

Minutes Approved by Science Advisory Committee on 9/3/2008

8/13/2008 Texas Environmental Flows Science Advisory Committee Meeting

TCEQ Building E, Room 201S, 1:30 PM – 4:00 PM

Members Present: Franklin Heitmuller, Robert Huston, Paul Jensen, Ph.D., P.E., Mary Kelly, Fred Manhart, Paul Montagna, Ph.D., George Ward, Ph.D., James Wiersema Robert J. Brandes, Ph.D., P.E. participated via conference call.

Call to Order/Welcome and Introductions

Todd Chenoweth, TCEQ, called the meeting to order and requested introductions of the Committee members and audience.

Discussion and Agreement on Agenda

The Committee approved the proposed agenda.

Overview of the SB3 Process & Role of the SAC

Bruce Moulton, TCEQ, presented a brief history of the environmental flows process in Texas and outlined the charge of the SAC as provided for by SB3. A handout was provided.

Nomination and Election of Committee Chair

Todd Chenoweth asked if the Committee was prepared to nominate a chair. George Ward nominated Robert Huston. Bob Brandes seconded. Mr. Huston was elected chair by unanimous vote.

Mary Kelly nominated Bob Brandes for Vice Chair. James Wiersema seconded. Mr. Brandes was elected vice-chair by unanimous vote.

Points of Contact

The Committee requested a point of contact from each agency. Points of contact for each agency are:

TCEQ: Kathleen Ramirez, MC 154
PO Box 13087
Austin TX 78711-3087
Tel: 512-239-6757
kramirez@tceq.state.tx.us

TPWD and TWDB stated that they would get back to the Committee with a point of contact.

Ground Rules for the Committee

Chairman Huston then began discussion of what ground rules the Committee might want to use regarding quorum, voting, and consensus based decision making.

Mary Kelly suggested that a consensus-based approach for decision making is preferred and all members agreed.

The members discussed how many members would be required to reach a quorum for formal action. Bob Huston suggested 6. Mary Kelly agreed and consensus was reached that 6 members would constitute a quorum and no recommendations would be made from the Committee without at least 6 members in attendance.

Bob Brandes asked that the agencies provide technical analysis/expertise as needed and all three agencies agreed to do so.

Paul Montagna asked if TCEQ would provide meeting minutes and distribution of minutes. TCEQ responded yes, but suggested that minutes would be a record of decisions made, not meeting notes. All members agreed this was acceptable.

Bob Huston discussed structure of SAC meetings:

- posting meetings – TCEQ will post on web;
- public input – Mary Kelly suggested they be open to public to allow for better credibility, along with posting notice with adequate advance meeting time. There was discussion that some committees meetings or work sessions might be handled by a conference call, and the members agreed that certain meetings could be closed to allow the Committee to produce work products. Consensus was reached that the goal was an open process, but the Committee might decide on a case-by-case basis for some closed meetings.
- Discussion followed on where and when meetings should be held: within individual basins, local, Austin, etc. Members agreed that these factors should be considered when setting meetings to ensure that all views were available to the SAC.

Alternates

Bob Huston brought up the topic of alternates: All members agreed that non-member alternates would not be appropriate.

Report on per diem and travel expenses

Barney Austin, TWDB, discussed funds available for reimbursement for members' expenses in carrying out SAC duties. A handout was provided to the Committee. Barney Austin recommended monthly reporting of expenses. Bob Brandes suggested the Committee appoint a member to draft a budget, circulate among the members and provide and estimate of expenses to the TWDB. Mary Kelly, Bob Brandes, and James Wiersema agreed to head this task and report to the full Committee at the next meeting.

Report on previous SAC activities

Cindy Loeffler, TPWD, provided an overview of actions taken in response to previous Science Advisory Committees recommendations.

- Members requested that Desktop Methodology report be made available to the SAC
- It was suggested that SAC members might attend freshwater inflow group meetings, and to contact Ruben Solis for more information.

Set Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Texas Environmental Flows Science Advisory Committee will be held on September 3, 2008, at 9:30 AM. The meeting will be held at the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's offices, building F, RM 2210.

Agenda for Next Meeting

The SAC requested the following presentations be made at the next meeting:

- Detailed briefing on SB2/TIFP activities and the active instream flows workgroup actions
- Review of default methodology for establishing environmental flows
- Review of existing methodology for estimating instream flow needs to bays & estuaries

SAC Mission: Chairman Huston agreed that he would work on a strawman document of committee mission, deliverables, and schedule to be discussed at the next meeting.

Meeting was adjourned.