

Trinity and San Jacinto River Basins and Galveston Bay BBASC Meeting

Wednesday, November 6th, 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; Jun Chang; Zachary Holland; Kathy Turner Jones; Gená Leathers; Darrel Andrews (alternate for Jim Oliver)

BBEST Members Present: Bill Espey, Chair; Jim Lester, Vice-Chair; Mike Turco; Mike Reedy; Tony Smith; Woody Woodrow

Call to Order

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

Public Comment

BBASC and BBEST members remembered their colleague Dr. Sammy Ray who recently passed away.

Approval of July 3rd, 2013 Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the July 3, 2013 meeting were unanimously approved.

Acceptance of Tom Stang's Resignation and Report from Vacancies and Nominations Committee

Tom Stang's resignation was unanimously accepted and Gená Leathers, the nominee being considered to fill the vacant position, was introduced. Mrs. Leathers was unanimously approved by members.

Status of Environmental Flows Advisory Group (EFAG) Work Plan Approval

Chair Bartos stated that he had no new information on when the Trinity BBASC's work plan would be approved by the EFAG. He inquired as to whether State agency personnel had any indication when the EFAG would meet, and agency staff informed the members that no EFAG meeting date has been set.

TWDB Report Regarding Funding for Continued Study of Environmental Flows

Chair Bartos gave a brief overview on the status of the potential funding from the legislature adopted Rider in the Appropriations Bill that provided \$2.0 million during the next biennium for the purpose of continued study of environmental and instream flows for basins. He informed members that the Science Advisory Committee (SAC) had requested information from each BBASC concerning the basin's funding needs and projects that would fit the criteria for these funds. Chair Bartos informed members that a letter had been sent to the SAC requesting consideration for these funds. Ruben Solis, TWDB, explained that the SAC's letter to the Environmental Flows Advisory Group (EFAG) dated September 10th, 2013 recommended an even split of \$312,500 between the four Eflow's basins deemed eligible, inclusive of the Trinity Basin. Mr. Solis further explained that the funds would have to be completely spent by the end of the biennium, August 2015 and that TWDB would administer the contracts. Mr. Solis outlined TWDB staff recommendations for stakeholders inclusive of evaluating work plan items,

prioritizing projects, and refining scopes of works (if needed) for selected items as well as developing a scoring criterion for proposals. Members inquired to the timeframe for accomplishing these tasks. Mr. Solis and Nolan Raphael indicated that the process is dependent on when funding is approved; however, they also indicated a process needs to be in place by spring 2014. Additionally, members discussed conflicts of interests that may arise through BBEST and BBASC member involvement in developing funding material, and Mr. Solis indicated a conflict of interests would arise if a person applying for funding were also involved in the proposal selection process. The BBASC unanimously agreed to form a sub-committee, co-chaired by BBEST members Bill Espey and Jim Lester, tasked with prioritizing work plan studies to match the potential funding amount of \$312,500 as well as developing a proposal scoring criteria. The subcommittee's recommendations are due January 1st, 2014 to the full BBASC for approval by email.

Presentation on RESTORE Act Funding

Woody Woodrow, USFW, presented information concerning funding opportunities resulting from the Deepwater Horizon (DWH) oil spill specifically with regards to the RESTORE Act. Mr. Woodrow provided an overview of how RESTORE funding is anticipated to be allocated among Gulf States as well as presented additional funding opportunities under Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA), National Fish and Wildlife Federation (NFWF), National Academy of Sciences (NAS), etc. Members inquired as to the timeline of when funds would become available, and Mr. Woodrow indicated that while some funding is already available through MOAX and NRDA, they are not applicable to instream or freshwater inflow projects. However, other funding such as RESTORE funds would be applicable to freshwater inflow projects when it becomes available.

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

Leslie Patterson, TCEQ, provided a handout and an update on the status of ongoing Texas Instream Flow Studies on the Middle Trinity River. She indicated that a draft study design will be submitted for review to workshop stakeholders in the near future followed by scientific peer review. Members discussed briefly how the instream flow studies relate to work plan elements and whether HB4/SB4 funding could be directed to continuing TIFP projects. Mr. Solis added that the SAC recommended that funding be applied to basin projects that could be completed by the end of the biennium.

Announcements

Ted Long informed members that he would be resigning from the Trinity BBASC. He indicated that he endorsed Gene Fisseler as his replacement. Members agreed that Mr. Long's resignation would be an agenda item at the next scheduled meeting and a replacement would be considered at that time.

Public Comments

No public comments were made at this time.

Next Meeting

The next TSJ BBASC meeting date and time was not decided.

Adjourn