

Meeting Minutes
Region 5. Neches Regional Flood Planning Group Meeting
Tuesday, April 28, 2026, 2:00 p.m.

<u>Voting Member</u>	<u>Interest Category</u>	<u>Present(x)/Absent ()/ Alternate Present (*)</u>
Milton Purvis	Agricultural	Absent
Jeff Branick	Counties	Present
Liv Haselbach	Electric Generating Utilities	Present
Ellen Buchanan	Environmental	Present
Allen Sims	Flood Districts	Present
Steve Moon	Industries	Present
Kyle Kingma	Municipalities	Absent
Amanda Young	Public	Present
Scott Hall	River Authorities	Present
Brian McDougal	Small Business	Absent
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	Absent
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 Doug Manning	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: 9

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.

Additional attendees included representatives from Traylor and Associates, Matthew Berg, Mary Bernard, Kevin Wessels, and Shanna Verret.

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

- There were no comments.

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

Discussion/Action Items

- Submissions of scope of work and affirmation forms were completed by the deadline.
- A newsletter covering December 2025–March 2026 activities was released in March.
- Fourteen amended RFPs were approved on March 31, 2026.
- Work continues on the technical memorandum and informal comments.
- Timeline questions arose regarding the NBS manual, with clarification that it is not yet out for public comment but will be shared statewide once released.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4: Approve minutes of the March 18, 2026, meeting.

Discussion/Action Items

- This item was tabled.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5: Update from Technical Consultant

- Update on Task 3A – Evaluation and Recommendations on Flood Plain Management Practices**
- Update on Task 3C – Flood Mitigation and Floodplain Management Goals**

Discussion/Action Items

Items covered included:

- Status of Task 5B lists for Harding and Angelina counties.
- Review of recommended standards, especially roadway-related provisions.
- Clarifications on prior updates acknowledged by the board.
- Emphasis was placed on refreshing group understanding of standards before future action.

Review of Floodplain Management Standards

Major discussion centered on roadway design standards. Proposed revisions included:

- Ensuring 100-year inundation remains within unpaved areas of rights-of-way.
- Clarifying definitions around arterial classifications.
- Allowing flexibility for future innovations such as underground stormwater storage.

- Group members debated impacts on evacuation routes, emergency access, storage systems, and consistency with state classifications.
- Agreement was reached to revise certain clauses and re-present updated language later.

Discussion on Habitable Structure Elevation Standards

Considerable dialogue explored:

- Differences between one-foot, two-foot, and three-foot freeboard requirements.
- FEMA substantial damage rules and their effects on homeowners.
- Conflicts between resilience goals and rebuild restrictions.
- Members expressed concerns about regulatory consequences, fairness to homeowners, and balancing modernization with feasibility.

Flood Mitigation and Data Goals Review

The group revisited short-term (10-year) and long-term (30-year) goals.

Categories included:

- Improving flood infrastructure.
- Expanding funding.
- Enhancing data availability and accuracy.
- Only minor adjustments were deemed necessary, except for terminology updates related to low-water crossings.

Low-Water Crossing Terminology

Extensive debate concluded that the term “low water crossing” is misleading.

Alternatives suggested:

- “Frequently flooded crossings.”
- “Crossings that may flood.”
- Consensus formed to adopt updated terminology and associated signage recommendations such as “Road may flood.”

Nature-Based Solutions Discussion

Members proposed expanding goals to explicitly include:

- Conservation easements.
- Riparian, wetland, and upland protection.
- Support for landowner incentive programs.
- Emphasis was placed on balancing private land rights with flood-mitigation benefits.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6: Public Comment

Discussion/Action Items

- There were none

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7: Reports from other flood planning region liaisons.

Discussion/Action Items

- Reports from other flood planning regions indicated similar progress and scheduling.
- Upcoming meetings were noted for several regions, and members planned attendance.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 8: Status updates and discussions from RFPG members.

Discussion/Action Items

- A detailed discussion focused on weighting factors in hazard indices and concerns about equal weighting in statewide tools.
- The importance of science-based weighting and flexibility for decision-makers was stressed.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 9: Consider the meeting date for the next meeting.

Discussion/Action Items

- The next meeting is scheduled for June 23, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 10: Consider possible agenda items for the next meeting.

Discussion/Action Items

- Tentatively ready to consider finalization of goals and recommendations

AGENDA ITEM NO. 17: Adjourn

Discussion/Action Items

- The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Scott Hall, Secretary

Steve Moon, Chair