

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

10:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.

**LIBRARY/COMMUNITY CENTER, 1101 CAMPBELL AVENUE,
JOURDANTON, TX**

MAY 23, 2012

MINUTES

Members Present: Con Mims, Chair; James Dodson, Vice Chair (Proxy for Don Roach, Tom Ballou); Ray Allen; Richard Bowers; Paul Carangelo; Gus Gonzalez; Carola Serrato; Wes Tunnell; Buddy Stanley; Mike Mahoney; Timo Hixon; Joel Pigg; John Adams; George Driskill; Ross Thompson; Scotty Bledsoe.

Call to order and Roll Call

Roll call was taken and a quorum was reached.

Public comment

There were no public comments at this time.

Approve Minutes

Technical consultant Sam Vaugh reviewed his comments to the draft minutes. Mr. Vaugh's comments were accepted and the minutes were approved by consensus.

Comments from SAC liaison

None

Comments from Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

None

**Activities of the Public Information/Education Program
Subcommittee and the public information consultant**

Nothing to report at this time.

**Schedule and responsibilities for drafting the BBASC's
Recommendations Report**

Jace Tunnell reviewed the report outline and schedule. He reported on completed portions of the recommendations report and noted that these have been posted to the ftp site.

Activities of the Modeling Subcommittee and technical presentations on modeling funded by Texas Water Development Board and/or City of Corpus Christi

Cory Shockley, HDR, provided a summary of the analysis presented to the BBASC from the April meeting which included a review of model comparisons from the various scenarios being evaluated. The scenarios are: modified BBEST (overbank exemption, pulse exemption rule, single tier of seasonal average condition base flows, and a 50% rule for diversions between seasonal base and subsistence flows), full BBEST, no environmental flow criteria, Lyons, and CCEF (regional water planning). At that April meeting the BBASC directed the technical consultants to perform additional evaluations of an alternative modified BBEST scenario using the 50% rule applied to wet (high) base flows. One proposed project (Sabinal recharge reservoir) and three hypothetical projects were evaluated: Laguna with off-channel reservoir and Cotulla with both on and off-channel reservoir. Mr. Shockley reviewed the results of this additional analysis, identifying the differences in both yield/supply and flows as compared to the other modeled scenarios presented at the April meeting. He noted that the modified BBEST wet scenario generally results in higher base flows than the modified BBEST average scenario.

BBEST member Ryan Smith presented recent habitat analysis for the different scenarios being evaluated by the BBASC to determine if those flows create enough habitat to maintain a sound ecological environment. He presented simple hydraulic modeling that shows a relationship between flow and habitat, as shown in percent maximum habitat available. He used a 75% minimum threshold for base flows and 20% for subsistence flows. This allows the BBASC to look at raw flow assessments from a biological perspective. For the Nueces River at Laguna analysis he found that "enough" habitat (i.e., per 75% minimum threshold of Maximum WUA used by BBEST) is maintained for fewer species under the full 50% diversion of the Modified BBEST A scenario. He noted that in most cases it is not far below the 75% minimum threshold and that Guadalupe Bass and Texas Shiner (both of which are species of greatest conservation needs, as determined by TPWD) do not meet the 75%. A TPWD representative clarified that neither of these species is listed as threatened or endangered by the TPWD or the USFWS. He found that "enough" habitat was maintained for more species by the Modified BBEST W scenario. For the Nueces at Three Rivers he found "enough" habitat (i.e., per 75% minimum threshold of Maximum WUA used by BBEST) is not maintained for all species under the full 50% diversion of Modified BBEST A scenario. However, neither is it under the Full BBEST recommendation. He found that "enough" habitat was maintained for more species by Modified BBEST W scenario. For the Frio River at Concan he found that "Enough" habitat (i.e., per 75% minimum threshold of Maximum WUA used by BBEST) is maintained for all species at Concan under the full 50% diversion of both the Modified BBEST A and Modified BBEST W scenarios. He concluded by suggesting that habitat analysis is not the only aspect to apply when evaluating whether or not a sound ecological environment is protected. Chairman Mims

suggested that the work plan could include additional recommendations beyond this habitat analysis.

Mark Wentzel, TWDB, presented his recent sediment transport analysis for three sites, Nueces River at Laguna, Nueces River at Cotulla, and Nueces River at Three Rivers. He explained that sediment analysis is important in that evaluating how sediment transport changes will provide an evaluation of how these different scenarios might affect shape of channel, which in turn affects habitat. He presented the results of their analysis for each of the three sites with both on and off-channel reservoirs under the following eflow scenarios: historical (baseline), full BBEST, Modified BBEST A, Modified BBEST W, and no eflows. He concluded that with off-channel reservoirs sediment remained relatively stable; for on-channel reservoirs the closer you get to the reservoir you can expect larger magnitude type changes which should be evaluated with more specific studies. Farther downstream this is less of a concern.

BBASC instream flow and estuary freshwater inflow recommendations

Instream Flow:

Cory Shockley resumed this discussion by suggesting the group needs to decide whether to apply the 50% rule to either wet base flows or average base flows and responded to questions regarding his analysis utilizing the modified BBEST wet and modified BBEST average scenarios. BBEST member Smith also clarified that there are higher frequencies of meeting a 75% of Maximum habitat criterion at Laguna for more species under the modified BBEST average scenario than under the modified BBEST wet scenario. After discussion by the members the BBASC, by consensus, adopted the following instream flow recommendations:

The BBEST's instream flow standards be modified at all locations in the basin, except the Lake Corpus Christi Off-Channel Reservoir site, which will be subject to estuary freshwater inflow standards, by:

- a) eliminating the overbank requirement,
- (b) eliminating high flow pulses where the maximum diversion rate of a future application is less than 20% of the rate which triggers a high flow pulse requirement, and
- (c) having only one (the "average"), instead of three, tiers of base flows and applying a 50% rule which allows for diversions below the base flow equal to 50% of the difference between the seasonal base average and subsistence flows.

These recommendations are with the BBASC's understanding that they will not have an unmitigated effect on the reservoir system safe yield or existing water rights, because any new project will have to honor senior water rights, and they will not adversely affect Nueces Bay and Delta, because of pass through and other requirements of the agreed order.

Freshwater inflows:

Mr. Shockley presented his evaluation of four scenarios regarding a freshwater inflow regime to the Nueces Bay and Delta:

- BBEST recommendation
- Agreed order safe yield
- No Pass through
- And OCR agreed order safe yield

After discussion the BBASC agreed to table this discussion to the June 2012 BBASC meeting to allow evaluation and recommendation by the Nueces BBASC Work Group.

Work Plan and strategies to meet environmental flow recommendations

This discussion was postponed until the June 2012 BBASC meeting.

Public comment

There was no public comment at this time.

Adjourn