

**Guadalupe, San Antonio, Mission, and Aransas Rivers and
Mission, Copano, Aransas, and San Antonio Bays
Basin and Bay Expert Science Team (BBEST)
Thursday, November 18, 2010 at 10:00 a.m.
University of Texas Marine Sciences Institute, Port Aransas, Texas**

Minutes

Call to Order

BBEST Chairman Sam Vaughn called the meeting to order.

Public Comment

There was no public comment at this time.

Approval of Minutes from October 14, 2010 Meeting

The minutes from the October 14, 2010 BBEST meeting were approved by consensus.

Science Advisory Committee (SAC) Report (Ward)

SAC member George Ward discussed the recent activities of the SAC. He noted that the group was developing guidance related to implementation of flow standards focusing on methods for evaluating interrelationships between recommended environmental flow regimes and proposed water supply projects. He noted that the proposed environmental flow standards for the Trinity/San Jacinto and Sabine/Neches basin and bay systems had been published by the TCEQ. BBEST vice-chair Norman Johns explained the TCEQ rules process and noted that the proposed environmental flow standards were subject to change.

BBASC Report (Raabe)

Steve Raabe, San Antonio River Authority (SARA), discussed the activities of the Guadalupe/San Antonio BBASC. He noted that the group was beginning to discuss options for framing their comments and recommendations they will be developing in response to the submittal of the BBEST environmental flows recommendation report. The BBASC is discussing how they might go about considering "other factors" including present and future needs for water for other uses related to water supply planning. The BBASC members identified concerns and other factors that the members will want to consider in their review. SAC chairman Bob Huston recommended, and the BBASC agreed, to categorize the various discussion points in relation to:

- Issues to be addressed by the BBEST
- BBASC considerations
- Potential strategies to meet environmental flow standards

Dianne Wassenich (vice-chair, BBASC) advised that the BBASC may be participating in a field trip hosted by the National Wildlife Federation immediately after the January 12, 2011 meeting of the BBASC.

BBEST Budget Update (TWDB)

Caimee Schoenbaechler, TWDB, discussed the remaining BBEST budget and requested that members submit reimbursement for expenses in a timely manner. Norman Johns suggested the group discuss the various technical assignments of the group and the need to set hours dedicated to each task, then revisit the budget so that any available funds may be re-allocated.

Discussion of GSA BBEST Recommendations Report & Schedule (Vaugh)

The BBEST members discussed the draft outline as amended per discussion during the October meeting. Members discussed the various chapters and identified the necessary considerations needed in order to prepare the report. Members made technical assignments as to who will draft the various components of the report. The draft outline was modified as discussed. The members will provide an estimate of hours necessary to complete technical assignments prior to the Thanksgiving holidays so that the budget can be adjusted as necessary. Members agreed to develop draft sections of the report prior to the December BBEST meeting. Each author is to submit their portion of the report to the BBEST chairs, Steve Raabe, and Cory Horan (TCEQ).

Subcommittee Report & Discussion of Estuary Work Elements and Issues

Member Warren Pulich gave a brief overview of the activities of the Estuary subcommittee. He noted that the subcommittee was on track to complete their assigned tasks. A GIS analyst was hired to support analysis of the TxBLEND models of salinity. He noted that a “blue crab workshop” would be held the following day to look at the availability of data and to develop a methodology applicable to using data to relate species abundance to freshwater inflows and salinity. Norman Johns gave a presentation discussing the application of the salinity zone approach to oysters. Members also discussed potential approaches to addressing drought conditions and low inflow criteria. The members agreed by consensus to allow Norman Johns to submit hours needed to address this drought strategy to be incorporated into the overall tasks/assignments and budget considerations.

Subcommittee Report & Discussion of Instream Work Elements and Issues

TWDB gave a status report on their sampling efforts and noted that 6 initial sites would be completed by the end of the week and that all field collection should be complete by December 2nd at which time member Thom Hardy’s rapid assessment methodology would be applied. Members discussed concerns regarding absence of data collected in Texas from the rapid assessment methodology database. It was agreed that the rapid assessment methodology and use of non-Texas data would likely be sufficient in light of time constraints. Thom Hardy noted that the habitat analysis could be completed shortly after the field data becomes available and that results should be available by the December meeting.

Members Debbie Magin, Mike Gonzales, and Gregg Eckhardt will coordinate in their analysis of water quality and instream flow conditions, using data collected by various programs across the state, in an attempt to relate dissolved oxygen and other parameters to flow. Nutrient data, where available, will also be considered.

Member Liz Smith discussed her proposal for the development of riparian data to apply to the biological overlay to the hydrology based analysis. She will refine the proposal based on discussions and submit for approval to proceed.

Subcommittee Report & Discussion of Hydrology Work Elements and Issues

At the October BBEST meeting, the members agreed to utilize the full period of record in their hydrologic analysis. Analysis of two sites, Cuero and Elmendorf, involved only the late period of record. The group agreed to extend the records for these two sites to be consistent with the procedure used for the other sites.

Sam Vaughn gave a brief summary of the draft environmental flow standards recently proposed by the TCEQ for the Sabine/Neches and Trinity/San Jacinto basins. These were presented as an example of how a HEFR matrix ends up in draft rules promulgating environmental flow standards. He discussed the approach taken by the Sabine/Neches BBEST to develop their environmental flow recommendations, noting that reservoir storage was used to define hydrologic conditions.

The members provided input as to what they would like to see and how to direct potential contractors in their time series analysis, noting that the goal was to provide information that will allow the group to develop an understanding of what implementation of a flow regime would look like. The members discussed the various components outlined in the draft scope of work, identifying considerations that should be addressed and making revisions to the various tasks outlined in the draft scope of work as appropriate. The group agreed by consensus to move forward with the draft scope of work.

The members discussed the procurement process and timeline for implementation of the contract. The group agreed that Chairman Vaughn would develop evaluation criteria and that Members Vaughn, Johns, Gonzales, Magin, and Eckhardt would be reviewers for the proposals submitted in response to the request for qualifications.

Future Meetings

The next BBEST meeting was moved from the usual 2nd Thursday of the month to Monday, December 20 and Tuesday, December 21, 2010. The meeting on Monday the 20th will begin at 10:00 and will be focused on instream flows. The meeting on Tuesday the 21st will begin at 11:00 and will focus on freshwater inflows. The meetings will be held at the San Antonio River Authority.

Subsequent meetings are scheduled to be held on:

- January 20, 2010
- February 3, 2010
- February 17, 2010

Public Comment

BBASC vice-chair Dianne Wassenich questioned why the BBEST was considering yields of potential water supply projects. Chairman Vaugh clarified that the BBEST will not be considering yields in preparing its recommendations as this is outside of the BBEST charge.

There were no other public comments.

Adjourn