

**Lower Rio Grande, Rio Grande Estuary and Lower Laguna Madre
Basin and Bay Expert Science Team,
Monday 19 March 2012 meeting
At University of Texas at Pan American**

Minutes

Members Present: Hudson DeYoe, Chair; Dave Buzan, Vice-Chair (via teleconference); Warren Pulich; Bob Edwards

Call to order

Chairman DeYoe called the meeting to order.

Project Administration

Chairman DeYoe met with Upper Rio Grande BBEST Chair Kevin Urbanczyk to discuss a joint meeting of the two BBESTs with the full BBASC. The two BBESTs will attempt to meet with the BBASC in late June or early July. The final reports being developed by the two BBESTs will stand alone but will be presented as a combined report.

Members were asked to submit reimbursement documentation in a timely manner.

Regarding the extension of the deadline for the Rio Grande BBEST reports, the extension request has been received by the Environmental Flows Advisory Group and the members are to proceed as if the request had been granted.

Updates on report components

Qualitative Descriptions

Resacas (Buzan and Benavides)

- Member Dave Buzan Presented a map identifying resacas in the study area. Members discussed the functions of resacas (ungaged contributors to the Lower Laguna Madre). Members will evaluate these drainage systems to better characterize ungaged inflows to the Lower Laguna Madre. Members agreed not to prescribe environmental flow restrictions to these ungaged flows. If the flow rate, based on high mass loading, is considered to be significant the recommendations report will address these flows. All others will be recommended as part of the work plan.

Bahia Grande and San Martin Lake (DeYoe and Buzan)

- No new updates

Above tidal Rio Grande (fish- Edwards, riparian veg- Pulich, WQ- DeYoe).

- This will be a qualitative assessment only. Remaining work includes an evaluation of water quality.

Quantitative Descriptions

LLM (Pulich, DeYoe, Edwards, Buzan)

- Member Warren Pulich presented recent GIS analysis of changes in seagrass communities in the Lower Laguna Madre. This analysis demonstrated that there is a decline in seagrass communities. It appears to be nitrogen input which is contributing to the change in seagrasses.
- Chair DeYoe gave a presentation on tracing nitrogen from the Arroyo Colorado into the Lower Laguna Madre. He is looking for isotopic signature showing up in plants. By evaluating nitrogen values in leaf tissue/drift algae in relation to distance along transects. He concluded that nitrogen signatures at the same location vary with the type of primary producers. For one species seasonal variation occurs. Despite this, nitrogen isotopes detected clear instances of Arroyo Colorado nitrogen being incorporated by primary producers.

Tidal Rio Grande (Edwards, Pulich, DeYoe, Benavides, Morin)

- No new updates

Presentation of recommendations to the Science Advisory Committee (SAC)

Cory Horan informed the members that they will need to present their findings to the SAC in June. June 20th is the anticipated meeting date.

Adjourn