination of the process and the groups, responsible for providing guidance to BBESTs. He noted that the charge of the BBEST was to define and develop an environmental flow regime that protected a sound ecological environment to the maximum extent possible, based on currently available science alone and not other interests. He specified that the balancing of other interests lies with the BBASC. He discussed the challenges the BBEST will face, primarily the lack of data and short time frame in which to develop their recommendations, as well as noting that adaptive management will function to fill in any gaps not identified by the BBESTs. He explained that the SAC had produced several guidance documents addressing various components, or overlays, to developing an environmental flow regime.

### **BBEST Budget Considerations**

Ruben Solis, TWDB, gave some brief comments on the BBEST budget, noting that there were 2 existing, and 5 soon-to-be-established BBESTs, and the challenge to divide and share the available dollars equally and fairly. The TWDB did set a fixed amount of dollars for each group and that most activities will fall into the 2010 – 2011 biennium. He noted that the BBESTs will need to work with TWDB to get a budget developed and approved and individual members were to turn in payee identification and forms to be eligible for reimbursement. He distributed a folder that included these forms and that they were available on the group's website. He also noted that there will be time and effort spent by the BBEST members after their environmental flows recommendations are submitted.

### **Duties of the Basin and Bay Expert Science Team**

Cory Horan, TCEQ, gave an overview of the duties of the BBEST as stated in Senate Bill 3. These duties can be found on the group's website located here:

[http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/permitting/water\\_supply/water\\_rights/eflows/colorado-lavaca-bbesc](http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/permitting/water_supply/water_rights/eflows/colorado-lavaca-bbesc)

### **Previous BBEST Experience**

Dave Buzan and Joe Trungale, both of whom had served on previous BBEST groups, gave an overview of their experiences with those groups. Joe Trungale noted that their experiences could help to improve the process, and that the adaptive management component is important as it allows the BBEST to accept uncertainties. They discussed the definitions of both Environmental Flow Analysis and Environmental Flow Regime, noting that the development of an Environmental Flow Analysis was important for predicting the response of the basin and bay system to changes in environmental flows. They also discussed what constitutes a Sound Ecological Environment, noting that SB3 did not provide a definition but that it was defined in the National Academy of Science review of the Texas Instream Flow Studies Technical Overview document. They noted that the BBEST will rely heavily on the guidance documents provided by the SAC. They discussed the importance of trying to achieve consensus and noted that previous BBESTs relied heavily on the hydrological component and not enough on other environmental flow components. They discussed some of the challenges the BBEST will face throughout the process as well as explaining an example Hydrology-Based

Environmental Flow Regime (HEFR) matrix and bay and estuary/freshwater inflow relationships, including indicator selections and salinity models. They discussed potential improvements to the process, the final product, and a suggested timeline in which to complete the tasks of the BBEST. Finally they discussed the interaction between the BBEST and BBASC, outlining examples where the BBASC could provide input to the BBEST process.

### **Basin Literature Review**

Dave Buzan gave an overview of a literature review of the Lavaca/Navidad basin and bay system and the Upper Colorado above the San Saba River performed under contract to assist the BBEST and BBASC with finding information on environmental flows. He explained that the purpose was to identify data sources that can be used to relate instream flows and freshwater inflows to ecological conditions (biology, hydrology, etc). He gave an overview of how many documents were found, noting that flow data goes back to 1936. He explained that the literature review database was available to both the BBEST and BBASC members and that the database would be updated throughout the process if other relevant documents were found.

### **Discussion of BBASC/BBEST Interaction**

BBASC Chair Ronald Gertson gave an overview of the interaction between the BBASC and BBEST throughout the process. He explained that the BBASC is to meet quarterly, initially considering mostly briefing and fact finding and then eventually strategies, etc. For example: how can the BBEST educate and inform the BBASC as the process moves along. BBASC member Andy Sansom suggested that a BBEST member give an update of the BBEST process at future BBASC meetings. Member Joe King noted the importance for the BBASC to track progress of BBEST as well as the need for supplemental training on specific areas. Staff from the three resource agencies were introduced to the groups, and were ratified as non-voting members of the BBEST. Those identified were Kathy Alexander, TCEQ, David Bradsby, TPWD, and Nolan Raphelt, TWDB. The groups requested that each be notified of meeting of the other's groups so that they may attend if possible.

### **Public Comments (limit 3 min.)**

There were no public comments at this time.

### **Set next meeting date and agenda – 5/26, 8/25, 12/1, 2/23/2011**

The next meeting was scheduled for May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2010 with the time TBD, in Edna, TX at the Lavaca-Navidad River Authority.

Proposed agenda items include:

- BBEST progress report
- Interest group presentations
  - Groundwater Conservation Districts, Refining, Regional Water Planning Groups
- Lavaca-Navidad watershed overview, including bay
- Future meeting logistics

### **Adjourn**