

Texas Environmental Flows Science Advisory Committee

Wednesday, July 14, 2010

8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Capitol Extension Building

Room E2.012

Austin, Texas 78701

MINUTES

Call to order Approval of meeting minutes from June 15, 2010

Chairman Huston called the meeting to order. The minutes from the June 15, 2010 meeting were approved by consensus.

Budget Update

Carla Guthrie, TWDB, gave an update on the remaining budget for the current fiscal year. She noted that funds remained in all budget categories and that unspent dollars could be moved to the next fiscal year. She noted that the second tier of BBEST budgets were in the process of being approved by the TWDB and the EFAG and that they included allocations for the BBEST members to work with the BBASC after submittal of the BBEST recommendations. The SAC agreed to review their budget after new BBESTs are established in order to determine if additional funds might be available for support of those groups.

Liaison Reports (San Antonio, Colorado, Nueces)

Member George Ward gave an update on the progress of the Guadalupe/San Antonio BBEST, noting that the group was addressing several issues which required decision making by the full BBEST, and had formed subcommittees to focus on various disciplines in order to put forth recommendations to the BBEST as a whole. Specific discussions included Sound Ecological Environment, selection of indicator species in the bay and estuary systems, and geographic extent.

Member Paul Jensen noted that the Colorado/Lavaca BBEST was making good progress in their efforts. He discussed the subcommittees formed by the group noting that they had chosen several indicator species and were utilizing an approach similar to that which occurred in the LCRA/SAWS Water Project. The group has been discussing the hydrologic exchange of the three bay/estuary systems under their charge. BBEST Member Dave Buzan discussed the various disciplines on which the group was focusing and their effort to look at those aspects of the ecosystem at the selected stations as well as their relations to environmental flows which will direct the hydrological analysis.

Member Paul Montagna discussed the activities of the Nueces BBEST. He noted that the group had only met one time to date, generally discussing their tasks as outlined in the statute and the time frame in which they had to work. He noted that this group had formed ahead of the official schedule and would have more time than other BBEST groups to meet their charge, but indicated the group's intention to utilize the time allotted to them without pause. He also noted that much work had previously been performed on the basin/bay system in relation to environmental flows, including adaptive management.

In anticipation of future SB3 basin and bay systems and in light of recent meteorological conditions, the SAC members briefly discussed the Rio Grande system, noting that much of the inflows to the

Lower Laguna Madre occurred outside of the actual Rio Grande watershed. This fact will need to be taken into consideration when [determining discussion](#) geographic extent of that system.

Report from WAM/Flow Regime Translation subcommittee

[Member Bob Brandes began this discussion by noting that this workgroup was focusing on an effort to investigate how environmental flow recommendations from a BBEST or BBASC could best be represented in the WAM or some other analytical tool for evaluating compliance and for applying such recommendations to proposed projects. He noted that the group was focusing on two main issues: \(1\) the extent to which environmental flow recommendations from a BBEST or BBASC could be satisfied based on water availability results from different WAMs, and \(2\) how best to evaluate the impacts of environmental flow recommendations on proposed water supply projects using a WAM and some other analytical tool. The group decided that an understanding of impacts in terms of actual flow numbers and real applications is needed, and this effort using various methods is underway.](#)

~~Member Bob Brandes began this discussion by noting that this workgroup was focusing on an effort to better understand how the WAM can be utilized to translate flow regimes into real world situations. He noted that the group was focusing on two main issues: how accurate are the BBEST recommendations when compared to real world conditions modeled by the WAM and how to evaluate the impacts of environmental flow recommendations on proposed water supply projects which may include environmental flow recommendations. The group decided that an understanding of impacts in terms of actual flow numbers and real applications is needed.~~

Further information will be distributed to this work group for future discussion. The intent of the SAC is to put forth this information as a recommendation as part of a guidance document.

Address need for additional HEFR Workshop

Dan Opdyke, TPWD, gave an overview of activities with respect to the HEFR workshop and the potential for an additional HEFR workshop. Dan proposed that a 2nd workshop be a half day [focus](#) on the technical aspects of HEFR. The SAC members agreed that this was appropriate. The 2nd HEFR workshop will be held in August.

The SAC members asked Dan to review the HEFR guidance document and identify items recommended for modification by the SAC.

Consider for Adoption Lessons Learned draft

Paul Montagna gave a status report on the Lessons Learned document. Members discussed the document, in particular how to address reservoirs and lake levels affecting habitat, and suggested minor revisions. The suggested revisions were accepted and [it was agreed that](#) the [revised final](#) document is [ready for release](#)~~being prepared as complete~~.

Work Plan Development guidance draft

Member Ed Oborny, not in attendance, passed on a report that he will redraft the work plan development document before the next meeting for the group to consider for approval.

Discussion of Cypress Basin Status – SAC role?

Rick Lowre, Caddo Lake Institute president, informed the group of the environmental flow efforts that have occurred in the Cypress river basin. The Cypress basin [has not yet been scheduled for standards development under](#)~~is not specifically mentioned in~~ SB3, and this discussion focused on the

ongoing efforts within the basin and how the SAC might approach this ~~basin and other basins not identified directly in SB3~~. Rick gave an overview of the environmental flow development process as applied to the Cypress basin, detailing the process taken. He noted that a report on the process could be made available to the SAC members. He stated that the Cypress group felt that they had met the objectives and intent of SB3 through their process and recommended that their results be considered as the SB3 environmental flow recommendations for this basin which TCEQ would use for rulemaking. He added that any issues identified would be addressed by the group. [-The SAC agreed to schedule a full presentation on the Cypress results at its September meeting.](#)

Public comments

There were no public comments at this time.

Next Meeting – Schedule (August 11 – TPWD) and Agenda

The next meeting will be held on August 11, 2010 at the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commissioner's hearing room. The meeting will begin at 8:30.

Items for discussion include:

- Work Plan Development guidance – final considerations and approval
- Modifications to the HEFR guidance document
- WAM/Flow Regime Translation subcommittee update
- BBEST Budget discussion

Adjourn