

# **Trinity and San Jacinto River Basins and Galveston Bay BBASC and BBEST Work Plan Development Meeting**

Wednesday, February 29, 2012 at 1:00 p.m.  
San Jacinto River Authority Office  
1577 Damsite Road, Conroe, Texas

## **Minutes**

### **Members Present:**

**(BBASC)** – Danny Vance (Chair), John Bartos (Vice-Chair), Scott Alford, Glenda Callaway, Zachary Holland, Jace Houston, Kathy Turner-Jones, Ken Kramer, Glynnna Leiper, Ted Long, Carl Masterson (alternate for Terry Anderson), Paul Nelson, Jim Parks, Denis Qualls, Adam Sinclair, Lori Traweek, Pudge Wilcox, Tracy Woody

**(BBEST)** – Bill Espey (Chair), Jim Lester (Vice-Chair), Richard Browning, Alan Plummer, Bob McFarlane, Antonietta Quigg, Mike Reedy, Sammy Ray, Tony Smith

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### **Call to Order**

BBASC Chairman Danny Vance called the meeting to order.

### **Public Comment**

None.

### **Approval of January 5, 2011 Meeting Minutes**

The meeting minutes were approved with one minor correction.

### **Discussion of BBASC Member Replacement (Kachtick)**

A nomination form for Tom Stang was distributed to members. Tom was unanimously approved as the replacement for Jim Kachtick.

### **TCEQ Environmental Flows Rulemaking Update**

Chris Loft with TCEQ told that group that TCEQ is currently developing environmental flow rule implementation guidance for use in water rights permitting. TCEQ recently solicited comments from the public on issues that they wanted addressed. The agency is now working through those comments and hopes to have draft guidance completed within a few weeks or so. Glenda Callaway asked how the guidance would be distributed. Chris said he didn't know, but will get back to the group with an answer.

### **BBEST Presentation on Draft Work Plan**

Bill Espey summarized the BBEST's efforts to incorporate stakeholder comments into the draft work plan as well as their rewriting efforts in some of the other sections. BBEST vice-chair Jim Lester gave a Powerpoint presentation outlining the editorial changes made to the Bays and Estuaries (B&E) section. First, the change in the final TCEQ rules from annual to seasonal freshwater inflow criteria prompted a changes in wording which expressed the allowance for opportunities

to recommend long-term monitoring efforts to assess the standards. Furthermore, the shift to seasonal criteria also prompted the recommendation to address the absence of winter season criteria in the original BBEST inflow recommendations. He next showed some minor editorial corrections in the Knowledge Gaps portion of the Estuarine Ecology section of the draft document. Also in the Estuarine Ecology section, Jim showed edits to a bulleted item under the Validation heading that removed references conditioned on freshwater inflow standards that have the potential for validation. And lastly, a sentence under the Refinement heading was also reworded as a result of the rule changes. Bill Espey stated that the instream flow section had only minor edits in response to the TCEQ rule changes.

### **Discussion of Draft Work Plan and Path Forward**

BBASC members discussed the draft work plan and what actions, if any, need to take place. Glenda commented that additional discussion needs to happen regarding the mechanics and logistics of implementing the plan, and the BBASC needs to further narrow down the priority steps and identify what should be done in the next five years. She also said that there should be more detail on potential funding. Ken Kramer wanted to be more specific about who already is doing some of the work identified in the plan (e.g., Senate Bill 2 instream flow studies, USGS monitoring, etc.). John Bartos suggested that a subcommittee could work on these issues.

Members modified some of the wording in the draft work plan to be more specific that the BBASC, in addition to the BBEST, also has the ability to initiate and recommend changes to the flow standards. After further discussion, a motion was approved that the BBEST report as revised be accepted and submitted to EFAG as a draft work plan. Members discussed the possibility of forming a subcommittee to work on supplemental information for the work plan. Feedback received from the SAC in the near future will also feed into that process.

### **Public Comment**

BBEST member Sammy Ray said that Dermo appeared in Trinity Bay in July of this year. He said the salinity in the bay was 26 ppt. With salinity being so high, young oysters are getting infected earlier. He expressed disappointment that TPWD will not be able to continue oyster sampling for Dermo disease due to budget cuts. He offered to inspect oysters and analyze data if someone else is willing to collect samples. He also said that blue crabs are not plentiful enough for the whooping cranes when they come in the winter.

Cindy Loeffler (TPWD) confirmed that budget cuts have unfortunately occurred, but she will bring this discussion back to her agency for their consideration. She also said that discussions have begun amongst the resource agencies regarding coordination and synergies of the SB 2 and SB 3 programs in light of funding reductions for all the agencies.

Antonietta Quigg of the BBEST mentioned an ongoing study in Galveston Bay looking at the effects of freshwater inflows that will end in September in 2013. Referring to two of the biological indicators used in the BBEST report, she said

that sampling is not turning up any wild celery, and that Rangia clams are also smaller than usual.

Fred Manhart of the SAC said that if the work plan is to be submitted to the EFAG, he advised that backup materials be submitted by September 1<sup>st</sup>. Bill Espey said that the BBEST will make the changes to the draft work plan that have been discussed, and he will then make sure the revised version gets submitted as soon as possible to the EFAG and SAC. He will also copy the BBASC with that transmission.

**Discussion of Future Activities**

The next meeting was scheduled for December 7, 2011 at 1:00 pm in Conroe at SJRA, which is also the date of the next Region H meeting.

**Adjourn**