

**Nueces River and Corpus Christi and Baffin Bays  
Basin and Bay Expert Science Team (BBEST)**

Friday, August 27, 2010 at 10:00 a.m.

Texas Parks & Wildlife Department Headquarters, Austin, Texas

**MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Sam Vaughn, Rocky Freund, Lonnie Stewart, Ryan Smith, Tom Arsuffi, David Hoeinghaus, Greg Stunz, Ben Hodges, Dave Buzan, Wayne Gardner

**Call to Order and Introductions**

Chairman Sam Vaughn called the meeting to order.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment at this time.

**Approval of Minutes from July 23, 2010 Meeting**

The minutes from the July 23, 2010 meeting were approved by consensus.

**Approval of Draft Meeting Rules**

The members discussed the draft meeting rules as prepared by Cory Horan, TCEQ. Mr. Horan will incorporate all comments and revise the meeting rule document for consideration and approval at the next BBEST meeting.

**Science Advisory Committee (SAC) Report (Montagna)**

SAC liaison Paul Montagna noted that the SAC Work Plan document has been finalized and is available on the TCEQ environmental flow resources website:

[http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/permitting/water\\_supply/water\\_rights/eflows/resources.html](http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/permitting/water_supply/water_rights/eflows/resources.html).

He explained that the next task of the SAC is to review existing SAC guidance documents and refine as necessary.

**BBEST Budget Discussion**

Ruben Solis, TWDB, explained that the BBEST budget would be \$228,000 for fiscal year 2010. Chairman Vaughn distributed a draft budget estimate (dated 8/27/2010) and members discussed meeting the various components, but agreed that this would be revisited if necessary. The members also discussed meeting expenses, specific task assignments to members, and potential services to be contracted. It was noted that member Rocky Freund will not be charging for expenses. By consensus the group agreed to submit for approval the proposed BBEST budget with a note to allow some flexibility within budget tasks.

The approved budget will be sent to the Environmental Flows Advisory Group for approval.

## **Draft Timeline for Environmental Flow Analyses and Environmental Flow Regime Recommendations**

A draft timeline of the steps involved with the development of an environmental flow regime was discussed. Using this schedule the members outlined what needs to occur in the process. Members discussed decisions that will need to occur regarding key species, key habitats and key ecological processes, as well as hydrological, water quality, and other important decision points. Chairman Vaugh will incorporate all the comments discussed and will also take input from the subcommittee chairs to further refine the draft timeline. This information will be used to further refine the BBEST budget as the process evolves.

## **Subcommittee Membership, Functions, & Logistics**

The task of each subcommittee is to bring back recommendations for consideration and approval by the full BBEST so that the members can stay up to date and informed of all processes. The BBEST subcommittees and the lead for each are defined in the approved Minutes of the July 23, 2010 meeting.

## **Review of Established Freshwater Inflow Methodology and Discussion of Trinity/San Jacinto BBEST Freshwater Inflow Approach (Buzan)**

Dave Buzan discussed the freshwater inflow methodologies used by the Sabine/Neches/Sabine Lake Bay and the Trinity/San Jacinto/Galveston Bay BBESTs and similar groups in order to provide perspective on the various approaches to developing freshwater inflow recommendations. He also discussed the Freshwater Inflow guidance document developed by the SAC and explained that the document noted that a reasonable management goal is to maintain the modified, but still sound ecological environment that has evolved for each bay system, and this requires consideration of multiple sources and processes. These include:

- Modifications in water exchange with Gulf
- Changing commercial and recreational fishing
- Changing sediment and nutrient loading
- Changing wastewater discharges and rainfall runoff
- Changing land use

The members discussed whether it could adopt a previously established freshwater inflow method. Chairman Vaugh noted that the group will want to consider what has been done by previous groups, adopt a methodology as appropriate, or improve and refine their recommendations based on previous methodologies. The ultimate goal is to protect a sound ecological environment.

## **Discussion of Estuary Work Elements and Issues**

The estuary subcommittee has not met at this point. The group will be digesting information from previous studies and basin specific characteristics. Subcommittee chair Greg Stunz noted that the group would need to consider Baffin Bay and how they might approach developing recommendations for that system as well as Corpus Christi Bay. The goal is to develop an outline of the process that discusses what kinds of analysis will be considered, so the group can begin to prioritize steps that need to be taken.

## **Discussion of Hydrology Work Elements and Issues**

The hydrology subcommittee met via conference call on August 23<sup>rd</sup>. The members discussed gage locations and available historical data from each site, ecologically significant stream segments, and various other site characteristics of importance. The subcommittee agreed to document the conditions on why a specific site was chosen for analysis for the development of an environmental flow regime.

The members discussed the sites that were evaluated, the factors considered at each gage location, and the modification of sites selected or removed from the recommended list. The subcommittee recommends adding the Sabinal River at Sabinal, gage #08198500, for a total of 21 sites. The BBEST approved this recommendation by consensus. By consensus, the group selected the following pilot sites for initial hydrologic analysis:

- Nueces at Laguna
- Sabinal above Sabinal
- Frio at Derby
- Nueces at Mathis
- Nueces at Uvalde
- San Miguel Creek at Tilden

The hydrology subcommittee will make the necessary interim parameter selections with Dan Opdyke, TPWD, in order to show flow statistics and how the HEFR results are affected by hydrographic separation techniques. The group will be discussing and making recommendations related to seasonality. The decisions on HEFR modifications will be made by the full BBEST. The hydrology subcommittee will perform hydrological analysis on the selected pilot gages and will report their results to the full BEST so a formal decision can be made on hydrographic separation techniques and other relevant assumptions for HEFR applications.

## **Discussion of Instream Work Elements and Issues**

The instream subcommittee will review the framework that the Guadalupe/San Antonio BBEST is using, as well as the framework that the Colorado/Lavaca BBEST is using, and will come back to the BBEST with a recommended approach to moving forward. TPWD may be willing to provide technical support in the forms of cross section data collection and compilation of data is currently available.

## **Future Meetings**

The next BBEST meeting will be held on October 22<sup>nd</sup> in Corpus Christi. It was noted that the Nueces BBASC meeting will be held on October 20<sup>th</sup> in Corpus Christi. The next BBEST meeting will be held on December 10, 2010.

The instream subcommittee will be meeting on September 10<sup>th</sup>, the hydrology subcommittee will meet on September 17, 2010. Dan Opdyke will get direction from this subcommittee meeting and will begin to perform the hydrologic analysis on the selected pilot study sites to

have the data ready for the October meeting. A second hydrology subcommittee meeting will be held on October 1, 2010.

The estuary subcommittee will schedule a meeting when all members are available.

**Public Comment**

Jace Tunnel, CBBEP, asked if non-BBEST members could participate in subcommittee conference calls. The group agreed that this would be appropriate. Subcommittee notices will be sent to the BBEST members and interested parties, as well as to the full BBASC.

**Adjourn**