

Trinity and San Jacinto Rivers and Galveston Bay
Basin and Bay Expert Science Team

6th Meeting – Agenda
June 10, 2009
Austin, TX

City of Houston
Bob Lanier Public Works Building
611 Walker Street
Houston, TX 77002

MINUTES

Business Review, Legislative Update

Chairman Bill Espey called the meeting to order. Members unanimously approved the May 13, 2009 meeting minutes.

Agency staff noted SB 2317, relating to Environmental Flows, had been attached to HB 3526, which was still in play at the time of the meeting. However, no bills altering the time frame for implementation of SB3 made it through the regular legislative session.

Fred Manhart, SAC member, gave an update on available SAC funding for use by the BBESTs for contractual purposes. He outlined the discussions the SAC has had concerning the use of SAC funding by the BBESTs and asked that the BBEST develop proposals for use of SAC funds. He explained the Fluvial and Estuarine scopes of work developed by the Sabine BBEST. The BBEST then discussed the approach to developing proposals. The Instream Flows Subcommittee distributed and discussed a list of key questions that need to be addressed in order to develop environmental flow recommendations. TPWD also distributed and discussed a list of key questions related to freshwater inflows.

Available SAC guidance

Two guidance documents have been released by the SAC. They are: “Fluvial Sediment Transport as an Overlay to Instream Flow Recommendations for the Environmental Flows Allocation Process” and “Methodologies for Establishing a Freshwater Inflow Regime for Texas Estuaries, within the Context of the Senate Bill 3 Environmental Flows Process”

It was noted that these documents are to be considered “working drafts” and comments on either document should be sent to the primary author and SAC Chairman Huston.

Biological Overlay - Update

Jim Wiersema, SAC member and lead on the SAC Biological Work Group, gave an overview of the work group’s activities in developing the biological overlay to the HEFR document. He indicated that a final draft should be available for SAC comments by the end of June, with a “working draft” available for distribution to the BBESTs in August.

USGS Analysis/Water Quality

Tim Oden, USGS, gave an overview of the USGS water quality monitoring program of the Lake Houston watershed. He described the types of monitoring performed in both the lake and its tributaries, what the primary water quality parameters the USGS is sampling, and discussed the data found for certain key parameters, primarily nutrients.

Report from Subcommittee on Instream Flows (ISF)

Tony Smith began this discussion of the work ISF subcommittee has done in determining the geographic scope and extent of applying environmental flow regimes within the basins. The members discussed the basis and context of four approaches to selecting from over 100 USGS gage stations to a “manageable” number of gages. Using the four approaches (Browning, SAC, EC, Trungale) led to a tiered selection of identified priority and secondary gage locations. 13 priority sites were identified; 8 in the Trinity and 5 in the San Jacinto. Priority gages met the criteria of multiple approaches, secondary gages by at least one approach. The subcommittee recommends the next steps be to take a deeper look at the priority gage sites to integrate additional overlay data, i.e. water quality, biology, geomorphology, etc., with the hydrologic data. The BBEST agreed that the ISF subcommittee would develop a scope of work (SOW) to present to the TWDB that would allow this work to be performed through contract using BBEST funds.

B&E Proposal Discussion

Vice chair Jim Lester, B&E subcommittee chair, gave an overview of the B&E proposal ranking results, explaining that based on both numerical and narrative rankings, there was a preference toward a hybrid Smith/Trungale approach based on hydrology and salinity with biological endpoints. Based on the rankings the chairs asked the two to develop a combined approach and a draft proposal was distributed. The BBEST discussed the best approach to accomplish this work through contract and the consensus was the hydrology and salinity modeling tasks would be performed by a contractor, and the BBEST would work with the results by applying the biological, water quality, etc, overlays to refine the results.

TxBLEND Verification and Validation

Ruben Solis, TWDB, gave an overview of TxBLEND, a two dimensional vertically aligned model. He presented results from and answered questions regarding various model calibration and validation runs.

Review and Future Initiatives

Jim Lester summarized the discussion of work to be performed under contract. The members will be developing scopes of work for supplemental SAC funding to enhance the literature review efforts, the ISF subcommittee and B&E subcommittee proposals.

Public Input

Glenda Callaway asked that it be noted that TPWD will be giving a presentation on the biology and ecology of the Trinity and San Jacinto Basins as the Stakeholder meeting to be held on July 1, 2009. Chairman Espey noted that the BBASC has requested an update of BBEST activities at the same meeting, and both chairs and other members who plan to attend will present the update.

Adjourn