

Meeting Minutes  
 Region 5. Neches Regional Flood Planning Group Meeting  
 Wednesday, March 18, 2026, 2:00 p.m.  
 Hybrid (in-person/virtual) Meeting

<u>Voting Member</u>	<u>Interest Category</u>	<u>Present(x)/Absent( )/ Alternate Present (*)</u>
Milton Purvis	Agricultural	Present
Jeff Branick	Counties	Present
Liv Haselbach	Electric Generating Utilities	Present
Ellen Buchanan	Environmental	Present
Allen Sims	Flood Districts	Present
Steve Moon	Industries	Absent
Kyle Kingma	Municipalities	Absent
Amanda Young	Public	Present
Scott Hall	River Authorities	Present
Brian McDougal	Small Business	Present
Butch Wilson	Water Districts	Present
Robb Starr	Water Utilities	Present

<u>Non-voting Member</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Present(x)/Absent( )/ Alternate Present (*)</u>
Kirian Brown	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department	Absent
Michelle Ellis (Matthew Holloway)	Texas Division of Emergency Management	Absent
Manuel Martinez	Texas Department of Agriculture	Present
Trey Watson	Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board	Absent
Cydnye Robinson	Texas General Land Office	Absent
Katie Pietsch Koslan	Texas Water Development Board (TWDB)	Present
Kathy Saucedo	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality	Absent
Lisa McCracken Mairs	US Army Corps of Engineers	Absent
Keith Horn	Texas Department of Transportation	Alternate Present
Jacob Donellan	Federal Public Lands	Absent
Randy Reece	Sabine Neches Navigation District	Absent

<u>Liaisons</u>	<u>Entity</u>	<u>Present(x)/Absent( )/ Alternate Present (*)</u>
Jonathan Spellman	Region 3. Trinity RFPG	Absent
Don Carona	Region 4. Sabine RFPG	Alternate Present
Vacant	Region 6. San Jacinto RFPG	Absent
Rolando Ayala	Freese & Nichols, Inc.	Present
Lincoln Abbott	Freese & Nichols, Inc.	Present
Risa King	Lower Neches Valley Authority	Present
Victoria Dai	Lower Neches Valley Authority	Present

**Quorum:**

Quorum: **Yes**

Number of voting members or alternates representing voting members present: 10

Number required for quorum per current voting positions of 12:7

The names of meeting attendees were gathered from those who entered information to join the virtual meeting and those who were physically present.

Mary Bernard, Big Thicket Biosphere Reserve  
Samantha Harris, Texas Department of Transportation  
Chaitanya Desai, Texas Department of Transportation  
Melissa Beaudry, Halff  
Aaron Burciaga, Ricoh  
Matthew Berg  
Doug Manning, Sabine RFPG Liaison Alternate  
Representatives from Traylor & Associates

*All meeting materials are available for the public at: <https://nechesfloodplanning.org/>*

## **AGENDA ITEM NO. 1: Call to Order, Welcome, and Roll Call**

### Discussion/Action Items

- The meeting was called to order at 2:02 p.m.
- A quorum was established.

## **AGENDA ITEM NO. 2: Receive registered public comments on specific agenda items.**

### Discussion/Action Items

- Mary Bernard, Director of the Big Thicket Biosphere Reserve, provided public comments advocating for inclusion of nature-based flood mitigation solutions within the regional flood planning process.

Discussion followed regarding potential development of a stand-alone Flood Mitigation Evaluation (FME) focused on nature-based solutions, including wetland restoration, detention storage, vegetated swales, groundwater recharge concepts, floodplain restoration, and other low-impact development strategies.

The planning group and technical consultant discussed the practical application of nature-based solutions within the current planning framework, including integration of such alternatives into Task 4C and Task 5B FMEs and associated scopes of work.

## **AGENDA ITEM NO. 3: Update from Texas Water Development Board.**

### Discussion/Action Items

- Katie Pietsch Koslan provided an update from the Texas Water Development Board regarding upcoming FME submission requirements.
- Discussion included revisions to the community affirmation form requirements, clarification regarding use of the 14-digit FME identification number, and upcoming deadlines associated with FME lists and scope of work submissions.

## **AGENDA ITEM NO. 4: Presentation from the Texas Department of Transportation**

### Discussion/Action Items

- Samantha Harris with the Texas Department of Transportation provided a presentation regarding roadway functional classifications and roadway hydraulic design standards.  
The presentation included discussion of:
  - roadway functional classification categories,
  - design criteria associated with each roadway type,
  - hydraulic design storm standards,
  - roadway inundation limitations,
  - evacuation route considerations,
  - Atlas 14 rainfall criteria,
  - roadway drainage and conveyance requirements,
  - and coordination between transportation infrastructure and regional flood mitigation planning.
- Discussion also addressed the challenges associated with undersized roadway crossings, maintaining existing drainage conditions, and balancing transportation infrastructure improvements with downstream flood risk considerations.

## **AGENDA ITEM NO. 5: Approve minutes of the February 18, 2026, meeting.**

### Discussion/Action Items

- There were no comments or changes regarding the minutes as presented.
- A motion was made by Robb Starr and seconded by Ellen Buchanan to accept the February 18, 2026, minutes as presented.
- The motion carried unanimously.

## **AGENDA ITEM NO. 6: Nomination and selection of officers and at-large members.**

### Discussion/Action Items

- The planning group discussed retaining the existing slate of officers and at-large members for another term. Officers and at-large members remain as follows:
  - Chair: Steve Moon
  - Vice Chair: Allen Sims
  - Secretary: Scott Hall
  - At-Large Members: Liv Haselbach and Ellen Buchanan
- The motion was made by Jeff Branick and Robb Starr seconded the nomination.
- The motion carried unanimously.

## **AGENDA ITEM NO. 7: Approval and certification of administrative expenses incurred by the RFPG sponsor.**

#### Discussion/Action Items

- Administrative expenses incurred by the RFPG sponsor were presented for approval and reimbursement submission to the Texas Water Development Board. Risa King clarified that the expenses included sponsor administrative costs associated with management of the RFPG process, including payroll, website fees, and related grant administration expenses.
- Robb Starr made a motion to approve reimbursement of the expenses as presented. Amanda Young seconded the motion.
- The motion carried unanimously.

#### **AGENDA ITEM NO. 8: Update from Technical Consultant**

- a. Update on Task 4C – Performance of FMEs**
- b. Update on Task 5B – Recommend a list of FMEs to be performed by TWDB**

#### Discussion/Action Items

- Freese and Nichols provided updates regarding Task 4C and Task 5B Flood Mitigation Evaluations (FMEs). Discussion included:
  - prioritization criteria,
  - regional benefit considerations,
  - flood mitigation needs analysis,
  - rural community eligibility,
  - roadway crossing deficiencies,
  - culvert inventory limitations,
  - detention and conveyance alternatives,
  - and integration of nature-based solutions into conceptual project development.
- Hardin County and Angelina County were identified as priority study areas for consultant-performed FMEs under Task 4C. Additional prioritized FMEs were identified for potential advancement under Task 5B through the Texas Water Development Board consultant process.

#### **AGENDA ITEM NO. 9: Consider and act upon authorizing the Technical Consultant to proceed with performing FMEs.**

#### Discussion/Action Items

- A motion was made by Butch Wilson to authorize the Technical Consultant to proceed with performing FMEs.
- The motion was seconded by Liv Haselbach.
- The motion carried unanimously.

#### **AGENDA ITEM NO. 10: Consider and act on the definition of a small or rural community that will guide then development of a prioritized list of FMEs to submit to the TWDB for a separate program (Task 5B).**

Discussion/Action Items

- A motion was made by Ellen Buchanan to approve the definition of a small or rural community.
- The motion was seconded by Jeff Branick.
- The motion carried unanimously.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 11: Consider and act upon approving a prioritized list of FMEs for submission to the TWDB.**

Discussion/Action Items

- A motion was made by Ellen Buchanan to approve the prioritized list of FMEs to submit to the TWDB for a separate program.
- The motion was seconded by Jeff Branick.
- The motion carried unanimously.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 12: Public Comment**

Discussion/Action Items

- No public comments were submitted.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 13: Reports from other flood planning region liaisons.**

Discussion/Action Items

- Discussion included improving coordination and communication among neighboring regional flood planning groups. Risa King agreed to distribute San Jacinto Regional Flood Planning Group meeting notices and updates to the full group.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 14: Status updates and discussions from RFPG members.**

Discussion/Action Items

- No updates. AY detention pond expansion on hwy 421

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 15: Consider the meeting date for the next meeting.**

Discussion/Action Items

- The next meeting is scheduled for April 28, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 16: Consider possible agenda items for the next meeting.**

Discussion/Action Items

- Potential future agenda topics included roadway standards, Task 4C progress updates, regional flood mitigation goals, and recommendations associated with the regional flood plan.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 17: Adjourn**

Discussion/Action Items

- The meeting was adjourned at 3:37 p.m.

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Scott Hall, SECRETARY

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Allen Sims, CHAIR

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