

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

Thursday, July 11th, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.

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

**Minutes**

**Members Present:** Dale Spurgin, Chair; Dr. Ken Kramer, Vice-Chair; Horace Grace; Bruce Bodson; Tiffany Malzahn; Ronald Kelling; Eddie Saucedo; Jay Bragg; Nick Dornak; Ronnie Woodruff; Dale Hoelscher; David Stratta; Bret Raley.

**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 approved the meeting minutes from April 11, 2024. No changes were made to the minutes.

**Announcement of vacancies**

Chair Spurgin informed members of the 5 vacancies on the BBASC for the following stakeholder groups: free range livestock (1 vacancy), agricultural irrigation (1), Recreational Water Users (1), Environmental Interests (1), and Municipalities (1).

**Announcement of nominations**

Mr. Alan Rudd was nominated to represent Recreational Water Users.

**Action on nominations**

Mr. Alan Rudd was elected as a member to represent Recreational Water Users.

**Discussion on Adjusting Membership Categories**

The group discussed the proposal to adjust member categories to address the challenge with filling vacancies and meeting quorum. Some categories have been difficult to fill and have had vacancies for many months. Vice-chair Kramer was hesitant to eliminate any member spots at this time, as the group is regaining momentum. There may be individuals who are willing to serve in those positions, but have not yet contacted the group. Chair Spurgin emphasized the importance of the balance of stakeholder types, due to the size of the basin and the variety of municipalities. Encouraging the naming of alternates should help the quorum issue. Ms. Malzahn noted that vacancies do not count towards meeting quorum. The group took no action on this item.

**Discussion on Designating Alternates**

Chair Spurgin reminded members to designate alternates for their positions. Alternates are not required to be nominated or elected and can simply be designated by the

member. Members can assign an alternate by contacting Ms. Jade Rutledge, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, with the name and contact information for the individual if they are willing to serve.

### **Discussion on BBEST Nominations and Vacancies**

The group discussed how to reinvigorate the membership of the BBEST. Chair Spurgin noted that the BBASC has the authority to designate BBEST members to fill vacant positions. The group opted to initiate the nominations process for three vacancies. The group discussed the importance of the balance of expertise in the BBEST membership. Ms. Malzahn mentioned that there is not a current member with geomorphology background. Mr. Raley asked if BBEST members can serve on multiple BBEST groups. Ms. Malzahn replied affirmatively and noted that some individuals currently serve in multiple groups. Ms. Malzahn also mentioned that there are Brazos River Authority (BRA) employees that could serve on the BBEST to fill some gaps in expertise. Vice-Chair Kramer mentioned that state agency employees can serve as non-voting members as well. The group discussed the types of projects they could propose if funding for studies became available. The group acknowledged the members that wish to continue serving on the BBEST: Mr. Tom Gooch, Dr. Tim Bonner, Dr. Kirk Winemiller, Dr. George Guillen, and Ms. Tiffany Malzahn. The group agreed to consider a BRA employee to replace Jack Davis and to take action to nominate at the next meeting.

### **Update on Publication of Freshwater Inflows to Texas Bays and Estuaries**

Dr. Paul Montagna updated the group on the publication on freshwater inflows into bays and estuaries in Texas. The publication is meant to be an updated version of the outdated publication with science based on recent studies. Dr. Montagna explained that estuaries are resilient and resistant to extreme events, such as drought or hurricanes. He emphasized that freshwater residence time is a major physical driver for bay and estuary ecosystems and data could be used to assist in water management decisions. He noted the importance of utilizing freshwater in a way that is most beneficial to the ecosystem, possibly focusing on upper reaches of wetland habitats. Keeping nursery areas functioning during drought is crucial, as these areas respond well to relatively small amounts of freshwater. The idea is a focused flow approach to help bays bounce back from extreme events. He noted that the Brazos basin has a river estuary and not enough science has been focused on those types of systems. Dr. Montagna discussed environmental flow standards being highly complex and challenging to interpret. Dr. Montagna also asked how to determine whether the standards are effective. He is not aware of any studies showing whether standards have biological meaning. Ms. Malzahn noted that the time scale of these effects would be challenging to evaluate within the timeframes of most studies. Vice-Chair Kramer noted that the standards are meant to ensure a variety of flows for a healthy ecosystem. The system of adaptive management also intended that the groups would reevaluate the standards over time. Mr. Bragg asked about the potential for Aquifer Storage Recovery projects and whether it could be used for targeted flows for crucial habitats. Dr. Montagna noted that the Water Trust could be another tool for targeted flows. The targeted flows would be utilized at certain times of year and specific locations for the most ecological benefit. Modeling could be utilized to identify the best time and place for focused flows. Different bays have different requirements, due to depth and volume of water. As nursery habitats are

typically shallower, then it would theoretically require less water to see benefits. Vice-Chair Kramer added that this approach may be most helpful for drought conditions. For long-term habitat maintenance, more flow diversity over time may be better.

### **Updates from State Agencies (TCEQ, TPWD, TWDB)**

Dr. Wentzel gave an update for Texas Water Development Board (TWDB). Dr. Wentzel noted that studies had been chosen for the current funding cycle and some studies had been contracted. There is a study in negotiation regarding the Brazos alluvial aquifer near College Station. Dr. Wentzel also reminded the group that study ideas could be submitted to TWDB at any time and TWDB would consider them when funding becomes available, typically on a two-year cycle. Mr. Marty Kelly, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, updated the group on work being done by the Agency in the Brazos basin.

### **Other Items**

None.

### **Next Meeting Date and Future Agenda Items**

The next meeting will be October 10, 2024. Future agenda items could include discussion of potential studies to suggest for funding. Mr. Kelly plans to give a presentation on the Texas Water Trust. Ms. Malzahn said BRA can give a presentation on work being done in the basin and data available. Vice-Chair Kramer noted that he would be discussing possibilities for funding BBEST activities. The following meeting dates in 2025 are January 9<sup>th</sup>, April 10<sup>th</sup>, July 10<sup>th</sup>, and October 9<sup>th</sup>.

### **Public comment**

There were no public comments made at this time.

### **Adjourn**