

**Brazos River and Associated Bay and Estuary System
Basin and Bay Stakeholder Committee (BBASC)**

Wednesday, October 26th, 2022 at 1:00 p.m.

Brazos River Authority Central Office located at 4600 Cobbs Drive, Waco, Texas
and Virtual Meeting (Microsoft Teams)

Minutes

Members Present: Dale Spurgin, Chair; Tom Michel, Vice-Chair; Horace Grace; Ken Kramer; Glenn Lord; Eddie Saucedo; Jay Bragg; Bruce Bodson; Tiffany Malzahn.

Call to Order

Chair Dale Spurgin called the meeting to order and member attendance was taken.

Public comment

There were no public comments made at this time.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

BBASC members unanimously approved the August 4, 2021 meeting minutes.

Announcement of vacancies

Chair Spurgin informed members that there are 11 vacancies on the BBASC for the following stakeholder groups: free range livestock (2 vacancies), commercial fishing (1), municipalities (4), environmental interests (1), agricultural irrigation (2), and public interest groups (1).

Announcement of nominations

Seven nominations were received for the following stakeholder groups: Ronald Woodruff and Ronald Kelling, P.E. for public interest groups; David Stratta for agricultural irrigation; Dale Hoelscher for free-range livestock; Marty McIntyre for commercial fishermen; and Michael Boyd and Brandon Wade for municipalities. The group discussed that Mr. Woodruff also indicated interest in the Municipalities stakeholder group and decided to consider Mr. Woodruff as a nominee to represent that group.

Action on nominations

Through majority vote, members approved the nominees that were present at the meeting: Mr. Ronald Kelling, P.E. as the new representative for public interest groups and Mr. Michael Boyd to represent Municipalities. Due to quorum requirements, the remaining nominations were taken up later in the meeting during agenda item '*Next Meeting Date and Future Agenda Items*'.

Status report on the update of "Freshwater Inflows to Texas Bays and Estuaries"

Mr. Ken Kramer gave an update on the 1994 publication *Freshwater Inflows to Texas Bays and Estuaries* that is currently being updated in an effort led by Dr. Paul Montagna at the Harte Research Institute. Many experts are involved in the project to

create an updated version of the document with the latest science. Mr. Kramer attended a workshop in June 2021 with the goal of gathering topics to be considered for the update. To date, seven of sixteen chapters have been submitted and all chapters are set to be submitted by the end of October 2022. The content will undergo a review and editing process. The goal is to submit the updated document to the publisher in early 2023 to make it publicly available by March 2023.

Financial Report

Chair Spurgin stated that the Brazos BBASC has funds in the amount of \$18,036.98 held at the West Central Texas Council of Governments (WCTCOG) in Abilene. He stated that the group should decide whether to retain the funds where they are currently held, which would require an updated Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The group voted to retain the funds at WCTCOG and renew the MOU.

Texas Water Development Board Update

Dr. Carla Guthrie, TWDB, gave an update on 16 contracted studies conducted from 2014 to present in the Brazos River basin-bay area. Dr. Guthrie noted that the completed reports are available on the TWDB webpage. Dr. Guthrie described the potential for an integrated statewide monitoring system, which could include water quality, species collection, geomorphology, hydrology, etc. to help evaluate flows. This has not been implemented, but TWDB is looking towards developing a plan with the goal of collecting better data. Currently, there is not a specific process for future funding if funds are made available in the next legislative session. Dr. Guthrie invited the group to brainstorm future studies and submit those ideas to TWDB.

Chair Spurgin asked about the best method to review the work that has been completed. Dr. Guthrie responded that the *Statewide Synthesis of Environmental Flow Studies* report is a good resource to consider while evaluating past studies and includes a summary by basin. Dr. Guthrie also offered to coordinate a meeting between the BBASC and TWDB staff to discuss key findings.

Ms. Tiffany Malzahn noted that a substantial amount of scientific work has been done in the basin outside of the TWDB-contracted studies and a summary of those studies would be beneficial.

Other Items

Chair Spurgin asked how the BBEST would need to be involved regarding the process of reviewing studies. Ms. Malzahn noted that the BBEST would take direction from the BBASC. BBEST Chair Tom Gooch agreed and noted that there are 2-3 vacancies on the BBEST. Chair Spurgin asked who would be able to review the studies done outside of the TWDB-contracted work. BBEST Chair Gooch said the BBEST members could volunteer to compile those studies.

Mr. Kramer asked whether study contractors could present to the BBASC groups. Dr. Guthrie responded that the ongoing studies include funding for future presentations to the BBASC. She noted that past contractors may be willing to volunteer to present on

projects. Vice-Chair Michel mentioned that virtual meetings would be a low-cost option for presenters.

Ms. Malzahn mentioned two U.S. Army Corps of Engineers programs in the basin, which may impact instream flows with the potential for storing floodwaters in reservoirs for beneficial uses.

Mr. Horace Grace expressed interest in surface water and groundwater interaction, and Chair Spurgin responded that two ongoing studies contracted by TWDB are evaluating surface water-groundwater interaction in the Brazos River.

Mr. Kramer asked Dr. Guthrie whether the TWDB legislative appropriations request included funding for studies that might benefit the Senate Bill 3 process. Dr. Guthrie responded that the request included baseline funds to support two strategies: environmental impact information and water resources data. This funding would provide support for studies that could benefit Senate Bill 2, Senate Bill 3, and other environmental flow work. Chair Spurgin suggested the BBASC should identify study topics in the Brazos basin by next summer. Dr. Guthrie said that it would be ideal to submit study topics to TWDB by September 2023, but the group could submit ideas any time. Dr. Guthrie further stated that TWDB is exploring whether funding could be extended further than the biennium to allow for additional time to complete studies.

Mr. Grace asked whether the upcoming session would be a water-focused session. Mr. Kramer expected that the session would be largely focused on water infrastructure. Mr. Kramer also suggested the group should explore ways to fund the BBEST to assist with the review of environmental standards and evaluate whether to recommend updates to the standards. Ms. Malzahn said that the BBEST could begin to review studies and suggested considering two or three sites specifically, rather than the entire basin. BBEST members may be willing to volunteer their time and could meet virtually to lower costs. Mr. Kramer mentioned that there will be a new Texas Water Caucus in the Texas House of Representatives, which may provide an opportunity to educate legislators and champion water issues.

Next Meeting Date and Future Agenda Items

A doodle poll will be distributed to members to determine the next meeting date. Chair Spurgin suggested the group choose a designated day for future meetings to prevent scheduling conflicts. He also stated that he would prefer the group to meet more often, ideally quarterly, to continue building membership and helping educate new members. He stated that meeting more often would also assist with the review of the environmental flow standards. He invited the group to send suggestions for future agenda topics. Chair Spurgin stated that hybrid meetings work well for attaining a quorum, but that in-person meetings are better for putting together proposals. Chair Spurgin expects the next meeting will be in January or February 2023.

The group voted to approve five additional members: David Stratta for agricultural irrigation; Dale Hoelscher for free-range livestock; Marty McIntyre for commercial fishermen; and Brandon Wade and Ronald Woodruff for municipalities.

Public comment

There were no public comments made at this time.

Adjourn