

# **Brazos River and Associated Bay and Estuary System Basin and Bay Stakeholder Committee (BBASC) Meeting**

**Tuesday, October 25, 2011 at 10:00 a.m.**

**Brazos River Authority Offices  
Waco, Texas**

## **Minutes**

### **Introductions**

BBASC chair Dale Spurgin called the meeting to order and members introduced themselves.

### **Public Comment**

None.

### **Approval of August 23, 2011 meeting minutes**

The minutes of the August 23, 2011 meeting minutes were approved without changes.

### **Basin and Bay Expert Science Team (BBEST) update**

BBEST member Tiffany Morgan gave an update of the science team's activities via a PowerPoint presentation (posted to the group's website). She said that the BBEST has developed the table of contents for their report and report section writing assignments have been made. December 15<sup>th</sup> has been set as the deadline for members to complete drafts of their section prior to being sent to the Texas Water Resources Institute (TWRI) for final editing and formatting. March 1, 2012 is the deadline for final report submittal to TCEQ. Tiffany next listed the analyses and recommendations that have been completed as well as those that are still in progress. She briefly explained the fish habitat guild approach and mentioned that focal species have been identified for each guild. Based on fish community data and other factors, the BBEST has made determinations of ecological soundness for most of the subwatersheds of the basin, with the majority found to have a high level of soundness. The Leon and Bosque subwatersheds are still being assessed. Tiffany laid out the flow components for which recommendations will be made (subsistence, three base flow levels, as many as four high flow pulse flow levels, and overbank flows), noting that members are recommending removal of the two per year high flow pulse level due to its similarity to the one per season level. Lastly, Tiffany explained the BBEST's work on determining a hydrologic condition approach and the options being considered: Palmer Hydrologic Drought Index, reservoir condition, combination of Palmer Index and reservoir condition, and hydrologic statistics (based on percentiles of historical flow). BBASC chairman Dale Spurgin asked if draft recommendations would be available for preview at their next meeting in January. Tiffany said she would check with the BBEST but expected it to not be a problem. BBASC alternate Tyson Broad asked if any Work Plan recommendations will be made by the BBEST. Tiffany confirmed that they will be doing making those recommendations in their report.

### **Replacement of Two Recreational Water Users Interest Group Members**

The BBASC considered four candidates to fill two vacancies on the committee, both in the recreational water users interest group category. Dan Loomis was present at the meeting and gave a brief overview of his background. BBASC members gave a background on the other three candidates: Ed Lowe for Jack Cathey, Tyson Broad for Cindy Bartos, and Phil Ford for Michael Bales. Members were instructed to write down their top two choices on paper, and the votes were then collected and tallied. The results of the vote were that Cindy Bartos and Dan Loomis were selected as the replacement recreational user representatives on the BBASC.

### **Presentation: Flow Regime Application Tool (FRAT) – Kirk Kennedy**

Kirk Kennedy with Kennedy Resource Company gave a PowerPoint presentation (posted to website) regarding the Flow Regime Application Tool (FRAT). Kirk started by providing an overview of the Water Availability Model (WAM) and its use in the water rights permitting process. He explained how WAMs have been used in the Senate Bill 3 process as a means of estimating inflows to water development projects, which through the use of FRAT are evaluated for their potential effect on instream flows. Kirk went over what FRAT is, how it was developed and continues to be refined, what it requires in the way of inputs, and the types of output it provides. He said that FRAT results can be used by BBASCs/BBESTs to determine the effect of a project on firm yield (reservoirs) and river flows under various environmental flow scenarios (i.e, no environmental requirements, TCEQ Modified Lyons, TWDB Consensus Criteria, or BBEST/BBASC Recommendations). Kirk then went into further details on the information needed as inputs to FRAT including e-flow recommendations and how they are applied, daily pattern of flow, project configuration, and WAM output. He mentioned the types of flows that could be used for comparison to FRAT results such as naturalized flows (WAM input), current conditions flows (WAM Run 8 output), and historical flows from the USGS gage. Kirk said that the baseline flow input to FRAT is typically the WAM Run 3 output which represents a worst-case of sorts in that full utilization of existing water rights is assumed with no return flows. Projects are then “implemented” in FRAT taking into account any environmental flow restrictions, and the results are used to understand how the e-flow recommendations affect the project’s ability to supply water and how the project impacts river flows. FRAT can also compute the flow reserved by the e-flow recommendation (i.e, assuming all flow above the recommendation is removed). Kirk discussed the process involved with determining hydrologic conditions and what previous groups have used (e.g., reservoir storage, cumulative flow). He walked the group through the project evaluation done by the Colorado-Lavaca BBASC as an example for the group demonstrating the daily flow frequency and daily time series charts that can be generated based on the FRAT analysis. BBASC members asked what the time and money requirements for FRAT analysis are. Kirk responded that the analysis for one project can cost roughly \$10,000-\$15,000 and be done in less than a month. Dan Opdyke (TPWD) mentioned what other groups have done in the past and added that the Brazos BBEST could use projects in their work that might be useable by the BBASC.

### **Discussion of Funding for Facilitation and Other Studies or Analysis**

In discussing the need for facilitation, Tyson Broad, who served on the Guadalupe-San Antonio BBASC, said that that their group would have been in trouble without it. He recalled that the facilitation services cost approximately \$25,000, and the money was raised from within the group. Potential funding sources can come from grants, foundations, and individual interest groups. BBASC member Matt Phillips said that there are several foundations that he has experience with that could be approached for potential contributions. As far as the technical analysis services that could be needed, Tyson said that for the Guadalupe-San Antonio BBASC, the FRAT analysis proved to be critical in the process of balancing the different interests of the group. He also said that the group spent about \$100,000 for the technical consultant, which included the FRAT analyses, report-writing, and other services. The City of San Antonio and the participating river authorities contributed a majority of the funds. BBASC members agreed that a subcommittee should be formed to further investigate and pursue fundraising possibilities. Dale said that he would consult with vice-chair Tom Michel on getting a subcommittee started and will e-mail the group by the first of next week on how to proceed.

### **Identification/Discussion of Important Issues to Consider**

Dale asked members to go around the table and raise any additional issues that they feel are important for the group to consider in their process.

#### Tom Conry (Municipalities)

Tom wants to ask the BBEST to evaluate the percentages associated with the dry/average/wet hydrologic conditions that were mentioned in Kirk Kennedy's presentation.

#### Phil Ford (River Authorities)

Phil said that 14 environmental studies are being funded by the Army Corps of Engineers within the basin. He will connect with his staff to see if there are opportunities to gain insight for the BBASC process from these studies.

#### Dan Loomis (Recreational Water Users)

Dan said that there have been a lot of changes in the basin since the 1940s. He mentioned the siltation that's occurring in the upper end of reservoirs, and brought up Lake Granbury as an example that he is familiar with. He said that the siltation is creating an artificial reservoir and is concerned about the potential environmental impacts that could result.

#### Bruce Turner (Electricity Generation)

Bruce expressed concern over whether enough funding can be raised to get the data needed for the group to make intelligent recommendations.

#### Ed Lowe (Environmental Interests)

Ed said that he is unsure of how the outcome of the BBASC findings and the TCEQ findings on the BRA Systems Operation permit application will relate to each other.

### Tyson Broad (Commercial Fisherman alternate)

Tyson mentioned that the Guadalupe-San Antonio (G-SA) BBASC approach was to trust the BBEST to do their job. He recommended that the Brazos BBASC start to think about strategies that might work in the Brazos basin (e.g., dedication of wastewater return flows to environmental purposes) to help meet the eventual BBEST recommendations, saying that the G-SA BBASC came up with approximately 30 strategies.

### David Blackburn (Municipalities)

David echoed the comments of Tom Conry regarding hydrologic conditions.

### Mary Ruth Rhodenbaugh (Public Interest Groups)

Mary expressed concern over how much of an impact the BBASC's work will have on state agencies and the Legislature. Dan Opdyke said that he felt the TCEQ in their rulemaking process gave weight to the recommendations of the BBASC and BBEST groups involved in the two East Texas basin processes (Trinity-San Jacinto and Sabine-Neches), though it was challenging due to a lack of consensus in both groups. He said it will be interesting to see how the TCEQ will handle the next two basins since one had complete consensus in its recommendations (Colorado-Lavaca) and the other a super majority (Guadalupe-San Antonio). Gregg Easley (TCEQ) added that the Legislature stays plugged-in to the process by way of their participation on the Senate Bill 3 Environmental Flows Advisory Group, which meets on an ongoing basis. Dale Spurgin added that the key is for the BBASC to do their job right and come to a consensus recommendation.

### Matt Phillips (Environmental Interests)

Matt said that the group definitely needs to produce a consensus report, but advised that the BBASC not lose sight that this is a long-term process that involves an adaptive management component.

### **Set Next Meeting**

The BBASC decided to meet next on Tuesday, January 24, 2012 at 10:00 am at BRA in Waco. Members are to plan on meeting until approximately 1:00 pm, but this could be extended if the BBEST will be presenting significant amounts of information at this next meeting. An update on the formation and activities of a funding subcommittee will be included on the agenda.

### **Public Comment**

None.