

PROJECT: Sabine Regional Flood Planning Group (RFPG)
NAME OF MEETING: Region 4 Sabine RFPG Meeting – September 2021
RECORDED BY: Mat Leclair, PE, CFM, CPESC
DATE: October 21, 2021; 11:00am
LOCATION: Virtual and In-Person (SRA Office – Orange, TX)
DATE SENT FOR APPROVAL: November 4, 2021
DATE FINALIZED:

The following reflects our understanding of the items discussed during the subject meeting. If you do not notify us within five working days, we will assume that you are in agreement with our understanding.

Voting Member	Interest Category	Present (x) / Absent () / Alternate Present (*)
James (Bill) Bruce	Agriculture Interests	x
Johnny Trahan	Counties	x
Francis X. Shannon	Electric Generating Utilities	
Clyde V. McKee III	Environmental Interests	x
Don Carona	Flood Districts	x
Nikki Davis	Industries	x
Alton Bradley	Municipalities	x
Michelle Falgout	Public	x
Travis Williams	River Authorities	
Jeff Rogers	Small Business	
Roman D. Griffin	Water Districts	x
Ross Gordon	Water Utilities	x

Voting Members: 12

Voting Members Present: **9**

Quorum: **Yes**

Non-Voting Member	Interest Category	Present (x) / Absent () / Alternate Present (*)
Colleen Jones	General Land Office	x
Kathy Saucedo	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality	x
Manuel Martinez	Texas Department of Agriculture	x
Andrea Sanders	Texas Division of Emergency Management	
Robert (Bob) Baker	Texas Parks and Wildlife	x
Trey Watson	Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board	x
Ryke Moore	Texas Water Development Board	x

Other Meeting Attendees:

Mat Leclair (FNI)

Hayes McKibben (FNI)

Mike Reedy (FNI)

Mark Howard (SRA)

Jim Brown (SRA)

Dawn Pilcher

Sonia M

T Olson

James Bronikowski

Douglas Manning

Agenda Item 1: Call to Order

- Johnny Trahan called the meeting called to order at 11:20 am when quorum was met.

Agenda Item 2: Roll Call

- Mark Howard confirmed quorum with 8 out of 12 voting members.
- James (Bill) Bruce arrived after roll was called which increased the number of voting members to 9.

Agenda Item 3: Welcome, Meeting Facilitation Information, and Instructions

- Johnny Trahan welcomes everyone to the meeting.
- Johnny Trahan notes the Texas Government Code 551.127 regarding the Zoom meetings and reads the material. For reference, please use the following link for the specific information read during the meeting: [GOVERNMENT CODE CHAPTER 551. OPEN MEETINGS \(texas.gov\)](https://www.texas.gov/government-code-chapter-551-open-meetings)

Agenda Item 4: Receive general public comments (public comments limited to 3 minutes per speaker).

- No members of the public online.
- No comments from the public.

Agenda Item 5: Discussion and Approval of minutes from the previous Region 4 Sabine RFPG meeting held September 21, 2021.

- **Ross Gordon motions to approve as presented. Nikki Davis seconds. Motion passes**

Agenda Item 6: Updates from Chairman

- Johnny attended the Water for Texas 2021 Conference and noted that he participated in a lot of meetings and one in particular regarding moving the 100yr floodplain to the 500yr floodplain which would be a huge deal in Orange County. Need to be vigilant about the state not making cookie cutter rules for the whole state as it has more of a disproportionate effect in the lower basin area and to make sure that the board's viewpoints are represented.
- Johnny Trahan noted that the lack of data may hamstring Sabine RFP a little bit. Johnny recommends that the #1 goal should be to fill in the gaps in the floodplain data so we can do a better job with creating and presenting projects.

Agenda Item 7: Update from the Texas Water Development Board

- Following up on Johnny's comments, Ryke Moore speaks to a path for policy recommendations. Keep in mind that we don't want to disproportionately affect other areas of the region.
- Ryke Moore noted that a newsletter update went out 1 month ago and another one will be coming in November/December. Please be on the lookout for those with answers TWDB is getting from many of the regions.

- Ryke Moore noted to be wary about sending emails to all group members and the reply all to ensure no one is breaking any rules or jeopardizing the situation.
- Ryke Moore spoke about the upcoming technical memorandum and ensuring the group is planning ahead for reviewing and approving the memo, possibly in December or January so make sure it's on the radar for future attendance.
- Ryke Moore noted the ongoing contract amendments which were sent out earlier that morning (10/21) and requests feedback on that. It is also something the group should be working to get on the agenda to approve for the sponsor (SRA) to get into an agreement with the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB).
- Finally, Ryke Moore spoke to the new Fathom data and that its target is still the end of October. TWDB is eagerly awaiting to get that out to everyone.

Agenda Item 8: Region 5. Neches RFPG Report.

- Don Carona attended the meeting last week in the Neches region and noted the Neches region did the exact thing we're doing today. Don provided feedback to FNI for the adoption of goals.

Agenda Item 9: Update from Freese and Nichols

- Mat Leclair presented on the following topics.
 - o Public Survey
 - Ross Gordon notes that with only 14 responses that the outreach effort is not working and did not think it represents a comprehensive input and Mat Leclair responds noting FNI is following up with stakeholders, especially critical ones requesting spatial data, models, other items.
 - Don Carona noted they were dealing with a similar issue with the GLO study and was surprised at the lack of a response from the public entities because they were directly contacted.
 - Ross Gordon encourages that FNI reach out and talk to people who specialize in outreach and is concerned that the group would not have very much participation at the upcoming public meetings given the lack of responses thus far.
 - Johnny Trahan notes he would post the link to the survey on Facebook groups and would make personalized visits with stakeholders.
 - Ross Gordon suggests that we should have at least 1 response from all 21 counties in the watershed as a bare minimum.
 - Mike Reedy notes that some of the other regions have brought in public relations firms, but notes the results aren't much better. The GLO study also has a lot of PR firms in it.
 - o Public Meetings
 - Mat Leclair notes the purpose of the public meetings is to present the existing conditions flood risk.
 - Tuesday, October 26th meeting in Orange, TX from 5:30pm – 7:00pm
 - Thursday, November 4th meeting in Longview, TX from 5:30pm – 7:00pm
 - Mat Leclair mentions that at least 2 or 3 FNI employees will be at the meetings. Multiple laptops will be provided so the public can provide input and will have access to the website at the meeting or the link to take home. FNI is also preparing a PowerPoint outlining the RFP process. FNI is also preparing 4 paper maps.
 - Johnny Trahan notes that Bill Bruce has joined the meeting.

- Task 3A
 - Mat Leclair notes FNI's subconsultants have been evaluating local floodplain management practices and they have found that a majority of the Cities and Counties have higher standards.
 - Mat Leclair discusses different levels of enforcement
 - Michelle Falgout notes she worked very closely with the City of Vidor's code enforcement person who was very active in enforcement. Mat Leclair responds that FNI will go back and check on that one in particular.
- Goals (Task 3B)
 - Mat Leclair notes that FNI presented on this in September and reminded everyone about the Mentimeter exercise to determine which categories were of highest importance to the RFPG members.
 - The top categories were Improve Flood Mitigation Projects, Expand Funding, Protect Life Safety, Improve Data, and Protect Property. Mat then noted that protecting life safety and property are two goals that are inherently built into the overall goal for the RFP so FNI has worked to create goals around those top 5 categories.
 - Mat Leclair notes that these goals roll into the FME/FMS/FMP process and that every single one of those items must be tied to a goal and mentions that if the group decides to not approve a particular goal that a mitigation need may not have a goal to tie back to.
 - *Goal 1A (short term goal) was read to be "install flood warning signage at 100% of identified low water crossings in the floodplain by 2033."*
 - Johnny Trahan notes that some of their issues around Orange County revolves around TXDOT and recognizes that the Sabine RFPG doesn't have representation from TXDOT and suggests that TXDOT be engaged in this process and notes that he will reach out to TXDOT.
 - Ross Gordon notes that we need to make specific entities who have control over items centered around goals need to be aware of the RFP process.
 - *Goal 1B (short term goal) was read to be "improve 10% of low water crossings to no longer be classified as a low water crossing", and (long term goal) to be "improve 20% of low water crossings to no longer be classified as a low water crossing."*
 - Johnny Trahan asks about how many of the 91 identified low water crossings are specifically on TXDOT roads as the RFPG has no control over those roads.
 - Johnny Trahan recommends using 20% and 40% for the goal.
 - After discussion, the goals were revised as follows:
 - **Install flood warning signage at 100% of identified low water crossings in the floodplain by 2033.**
 - **Improve 20% of low water crossings to no longer be classified as a low water crossing by 2033.**
 - **Improve 40% of low water crossings to no longer be classified as a low water crossing by 2053.**
 - **Bill Bruce motions to approve the goals. Ross Gordon seconds the motion. Motion passes.**
 - *Goal 1C (short term goal) was read to be "Reduce the number of critical facilities in the 100-year floodplain by 15%" and (long term goal) to be "Reduce the number of critical facilities in the 100-year floodplain by 25%."*

- Johnny Trahan notes this goal would be particularly difficult to meet in Orange County and suggests using the wording “improve flood protection for _____”.
- Ross Gordon agrees as it allows for a wide variety of solutions and also voices a concern that there are a lot of structures that are not in the regulatory 100-year floodplain but who still suffer from flooding, and this goal may be excluding them.
- Johnny Trahan agrees and notes that “flood-prone areas” could be used instead.
- After discussion, the goals were revised as follows:
 - **Improve flood protection for 15% of critical facilities in flood-prone areas by 2033.**
 - **Improve flood protection for 25% of critical facilities in flood-prone areas by 2053.**
- **Ross Gordon motions to approve the goals. Michelle Falgout seconds the motion. Motion passes.**
- *Goal 1D (short term goal) was read to be “Reduce exposure of existing structures in the current 1% annual chance floodplain by elevating, acquiring, relocating, or otherwise providing flood protection to 10% of structures.” and (long term goal) to be “Reduce exposure of existing structures in the current 1% annual chance floodplain by elevating, acquiring, relocating, or otherwise providing flood protection to 20% of structures.”*
 - After a brief discussion, the goals were revised as follows:
 - **Reduce exposure of existing structures in flood-prone areas by elevating, acquiring, relocating, or otherwise providing flood protection to 10% of structures by 2033.**
 - **Reduce exposure of existing structures in flood-prone areas by elevating, acquiring, relocating, or otherwise providing flood protection to 20% of structures by 2053.**
 - **Ross Gordon motions to approve the goals. Michelle Falgout seconds the motion. Motion passes.**
- *Goal 1E was read as “Increase the number of regional flood infrastructure projects designed for larger storm events.”*
 - Don Carona expanded upon the newly added goal based on his comments on the previously provided document.
 - Ross Gordon recommends using wording of “promote and facilitate regional infrastructure projects”
 - After discussions, the goals were revised as following:
 - **Advance multiple regional flood infrastructure projects designed for larger storm events by 2033.**
 - **Promote, facilitate, or construct regional infrastructure projects by 2053.**
 - **Ross Gordon motions to approve the goals. Don Carona seconds the motion. Motion passes.**
- *Goal 1F was read as “100% of counties to perform public education and awareness campaigns to better inform the public of flood-related risks on an annual basis.*
 - There was no further discussion on this goal and the goal was finalized as the following:

- **Ross Gordon motions to approve the goals. James (Bill) Bruce seconds the motion. Motion passes.**
- *Goal 3D (short term goal) was read to be “Increasing the number of stream/flood gages installed and maintained in the region to at least 1 in HUC10s.” and (long term goal) to be “Increasing the number of stream/flood gages installed and maintained in the region to at least 1 in 80% of HUC12s.”*
 - Ross Gordon expresses concerns about the goal being too aggressive.
 - Don Carona agrees and recommends revising the goal to be 1 in 50% of HUC10s.
 - Michelle Falgout notes that it must be for the whole system which must be purchased and not the gages alone.
 - Ross Gordon recommends a wording revision for the goal to include the technology associated with the gage reporting.
 - After discussion, the goals were revised as follows:
 - **Increase the number of monitoring gages and associated real-time reporting technology installed and maintained in the region to at least 1 in 50% of HUC10s by 2033.**
 - **Increase the number of monitoring gages and associated real-time reporting technology installed and maintained in the region to at least 1 in 50% of HUC12s by 2053.**
- **James (Bill) Bruce motions to approve the goals. Nikki Davis seconds the motion. Motion passes.**
- FME/FMS/FMP Process (Task 4B)
 - Mat Leclair notes that the group still needs to vote on the FME/FMS/FMP process
 - Ross Gordon asks if that could be pushed to the next meeting and Mat Leclair responds noting that it could be pushed to the next meeting and revise as necessary at the next meeting.
 - Johnny Trahan suggests tentatively approving the process with a review to be held at the next meeting where it can be potentially be amended.
 - **James (Bill) Bruce motions to tentatively approve the process and Clyde (Tad) McKee seconds the motion. Motion passes.**
- Mat Leclair discusses the upcoming schedule for the next 2 months leading up to the submittal of the Technical Memo (Task 4C) which is due January 7th, 2022.
- Mat Leclair notes that FNI is preparing the first draft of the Tech Memo and will provide to the group in November for review, comments, and revisions for approving the memo in December ahead of the January deadline to TWDB.

Agenda Item 10: Consider date and agenda items for next meeting.

- Johnny Trahan recommends the next Sabine RFPG Meeting to be held on November 18th at 10am on Zoom and in person at the Sabine River Authority’s office in Orange.
- **James (Bill) Bruce motions for scheduling the next RFPG date for November 18th and Clyde (Tad) McKee seconds the motion. Motion passes.**
- Ryke Moore notes that based on the wording for the agenda there is no course of action so the group would want to avoid meeting a quorum at both meetings. Mark Howard recommends emailing him if planning to attend the meeting to ensure not exceeding quorum at the public meetings.
- Ross Gordon proposes a suggestion for the next agenda for FNI to present a summary of goals that other RFPGs are considering.

Agenda Item 11: Adjourn

- Johnny Trahan adjourned the meeting at 2:06 pm.