

**Colorado and Lavaca Rivers and Matagorda and Lavaca Bays
Basin and Bay Area Stakeholder Committee (BBASC)**

Wednesday, August 25, 2010 at 9:00 a.m.

LCRA-Lake Plant Facility

1052 FM 102, Eagle Lake, Texas 77434

MINUTES

BBASC Members Present: Chair Ronald Gertson, Vice-Chair Myron Hess, Bruce Arendale, Patrick Brzozowski, Jim Dailey, David Hill, Deedy Huffman, Joe King, Frank Lewis, Teresa Lutes, Dick Ottis, Jennifer Walker (alternate for Bob Pickens), L.G. Raun, Steve Box (alternate for Andy Samson), Clarence Schomburg, Haskell Simon, and Bryan Cook (alternate for Suzanne Zarling).

Call to Order and Introductions

Chairman Ronald Gertson called the meeting to order and meeting attendees introduced themselves.

Discussion and Agreement on Agenda

Two items were added to the meeting agenda: 1) BBEST update and 2) discussion of a WAM subcommittee.

Public Comments

none

Stakeholder replacements for Rick Kresta

To facilitate the replacement of Rick Kresta (recreational user interest group), a subcommittee was formed to bring a replacement recommendation to the October meeting for the stakeholders to consider. Bruce Arendale, Patrick Brzozowski, and Myron Hess volunteered to participate, with Bruce taking the role of subcommittee chairman. A decision was made to open up a one month period for new nominations on the TCEQ website.

Approval of meeting minutes

Corrections to the attendee list of the May 26th BBASC meeting needed to be made. These changes will be made, and the finalized version will be posted to the website.

Instream Flow Presentation

SAC member, Ed Oborny, gave a presentation on the elements of an instream flow regime. He began with an overview of the Texas Instream Flow Program (TIFP) and the goal of an instream flow study to holistically consider all possible scientific disciplines (e.g., hydrology, biology, water quality, etc.). The four flow components identified by the TIFP (subsistence, base, high flow pulse, and overbank flows) were defined and their ecological purpose described. The importance of variation between the flow components was discussed in the context of providing instream habitat to a variety of organisms and the overall maintenance of a sound ecological environment.

Freshwater Inflows Presentation

Leslie Hartman, Matagorda Bay Ecosystem Leader with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, gave a presentation on the importance of freshwater inflows to Matagorda and East Matagorda Bays. She talked about the historical inflows and seasonal salinities of these systems and the factors that cause inflow variability over time. The inflow needs of the Matagorda Bay system were discussed based on previous studies and analyses, and the beneficial role of freshwater inflows was described. She then gave examples of specific bay-inhabiting fish and invertebrates, talking about their life cycles and the salinity preferences of each organism's life cycle stage. Lastly, she discussed the negative effects that reduced freshwater inflow can have on the estuarine ecosystem.

BBEST Update

BBEST chair Dave Buzan provided an update of the science team's recent activities. He gave a refresher on the BBEST's work timeline and the group's overall charge. He discussed tools available to the BBASC, such as the WAM, to help evaluate flow recommendations and encouraged the BBASC to get familiar with them. He mentioned that the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB), at the last BBEST meeting, had proposed a meeting to start talking about how the WAM might be used to assist the BBASC, and that the BBEST hydrologists plan on being involved in this process.

WAM Subcommittee

Having attended the BBEST meeting, Myron Hess proposed forming a BBASC subcommittee with the purpose of participating in and providing input to the WAM development meetings with the BBEST and state agencies, and ultimately bringing recommendations to the next full BBASC meeting. A subcommittee was formed with the following members: Pat Brzozowski (chair), Myron Hess, Haskell Simon, Andy Samson, Suzanne Zarling, Teresa Lutes, and Clarence Schomburg. Myron would coordinate with TWDB on next steps.

Recreation Presentation

Bruce Arendale gave a presentation on recreational uses within the Colorado and Lavaca River basins. He showed pictures of family outings and personal experiences spent fishing, boating, water skiing, swimming, and hunting in and around the Colorado River, the Highland Lakes, and the bay. He listed examples of the many possible recreational uses that one could take part in and discussed the value that water recreation brings to the individual.

Irrigated Agriculture Presentation

L.G. Raun, a third-generation rice farmer, gave a presentation on irrigated agriculture in the context of growing rice. He spoke about his own family's past involvement in rice farming and also briefly discussed the origins and evolution of the industry in the U.S. The benefits to humans (food, direct and indirect economic impacts, recreation) and to wildlife (food, habitat) were described, as well as the industry's heritage of environmental stewardship (e.g., wetland restoration). A secure supply of water (surface and groundwater), which can rival or exceed that needed for municipal use, is critical for maintaining production and the quality of life that it brings.

Lunch Break

Discussion of professional facilitation of future meetings

Ronald Gertson introduced the idea of potentially using professional services to facilitate BBASC meetings, once the work of making recommendations is taken up (possibly 10-12 meetings over a 6 month period), and write up a final report. The issue of funding needs and sources was discussed. Myron Hess spoke briefly about the experience of the Trinity-San Jacinto BBASC, saying that an estimate for facilitation of 8 meetings could cost around \$40,000. The possibility of using LCRA facilitators was mentioned. Myron offered to get more information on the options available. All stakeholders were encouraged to look within their own circles for potential funding sources.

Next meeting date and agenda

The next meeting (October 28) will be planned for Austin, with Teresa Lutes tasked with looking for a specific location. As for potential presentations for the next meeting, Teresa was willing to talk about municipal uses, and Myron agreed to be prepared to do a presentation, if time allows, for his interest group. Myron also agreed to check with Suzanne Zarling of LCRA to see what they would be presenting. Facilitation would be revisited at the next meeting. The topic of regional water planning would be reserved for a later meeting. The following meeting was set for December 1. Joe King was going to check on whether it could be hosted at STP in Matagorda County. If not, LCRA could be a potential location.

Tour of rice-growing region