

Fiscal Year 1994-

The Introduction of the Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program-Summary of the Process.

On September 1, 1994, the CCBNEP will begin Year 1 of a four-year CCMP development process. This Cooperative Agreement Work Plan describes the proposed work to be carried out during FY 1995 under five Program Elements. Work under this Cooperative Agreement is scheduled for completion by August 31, 1995, with exception of Task 1.10 (a two-year circulation modeling effort under the auspices of the Texas Water Development Board) that is scheduled for completion by August 31, 1996. Of the total Work Plan budget of \$1,313,334, \$985,000 are federal (EPA) funds and \$328,334 are State of Texas (TNRCC and TWDB) nonfederal matching funds. Detailed budget information can be found in Table 2, which summarized the overall Program Budget, and Table 3 which details funding sources. Table 4 provides a summary of projected expenditures by Program Element.

Eleven scientific/technical assessment projects will take place under this Cooperative Agreement. These projects will comprise a significant component of the 'Characterization Phase' of the CCBNEP. The result of the Characterization Phase will be increased understanding of estuarine problems and a recognition of their management implications. Although the Scientific-Technical Advisory Committee will provide overall guidance for the Characterization effort, consultant services will be sought to carry out the work which, in general, will be applied (i.e., management-related) sciences rather than empirical research involving new data collection.

As part of the Characterization Phase of the Program, an assessment will be conducted of the existing management and institutional framework for resource management within the CCBNEP study area. This 'Base Program Analysis' will identify gaps or overlaps in management jurisdiction from a regulatory viewpoint, as well as identify the potential for enhanced coordination by agencies involved in estuarine research, planning, and management. Consultant services will be sought to perform this inventory and analysis of existing management structures, which will build upon earlier efforts by the Galveston Bay National Estuary Program and other state agencies that have carried out similar analyses. The Local Governments Advisory Committee will provide general guidance for this project. Meanwhile, the Program will move forward to undertake early action through one or more Action Plan Demonstration Projects (APDPs) that will be designed to provide case-study information for a given management action and its applicability for basin-wide implementation as part of the CCMP.

Public understanding of the Program, and opportunity for citizen involvement in the development of the CCMP, are two major goals, for which a foundation will be built during FY 1995. Twelve separate projects in public participation are identified in this Work Plan. The projects have been designed to further the goals of the four-year Public Participation Strategy developed by the Management Conference under the auspices of the Citizens Advisory Committee. The Program's Outreach Coordinator will provide overall direction to each of the Scheduled projects, who will draw heavily upon expertise and volunteer labor from the community at large and CAC subcommittees.

A Preliminary CCMP is targeted for completion by April 1996, or within 18 months of initiating Year 1 of the four-year program. The Management Conference will begin to develop a framework for the CCMP during the first all-Conference workshop scheduled for early 1995. A goal of this 'CCMP Development Workshop' is to reach consensus on the general scope (content) and process of the CCMP development effort, and to provide Management Conference members the opportunity to get acquainted individually and with the work of other committees. The services of a professional facilitation team will be sought to assist the design and implementation of the workshop.

A Program Staff of five will support the operations of the Management Conference, and ensure that all federal and state grant requirements are met. The administration of contracts for consultant services will occupy a large part of Staff's time, as will the development of plans for future years of the Program. Close coordination with staff from the EPA Region 6 office will be necessary, as will daily interaction with staff and management of the TNRCC offices in Austin.