

**Guadalupe, San Antonio, Mission, and Aransas Rivers and  
Mission, Copano, Aransas, and San Antonio Bays  
Basin and Bay Area Stakeholder Committee (BBASC) and  
Basin and Bay Expert Science Team (BBEST)**

Wednesday, April 7, 2010 at 10:00 a.m.

Community Center Annex, Victoria, TX

<http://www.victoriatx.org/communitycenter/directions.asp>

**MINUTES**

**Welcome, call to order, and introductions**

Roll call was taken, and Jerry James welcomed the attendees and called the meeting to order.

**Public comments**

None.

**Discussion and agreement on agenda**

Consensus approval of the agenda

**Approval of BBASC meeting minutes from March 1, 2010**

Discussion regarding meeting locations. No changes made to minutes, but locations will remain open to discussion. Correct spelling of Warren Pulich's name. Revise language under "Overview of Water in the San Antonio Area" to state that SAWS aquifer storage and recovery project stores Edwards Aquifer water in the Carrizo Aquifer. Clarify that agency staff refers to the three agencies – TCEQ, TWDB, and TPWD. Minutes with changes approved unanimously.

**Update on the Texas Instream Flow Program: Dakus Geeslin - TCEQ, Gordon Linam - TPWD, Mark Wentzel - TWDB**

Mark Wentzel presented the background on the Texas Instream Flow Program/SB2. Local river authorities work as partners with the three agencies. Expect to be done with the lower San Antonio River (LSAR) Basin (downstream of USGS gage at Elmendorf and Cibolo Creek) by 2013. Agencies and river authorities design a study, followed by data collection and evaluation and producing a final report with flow regime recommendations. Numerous opportunities exist for stakeholder involvement. Study design and study report are peer reviewed. Preliminary information from the lower San Antonio River study should be available for the BBEST to use.

Gordon Linam discussed aquatic and riparian habitat assessment. Field work being done to identify specific habitats that various species prefer at different times/flows. Five indicator species selected – burrhead chub, pugnose minnow, freshwater eel, darter species, and the golden orb mussel.

Dakus Geeslin discussed the water quality aspect of the instream flow studies. Existing data will be evaluated. Additional data (temperature, dissolved oxygen-DO, pH, and conductivity) will be collected via long-term sonde deployment. A water quality modeling approach will be developed to allow prediction of water quality under various flow conditions. Presented temperature and DO data from the Goliad site. SARA is collecting nutrient data.

Additional discussion about specifics of LSAR study – extent of study area, how river and bay needs will be jointly taken care of (SB3 not SB2), consideration of Guadalupe River Basin (instream flow work to start in 2011-2012), availability of data for the BBEST (some preliminary data should be available), reconciling flow regimes from BBEST and TIFP (adaptive management).

### **BBEST budget overview – Ruben Solis**

Ruben Solis explained that the TWDB provides budgeting and funding support for the BBESTs. Overall goal is to provide same amount of funding for each BBEST – this amount is \$228,000. Money available to the BBEST for travel, per diem, work tasks, and contracts. Previous BBESTs have set up a budget, submitted it to the TWDB, who then submits it to the Environmental Flows Advisory Group for approval. Funds are then available for use. Ruben offered to attend next full BBEST meeting to provide information and assistance to members on reimbursement. Money can be moved around within the budget. Members should submit reimbursement requests promptly so that the budget can be tracked. The budget is tight.

### **SAC/BBEST relationship – Bob Huston, SAC Chair**

Bob Huston pleased with the joint BBASC/BBEST meeting. He reviewed the SB3 process. Six groups are involved in the process: EFAG, BBASC, BBEST, SAC, TCEQ (regulatory/rulemaking agency), resource agencies (TPWD, TWDB, TCEQ). Encourages the BBEST and BBASC to make use of the resource agencies. Review of SB3 charge (handout). Clear delineation of duties: BBEST responsible for determining a science-based flow regime, BBASC responsible for considering other factors in addition to the science. The SAC is supposed to be the body that maintains continuity in the scientific process across the state as the various basins work through the SB3 process. The SAC appoints liaisons to each BBEST. For Guadalupe-San Antonio, the primary liaison is George Ward, and the secondary is Jim Wiersema.

The current SAC has developed a series of six technical guidance documents. These are all working documents. The SAC also has developed and adopted the document “Discussion Paper: Moving from Instream Flow Regime Matrix Development to Environmental Flow Standard Recommendations,” which was transmitted to the BBASCs and BBESTs on February 17, 2010. In a perfect world, SB2 studies would have been started ten years ago and completed before the SB3 process started. The BBEST should not wait for SB2 results; the timing is not right. The SB2 results will be very important for the adaptive management component of SB3. The BBASC will develop a workplan for revisiting the flow standard at least every ten years. SAC will coordinate with the resource agencies to modify existing data collection programs to feed better into the SB3 adaptive management/workplan needs. Otherwise, there will not be enough money to fund much additional data collection.

The SAC liaison is a resource for the BBEST and also a conduit for information back to the SAC. It’s mainly about communication, not shifting work responsibilities. No official liaison from TCEQ, but a healthy dialogue has been maintained throughout the SB3 process. The BBEST needs to get to interim decisions by consensus and limit revisiting interim decisions. Be willing to make hard decisions and expect imperfections.

### **Overview of BBEST charge as stated in SB3 – Cory Horan**

Cory presented a short handout on duties of the BBEST under SB3. He stated that the BBASC has submitted a request to the EFAG to extend the originally imposed schedule for the work of the BBEST and the EFAG will be considering an extension. Encouraged the BBEST members to make use of environmental flows resources posted on the Web: SAC guidance documents, HEFR documentation, etc. Cory will e-mail the links to the group.

### **Previous BBEST experience – Sam Vaughn, HDR Engineering and member of the BBEST for the Sabine and Neches Rivers and Sabine Lake**

Presented a summary of and commentary about his experiences on the Sabine-Neches BBEST. He noted that the Guadalupe-San Antonio BBEST has more members from academia, which should be a benefit. He outlined the Sabine-Neches BBEST process, discussed the subcommittees that were formed to address the various disciplines, discussed work that was contracted out and the reasons for taking that approach, and acknowledged the significant support provided by the Sabine River Authority and the resource

agencies. Emphasized how valuable their decision tree was in capturing options evaluated and decisions made. Used HEFR as a starting point, then looked at other disciplines relative to flow (biology, water quality, sediment transport). Included qualifying language in each flow matrix table. BBEST developed not only recommendations, but also recognitions, which helped achieve consensus. Also had unresolved issues, and identified future studies and adaptive management as ways of dealing with them. There was minimal formal interaction between the BBEST and the BBASC; there was likely some informal communication. He emphasized that the starting point for the BBEST is defining what constitutes a sound ecological environment. Consideration of how the BBEST's recommended flow regime would impact water rights is outside the scope of its charge under SB3. That task is assigned to the BBASC.

### **BBASC process and schedule – Suzanne Scott**

Suzanne Scott expressed the desire for the BBASC to meet throughout the next year while the BBEST is doing its work and to get status reports from the BBEST. The BBASC would like to have a presentation from the South Texas Watermaster regarding how he handled the last two-year drought, how it affected water rights holders, and how riparian water rights affected conditions in the basin during the drought. Consensus of group is to meet monthly, the first Wednesday of each month.

Tyson Broad presented his memo regarding getting maps from various entities (TPWD, GBRA, SARA, etc.) to help BBASC members become familiar with the entire basin. The letter requests information that is readily available, not anything that has to be created. He requested input from BBASC members regarding which agencies to ask, how to word the request, what type of information to ask for. He wants to keep this simple – maybe about a dozen maps. Try to avoid getting duplicate information from different entities. Suzanne Scott offered to be the point of contact. BBASC consensus is that this information would be useful and should be obtained.

### **Future meetings and agenda items**

#### **BBASC**

Next meeting is Wednesday, May 5, 2010. Suggested agenda items:

- Status report from BBEST, either in person or written.
- Water use presentation – who uses water in the basin and how.
- Estuary overview – George Ward or Norman Boyd
- Briefing on SAC discussion paper mentioned by Bob Huston.
- Region L Water Plan – hold for later meeting. Also other two regions (N and J).
- Upper basin hydrology – maybe middle and lower.
- Drought – South Texas Watermaster
- Riparian water rights – does anyone keep track of water used under these rights?

Location of May 5 meeting: 1<sup>st</sup> choice – GBRA (Seguin), 2<sup>nd</sup> choice – SAWS (San Antonio)

#### **BBEST**

Next meeting is likely on Thursday, April 29, 2010. Cory will notify all members when date is finalized. Meeting location has not been determined and will also be sent out at a later date.

### **Public comments**

James Dodson offered information on the San Antonio Bay Partnership.

Bob Huston added that an additional lesson learned from previous basins is that BBASC and BBEST need to interact even after the BBEST finishes its recommendation report. BBEST should be considered an additional resource after completing its report. Also, note that the charge to the BBASC includes developing both flow standards and strategies to meet those standards.

### **Adjourn**