

Nueces River and Corpus Christi and Baffin Bays Basin and
Bay Expert Science Team (BBEST)
Friday, July 23, 2010 at 10:00 a.m.
Texas Parks and Wildlife Airport Commerce, Austin, TX

MINUTES

Call to Order and Introductions

Cory Horan, TCEQ, called the meeting to order. The members and audience introduced themselves and briefly discussed their main areas of expertise.

Approval of Minutes from June 21, 2010 Meeting

The members suggested two minor comments and the minutes from the June 21, 2010 meeting were approved by consensus.

Selection of Chair and Vice Chair

Members had discussed this topic via e-mail prior to this meeting. Sam Vaughn was nominated as chair and Rocky Freund was nominated as vice-chair. These nominations were approved by consensus and Sam Vaughn was appointed as chair. Rocky Freund was appointed as vice-chair.

Discussion of meeting rules

The members discussed potential meeting rules to be developed for the group. The key items addressed included what constitutes a quorum, the use of alternates/proxies, and how to define consensus. By consensus, the members agreed upon a set of meeting rules which will be drafted by Cory Horan and presented to the BBEST at their August meeting for approval.

The members agreed by consensus that decisions should be made by the BBEST as a whole, and only recommendations for consideration by the full BBEST should be developed by the various subcommittees. Members also agreed that no formal minutes of subcommittee meetings will be produced, but members will keep records of discussion items if a formal recommendation is to be presented to the BBEST as a whole.

SAC Lessons Learned from Initial SB3 BBESTs

SAC Chairman Bob Huston discussed the SAC "Lessons Learned" guidance document. In developing the document, the SAC tried to reflect on experiences of Trinity/San Jacinto and Sabine/Neches BBESTs in order to capture what the SAC felt was appropriate for future BBESTs to consider with the objective of informing future BBESTs to allow them to be more effective and successful. He noted that the BBEST work product would maintain its integrity throughout the process, without modification by the BBASCs or the EFAG. The document reminds readers that this is a collaborative process designed to achieve consensus, and consensus decisions must be documented and not revisited. It also notes that the BBEST must utilize only the best available science. In discussing adaptive management, the document states that there will be

uncertainties in the decision making process, but the work plan provides a mechanism for working through those uncertainties.

BBEST Budget Discussion – BBEST Members

Ruben Solis, TWDB, discussed the basic budget process, distributing the pertinent forms and explaining the reimbursement process. Chairman Vaugh distributed a strawman budget which the group reviewed and discussed the various budget items, including compensation for member's time, number of meetings and time allotted for subcommittee activities, and technical assignments of members that will result in a specific deliverable. Chairman Vaugh will refine the draft budget based on the discussion and comments received and will bring back to group for approval.

Geographic Scope of Instream Flow Recommendations – Kathy Alexander, TCEQ

Kathy Alexander, TCEQ, gave an overview of this SAC guidance document. Members discussed relevant topics including: a) Representation of headwater, transition, and deposition zones; b) SB2 study segments; c) Procedure development for interpolation between flow regime recommendation locations; d) Dealing with the Edwards Aquifer recharge zone; and e) Potential TPWD updates of ecologically significant stream segments to account for mussels. Sam Vaugh distributed a preliminary draft map showing locations of USGS streamflow gaging stations likely to be considered for flow regime recommendations and a table summarizing information relevant to geographic scope considerations for these stations. These materials are to refined pursuant to comments during the meeting, considered by the Hydrology Subcommittee, and updated prior to the next meeting. Ryan Smith distributed a reference summary of information relevant to ecologically significant stream segments identified by TPWD.

The HEFR Methodology – Dan Opdyke, TPWD

Dan Opdyke, TPWD, presented an introduction to the HEFR methodology. He explained that the rationale for using the HEFR method was because hydrology is considered the master variable in the available literature and that it has a significant impact on many ecosystem functions. He discussed the SAC guidance document which outlines the HEFR methodology and noted that the consideration of hydrology was only a first step that provides an initial estimate only. Opdyke advised that TPWD is willing to provide technical support to the Nueces BBEST, particularly with respect to applications of the HEFR methodology.

Review of Established Freshwater Inflow Methodology and Discussion of Trinity/San Jacinto BBEST Freshwater Inflow Approach

These items were postponed to a future meeting.

Establish BBEST Subcommittees

The group discussed the goals and objectives of subcommittees. By consensus, the members agreed that three subcommittees be established. The following subcommittee assignments were made:

Hydrology: Sam Vaugh - lead, Ryan Smith, Ben Hodges, Rocky Freund, David Hoeninghaus, Lonnie Stewart

Estuary: Greg Stunz - lead, Ken Dunton, Wayne Gardner, Ben Hodges, Dave Buzan

Instream: Dave Buzan - lead, David Hoeinghaus, Rocky Freund, Lance Williams, Ryan Smith, Tom Arsuffi, Lonnie Stewart

A chronological list of potentially relevant reports compiled from the Nueces River Authority and City of Corpus Christi libraries was provided to the members by Rocky Freund.

Discussion of Sound Ecological Environment (time permitting)

The item was postponed to a future meeting.

Timeline for Development of Environmental Flow Recommendations

The members discussed the available timeline approved by the EFAG and agreed by consensus that their target date for completion of recommendations would be October 1, 2011.

Next Meeting - Discussion Items

Topics for future meetings include:

- Discussion of timeline for future actions
- Review of established freshwater inflow methodology
- Trinity/San Jacinto BBEST freshwater inflow approach

The next meeting will be held on August 27, 2010 at 10:00 am in Austin.

Public Comment

There was no public comment at this time.

Adjourn