

# **Trinity and San Jacinto River Basins and Galveston Bay BBASC meeting**

Wednesday, July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2013 at 1:00 p.m., San Jacinto River Authority Office  
1577 Damsite Road, Conroe, Texas

## **Minutes**

**Members Present:** John Bartos, Chair; Jace Houston, Vice-Chair; Adam Sinclair; Tom Michel; Scott Alford; Pudge Willcox; Denis Qualls; Jim Parks; Ted Long; Glenda Callaway; Lori Traweek; Ken Kramer; Carl Masterson (alternate for Terry Anderson) Kevin Ward; Paul Nelson

**BBEST Members Present:** Jim Lester, Vice-Chair; Sammy Ray, Mike Turco

### **Call to Order and Introductions**

Chair John Bartos called the meeting to order and the members introduced themselves.

### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment at this time.

### **Approval of April 3, 2013 Meeting Minutes**

The minutes from the April 3, 2013 meeting were approved by consensus.

### **Status of EFAG Work Plan Approval**

Chair Bartos drafted a letter to the EFAG requesting guidance and status of work plan approval. No response from the EFAG has been received.

### **An Evaluation of Sediment and Nutrient Loading to Galveston Bay from the Trinity River**

Michael T. Lee, USGS Texas Water Science Center, presented a study of sediment and nutrient loading following high flow pulse events in the lower Trinity River and Galveston Bay. He emphasized that sediment and nutrient loading is highly variable and are influenced by flood-discharge magnitude, duration, origin of floodwater and timing of sample collection. In addition, he indicated that the wetlands and bayhead delta of the Trinity River and Galveston Bay system play a possible role in dampening freshwater discharge and sequestering nutrients and sediments. Members discussed the possible mechanisms responsible for the reduction of freshwater as it travels downstream and enters the bay. Member Glenda Calloway inquired as to when the study would be complete, and Mr. Lee indicated the study would continue through 2014, but that sampling was event dependent which could impact the timeframe for completion of the study.

### **Possibilities and Priorities for Funding of Work Plan Elements**

Member Ken Kramer, Sierra Club, provided an update on HB4/SB4 bill recently passed by the legislature which allocates a total of 2 million dollars to implementation of EFlow studies. He informed the TSJ BBASC that the Guadalupe, San Antonio, Mission, and Aransas Rivers and Mission, Copano, Aransas, and San Antonio Bays Basin and Bay

area is set to receive \$750,000 of the 2 million, with the remaining to be distributed to the other basins as determined by the EFAG and SAC beginning September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013. Mr. Kramer also informed the BBASC about the RESTORE Act (BP oil spill money resulting from CWA fines) as a potential funding opportunity for Gulf Coast based projects such as those addressing freshwater inflows to Texas bays and estuaries.

BBASC members agreed that to maximize funding efforts for projects outlined in the Work Plan for Adaptive Management, the project list should be narrowed down and prioritized. The BBASC unanimously agreed to task the Trinity and San Jacinto River Basins and Galveston Bay BBEST with prioritizing work plan studies to those that fit the two potential funding sources discussed previously (HB4/SB4 and RESTORE Act). The members were in consensus that a September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013 deadline would be appropriate specifically for project prioritization related to HB4/SB4 funds.

### **Vacancies and Nominations Committee Report**

Chair of the Vacancies and Nominations Committee, Lori Traweek, provided an update on filling the BBASC vacancy left by Tom Stang who represented Chemical Manufacturing. She indicated the committee has no recommendations at this time, but they have contacted the East Harris County Manufacturers Association to solicit potential nominees for the position.

### **Middle Trinity Texas Instream Flow Studies and Agency Updates, TCEQ, TPWD, TWDB**

Chris Loft, TCEQ, provided a handout and an update on the status of ongoing Texas Instream Flow Studies on the middle Trinity River. He indicated that two public stakeholder meetings and a study design work shop have already been held, and a draft study design will be submitted for review to stakeholders at the beginning of August followed by scientific peer review. Furthermore, he communicated that data collection efforts are ongoing. Members discussed how the instream flow studies relate to work plan elements, whether funding should be directed to those projects not already covered under TIFP, and how drought conditions might impact baseline sampling effort.

Cindy Loeffler, TPWD, informed the members that a drought impact on estuaries workshop was held in January 2013 and as a result of this meeting an Inflow Researcher Work Group was formed. In addition, she stated that another drought impact to estuaries workshop will be held at the end of September in Victoria, TX.

### **Public Comments**

Dr. Sammy Ray, BBEST member, commented on how the drought is affecting Texas bays and estuaries specifically with regards to changes in oyster recruitment and species composition. Further, he stated that he is observing large changes in coastal ecosystems and believes the State is fast approaching levels of drought similar to those observed in 2011 and/or surpassing the worse drought of record which occurred in the 1950s. No additional public comments were made.

**Next Meeting**

The next TSJ BBASC meeting was scheduled to coincide with the Region H Water Planning Group meeting on Wednesday, November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at 1 p.m. in Conroe, TX. Members agreed that another presentation at the next meeting would be beneficial, and Chair Bartos encouraged members to submit their suggestions via email to him. Additionally, Chair Bartos suggested that funding opportunities be discussed via email before the next BBASC meeting.

**Adjourn**