

**MEETING OF THE NUECES RIVER AND CORPUS CHRISTI BAY AND  
BAFFIN BAY BASIN AND BAY AREA STAKEHOLDERS COMMITTEE**

**10:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.**

**OCTOBER 19, 2011**

**TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY RESEARCH AND EXTENSION CENTER**

**1619 GARNER FIELD ROAD**

**UVALDE, TEXAS**

**MEETING MINUTES**

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**Members Present:** Con Mims, Chair; James Dodson, Vice Chair; Jace Tunnel (for Ray Allen), Rocky Freund, Gus Gonzales, Don Roach (for Jim Naismith); Wes Tunnel; Mike Mahoney; Tom Ballou; Joel Pigg; John Adams; Ross Thompson; Scotty Bledsoe; Teresa Carrillo; Jim Bader

**Call to order and Roll Call**

Chairman Con Mims called the meeting to order and roll call was taken.

**Review membership and authorize changes, as necessary**

Chairman Mims noted that member Dr. Jim Gallagher, representing agricultural water users, had resigned from the BBASC. As there is another member representing agricultural water users on the BBASC, the members agreed that representation for this category was adequate. By consensus the members agreed and that no replacement for Dr. Gallagher was necessary.

Chairman Mims noted that member Andy Garza, representing soil and water conservation districts, had also resigned from the BBASC. By consensus the members agreed to appoint Jim Bader, Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB), to the BBASC representing soil and water conservation districts.

With Mr. Bader in attendance the BBASC reached a quorum.

**Approve Minutes**

The minutes for the April 20, 2011 BBASC meeting were approved by consensus.

**Comments from Texas Commission on Environmental Quality**

Cory Horan, TCEQ, recommended that members familiarize themselves with the recommendation reports produced by other BBASC groups as well as environmental flows rules adopted by the TCEQ.

Chairman Mims noted that the BBEST report is based on best available science and is not subject to change by the BBASC.

## **Presentation on the Nueces River and Corpus Christi Bay and Baffin Bay Basin and Bay Area Expert Science Team's (Nueces BBEST) environmental flows recommendations report**

BBEST Chair Sam Vaughn began a discussion of the environmental flow recommendations developed by the Nueces BBEST.

He identified the geographic scope and the 20 USGS gage locations the BBEST had selected. He noted the group elected to use the Hydrology-Based Environmental Flow Regime (HEFR) methodology to identify the statistical hydrology, and then applied biological, water quality, and geomorphic overlays to determine whether adjustments to the HEFR regime were appropriate. Members Ryan Smith and Dave Buzan explained the BBEST instream flow analysis and recommendations. They noted that while no SB2 type data existed within the basin, the BBEST initiated cross section data collection and analysis performed at 3 selected sites. In their habitat analysis the BBEST superimposed the HEFR generated flow ranges over their habitat availability curves to determine if the HEFR flows were maintaining enough habitat on a species by species, and not by guild, basis. The group concluded that the HEFR numbers would maintain suitable habitat and water quality sufficient to support a sound ecological environment.

BBEST member Greg Stunz led a discussion regarding the BBEST's Bay and Estuary recommendations. He noted that the group focused mainly on the Nueces River delta and Nueces Bay. The group evaluated the changes from historic conditions, primarily the oyster fishery, and historic inflows to the bay and determined that the system did not constitute a sound ecological environment. In developing their freshwater inflow recommendations the group considered historic water availability, freshwater inflow/salinity relationships, and ecological needs of selected focal species. He noted that the seasonal inflow recommendations were based on meeting the biological needs of all indicator species, while accounting for historical patterns of water availability.

Chairman Vaughn then explained how the BBEST evaluated the practical application of their environmental flow regime recommendations using a theoretical water supply project.

## **Discussion and appropriate action on future activities and responsibilities of the Nueces BBASC, meeting schedules, funding, and Nueces BBEST support**

Vice Chairman James Dodson reviewed the BBASC time frame noting that recommendations from the BBASC were due to TCEQ and the Environmental Flows Advisory Group (EFAG) on September 1, 2012. The BBASC agreed to form a subcommittee that will meet several times over the next two months in order to review the BBEST report and recommendations and prepare a work plan for the development, by the full BBASC, of comments, recommendations and strategies to be submitted to TCEQ by September 1. The subcommittee members are: Ray Allen (&/or alternate Jace Tunnell); Jim Tolan; Gus Gonzalez; Con Mims; Rocky Freund;

Teresa Carrillo; Joel Pigg; Don Roach and James Dodson (subcommittee lead). Any BBASC member can participate in these subcommittee meetings.

Ruben Solis, TWDB, informed the BBASC that \$22,000 has been made available to the BBEST to directly assist the BBASC in evaluating the BBEST recommendations. SB3 does not allocate funding for the BBASC itself.

Members discussed funding for BBASC activities and public outreach and education on environmental flows and the group's activities. The subcommittee will explore these issues and report back to the full BBASC. It was noted that comments from the public are accepted and will be incorporated into the group's meeting minutes.

**Public comment**

There was no public comment at this time.

**Adjourn**