

**Guadalupe, San Antonio, Mission, and Aransas Rivers and Mission,
Copano, Aransas, and San Antonio Bays Basin and Bay Area Stakeholder
Committee (BBASC) meeting**

Thursday, February 28, 2013 at 10:00 am

SAWS' Customer Service Building, Room CR-1452800 US Hwy 281 North
San Antonio, TX

MINUTES

Members Present: Suzanne Scott, Chair; Diane Wassenich, Vice-Chair; Tyson Broad; Jay Gray; Milan Michalec; Jennifer Ellis; Tommy Hill (for James Lee Murphy); Mike Peters; Mike Mecke; Steve Raabe (for Con Mims); Bill Braden; Doris Cooksey (for Kim Stoker); Roland Ruiz; Stephen Fotiades; Steven Bereyso (for Robert Puente)

Public Comment

There was no public comment at this time.

Discussion and Agreement on Agenda

The members agreed to accept the agenda as drafted.

Approval of Minutes from October 30, 2012

Due to lack of quorum, approval of the draft minutes from the previous meeting on October 30, 2012 was postponed. This portion of the minutes will be reviewed for approval at the next BBASC meeting.

Discussion Regarding the Science Advisory Committee's Review and Comments on the GSA BBASC Work Plan

Steve Raabe briefed the BBASC members over the SAC's comments regarding the GSA BBASC's Work Plan for Adaptive Management. The BBASC members discussed the concerns expressed by the SAC with regards to the submitted work plan including the effort of implementation for recommended strategies (specifically expansive GIS work and effort required to account for water consumed by exempt uses), how to better clarify and effectively integrate the recommended strategies into the work plan, and whether recommendations for coordinating with the Regional Water Planning Group should have been addressed. Additionally, questions were raised about the process of responding to SAC's comments on the work plan, appointment terms of BBASC members and how to approach the next cycle of recommendations by the BBASC in 5 years.

Discussion regarding the GSA BBASC Letter to SAC and SAC's letter to EFAG regarding E-Flows Process

Members discussed the letter the BBASC sent to SAC regarding the e-flows process. Chair Suzanne Scott summarized the major SAC recommendations to EFAG including

continued involvement of the BBASC in implementation of the work plan, continued maintenance and appointment of a diverse BBASC, better coordination with regional and state water planning entities, and funding for work plan implementation. While EFAG did take action by extending the timeline for SB3 rules development, work plan approval was left pending. Concerns were expressed by members as to whether having an unapproved work plan would hinder attaining funding for work plan implementation.

Report from Mission-Aransas National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) “Balancing Freshwater Inflows in a Changing Environment”

At the time of this meeting, the NERR work group was unavailable to present; however, they did provide a handout summarizing their work to date. The BBASC members who attended the most recent workshop explained that the NERR workshops are designed to facilitate the understanding of study methods and tool implementation between scientist and decision makers. Some of these members expressed concerns about whether the models in development would truly represent natural ecological processes, the lack of technical understanding of modeling and model development by laypeople, and possible misinterpretation of model output. An inquiry was also made as to whether the NERR is on schedule to complete these studies. Members that attended the most recent workshop stated that the studies appear to be on schedule.

Report on GBRA Texas Instream Flow Program and SB3 Instream Flow Program for the Lower Guadalupe

Debbie Magin, GBRA, updated the BBASC members as to the status of GBRA’s Instream Flow Program and the SB2 Instream Flow Study on the lower Guadalupe being conducted by TPWD, TWDB, TCEQ with assistance from GBRA. Ms. Magin indicated that GBRA had designated a reach on the Lower Guadalupe from just below its confluence with the San Marcos River to Cuero. At present, the GBRA study is in the process of collecting biological and physiochemical data to aid substrate mapping efforts and future model development (hydrological and habitat). It was expressed that GBRA’s study was designed to complement the SB2 study and that GBRA’s instream flow studies should be completed by 2014.

Ms. Magin indicated that the SB2 Instream Flow Program for the lower Guadalupe just entered its initial phase which included development of a study design, establishing the geographic scope of the study, and prioritizing data needs.

Report from SARA Instream Flow Program including EDYS Modeling for Lower San Antonio River and San Antonio Bay

Mr. Raabe updated members concerning the status of SARA’s Instream Flow Program. He indicated that development of HWY 77 site recommendations for e-flows is underway. Mr. Raabe stated that additional data (longitudinal mussel surveys, vegetation surveys) are currently being collected to aid development of numerous models (two dimensional modeling to predict mussel habitat/presence, dynamic ecological simulation models, high flow pulse riparian response models, etc.). For San

Antonio Bay, a proof of concept study was completed last year concerning adapting the current TXBLEND model to evaluate marsh vegetative responses to changes in water levels and salinity with an aim to incorporate animal behavior modules in the future.

Report on Bandera County River Authority and Groundwater District (BCRAGD)

Dave Mauk presented on the status of studies undertaken by the BCRAGD. He indicated that several studies are currently ongoing and that the studies' objectives are primarily to observe the relationships between precipitation, aquifer recharge, and spring flow.

Report from Synoptic Flow Meeting

Chair Scott and Mr. Raabe provided an overview of the meeting. The meeting resulted in the development of a list of pertinent stakeholder questions and action items such as installation of a USGS gage below saltwater barrier at HWY 35, development of a scope of work and cost estimates to measure flows at the head of the canal system, and a gain/loss study within the canal system. Members discussed the significance of knowing whether a loss or gain is occurring within the canal system. BBASC members also expressed interest in the Bureau of Economic Geology's lidar/topology surveys as possible additional data that could be incorporated into adapted TXBLEND models being developed in other studies.

Discussion Regarding Legislative Action to Support Funding for Work Plan Implementation and Additional Funding Opportunities

BBASC members discussed the proposed HB4/SB4 legislation with regards to the 20% allocation of funding from the State's Rainy Day Fund. Chair Scott proposed that the GSA BBASC actively promote incorporation of funding for basin work plans into this legislation. She informed the BBASC members that EFAG's Chairman Huston and other basin groups had thought this prudent. Thus, she requested the support of the GSA BBASC for a letter she drafted to the legislature recommending a 1% allocation of funds to work plan implementation. Chair Scott indicated that this would not be considered an official action of the GSA BBASC and no members objected to the letter.

Additionally, members discussed the BP funds becoming available (RESTORE Act) and the GLO priority project list. Moreover, they discussed that other funding might come from projects on the global project list administered through the National Environmental Resource Damage Assessment (NERDA) or oil and gas companies in the region involved in the shale boom. Overall, members agreed that funding opportunities are or will be available and effort needs to be made to highlight work plan projects.

Discussion on future dates and times of GSA BBASC meetings for 2013

The BBASC members agreed to hold meetings on a quarterly, or as-needed, basis, targeting May 2013 for the next meeting.

Possible Agenda Items for the next GSA BBASC meeting

Members discussed the following items for future agendas:

- Presentation from Dr. Tim Bonner explaining his comments concerning the E-Flows process
- TPWD presentation of freshwater inflow methodology
- Presentation from USFW regarding Whooping Crane count methodology
- Coastal and Marine Spatial Processes (James Dodson?)

Public Comment

There was no public comment at this time.

Adjourn