



Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program, Inc.

1305 N. Shoreline Blvd, Ste. 205, Corpus Christi, Texas 78401-1500

361-885-6202 (phone) • 361-881-5168 (fax)

January 22, 2010

To: CBBEP Board of Directors

From: Ray Allen, Executive Director

Re: San Antonio Bay Partnership Effort

I am pleased to report that our efforts to develop local support for an estuary program for San Antonio Bay has been quite successful, nearly 100 people attended an initial workshop in Victoria on January 12th. CBBEP's contractor, James Dodson worked for months building interest in the idea and put together a great agenda for the kick-off meeting.

While no firm funding has been secured, TCEQ representatives have expressed a desire to help line up funding to keep the effort going. I am hopeful that those dollars can be found in the next couple of months.

Please find attached a draft white paper laying out a strategy for moving forward. That document has been prepared to help attract additional funding to the effort.

In order to not lose momentum, CBBEP staff is seeking authorization from the Board of Directors to extend Mr. Dodson's contract for a period not to exceed 6 months at a rate of \$2,500/month plus reasonable expenses beginning on February 1, 2010.

The request for a 6 month contract is not an indication that our interest runs out in 6 months but rather a strong signal that others need to step forward with funding.

San Antonio Bay Partnership - A Strategy for Moving Forward

January 21, 2010 (DRAFT)

After the successful workshop held on January 12th in Victoria it is critical that the San Antonio Bay Partnership (SABP) effort continue to move forward in order to maintain the support of the community. If funding can be secured, CBBEP proposes to undertake this effort in the San Antonio Bay system under the CBBEP umbrella but to have essentially a separate stand-alone effort regarding community involvement and the development of a Plan for San Antonio Bay.

It is our intent to seek significant state funding dedicated to the Partnership from the legislature for the next biennium beginning in September 2011. The goal for the next 19 months is to put together the framework of an estuary program based on the NEP model, of local stakeholders, state and federal agencies and non-governmental organizations working together for a healthy and productive San Antonio Bay system. Of course the amount of progress that can be achieved will depend to a great deal on the amount of funding that can be secured.

EPA has published a guidance document “Community–Based Watershed Management: Lessons from the National Estuary Program” (EPA-842-B-05-003) that can serve as a starting point for our efforts. The steps laid out include:

1. Development of an Organizational (Governance) Structure

Establish core committees including a leadership committee, a broader management committee, and other committees necessary to carry out the work of the partnership.

2. Establish a San Antonio Bay Partnership Program Office

The program office facilitates the work of the committees, providing administrative and technical support to the committees, conducting public outreach and education activities. Just as TCEQ served as the host organization for the development of the Coastal Bend Bays Plan, CBBEP is willing to coordinate and host the development phase of the San Antonio Bay Partnership.

3. Develop Technical Characterization Reports

Describes historic and current conditions in the estuary and identifies any problems that may exist. The initial reports rely primarily on existing scientific information and may identify data gaps that need to be addressed with new studies. It is hoped that the various resource agencies could help out by working with their existing data:

- TPWD – Fisheries Status & Trends, Commercial Harvest, Recreational usage, etc
- TCEQ/River Authorities – Water/Sediment Quality Status & Trends, Impairments
- TGLO – Wetlands Status and Trends and Shoreline Changes
- USFWS – Colonial Waterbird Status and Trends
- USGS – Land Use/Land Cover Status and Trends
- TWDB – Bay Hydrodynamics
- Navigation District – Commercial Shipping Tonnage, Number of Vessels, etc.

4. Development of the *San Antonio Bay Plan – A Blueprint for Action*

The written management plan identifies the most pressing problems in the bay system and establishes goals, objectives, and actions for resolving them. The plan is a living document and needs to be periodically reviewed and updated. The plan should also address monitoring and financing.

5. Implementation of Demonstration Projects during Plan Development

Demonstration projects are an important tool that can showcase management strategies, involve the public, and demonstrate some early on-the-ground successes.

6. Implementation of the San Antonio Bay Plan

The completion of the Plan is an opportune time for the program to consider changes to the organizational structure and institutional partnerships to provide for the long-term funding and implementation of the Plan. The implementing organization must ensure oversight and accountability, obtain stable and diverse sources of funding, monitor results and communicate them to the public and stakeholders and periodically update the Plan.

Proposed Work Plan for the next 19 months

If funding can be secured, CBBEP will provide a person (employee or contractor) to manage the program to keep the process moving forward. Essentially the amount of funding will dictate the amount of time that person can dedicate to the effort. Office space and additional administrative and technical support are desirable but would also require funding. CBBEP will also provide bookkeeping and accounting assistance.

The Program Manager will be tasked with:

- Facilitating the establishment and providing support for the leadership committee and other committees.
- Coordinate with various state, federal and local resource agencies/organizations to develop technical characterization reports.
- Communicate with the many stakeholders and general public in order to maintain enthusiasm and momentum for the Partnership.
- From time to time organize and hold public meetings and workshops needed to advance the Planning process.
- Seek financial support from local, state and federal sources.
- Prepare work plans and budgets.
- Carry out other task necessary to keeping the estuary program development process moving forward