

Interbasin Compact Committee Basin Roundtables Rio Grande Inter Basin Roundtable

MINUTES

May 11, 2010

**Adams State College - Student Center
First Street, Alamosa**

Attending: JB Alexander, Ron Brink, Michael Murphy, Eugene L. Farish, Jim Clare, Don Thompson, Allen Brown, Zeke Ward, Larry Sveun, Cindy Medina, Dale Wiescamp, Charlotte Bobicki, Kelly DiNatale, Perry Cabot, Peter Clark, Erin Minks, Mona Syring, Diana Anderson, Craig Cotton, Steve Vandiver, Tracy Miller, Mike Collins, Tim Garcia, Melody Schneider, Karla Schriver, Paul Robertson, Ronald Riegenbach, Bill Yohey, Dale Pizel, Rodney Smith, Charles Spielman, Art Hutchinson, Ruth Heide, Hew Hallock, Travis Smith, Kristin Maharg, Aaron Pancot.

Introductions

Chairman Mike Gibson welcomed everyone. He noted the empty places where Ray Wright & Doug Shriver used to sit. Eric Hecox of CWCB recognized their huge contribution to the Rio Grande Basin Roundtable, to CWCB, and to IBCC. Travis: "Whenever you talk about water, you would always talk about Ray and Doug. They were real water buffalos, Valley boys who lived through huge transitions." Rio spoke of how they influenced the future of this community, and of the importance of including many people and their diverse interests, reaching out to newcomers. Judy spoke of how they set examples and high standards for all of us. Dale encouraged us to pay attention to good people and to accept the gifts they give. Another person recounted the humor of these men, how Doug and Ray made him laugh.

Eric presented commemorative plaques to the families of Doug and Ray, praised our community, and gave special thanks for the leadership of Doug and Ray.

Approval of Minutes of April 13, 2010 -- JB moved that the minutes be accepted. Seconded by Allen Brown. Unanimous approval.

Colorado Division of Water Resources – Rio Grande Basin Report - Craig Cotton

Craig Cotton's report to the Roundtable included a report on dust-on-snow conditions and how it decreases *albedo* or reflectivity, an update on Elephant Butte and Caballo reservoirs, numbers on Rio Grande Compact water storage, and an explanation of the term "usable water." He reported that the Well Rules and Regulations Advisory Committee is trying to work out sustainability issues and that they are waiting for data on Valley models from Mike Sullivan's office in Denver to complete that work. He asked Steve Vandever when we would know about the modelers' work. Steve said "We're waiting impatiently." Contact Craig Cotton for a copy of his report.

Election of Officers – Vice President -- Mike explained that Doug Shriver had been Vice President of the RGBRT, and that we need to elect another member to this position. Travis Smith moved that Rio de la Vista be elected to the position of Vice President. Steve Vandiver seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor of having Rio serve as Vice President.

Secretary - Mike explained that this leaves the position of Secretary open. Mike Gibson nominated JB Alexander to serve as Secretary of the RGBRT. The nomination was seconded by Cindy Medina and Bill Yohey. The vote was unanimous in favor of having JB serve as Secretary.

Legislative Representative - Alex Davis of CWCB initiated a discussion of how to designate a State legislative appointee by the Agricultural and Natural Resource Committees of the Senate and the House to the Roundtable. No Roundtables have a particular process, so there is some confusion about how to make this nomination: how the DNR views this particular appointment; whether two people from the legislature might ask the DNR to make the nomination. At the last meeting members said they wanted Steve Vandiver to be nominated, but the disconnect is that although anyone can nominate, the decision remains in the legislators' hands and they want to be free to choose. Some members expressed the sense that the Roundtable wanted to be free to make this choice. Mike Gibson explained that at the last meeting there was not a quorum, so we had a discussion, but took no definitive action on this. Since there is no rush it was decided to give members of the Rio Grande Roundtable a month so that other potential appointees could be included for consideration. Mike asked if there were any other names. Cindy questioned the lack of clarity on the process. Alex stated the two chairpersons of the Committees, Hodge and Fisher, want to make an appointment from a selection and not be told what to do. The legislators and the Governor would prefer to have more than one person suggested. Alex went on to say that she had a list of candidates that she did not share with the group, but said that if the Roundtable wanted to add Steve to that list there was still time to do so. Discussion: The Roundtable has said who we want. Zeke said this was filling a vacancy and is a little different. Bill said that Steve, Rio, Travis, and Craig Cotten are among those who really know what's going on. Judy: "If we knew who those 26 people on the DNR's list are, I think Steve would probably still be at the top of our list."

Vote Legislative Committee Representative: JB moved that we recommend Steve Vandiver as our legislative committee representative. Bill and Cindy seconded. The vote was unanimous to submit the name of Steve Vandiver to represent the RGBRT as our legislative appointee, and Alex was asked to add him to the DNR list.

Replacement Member from Rio Grande County – Mike has talked to Suzanne, administrator for Commissioners. Waiting for response.

Vote: Replacement Member for IBCC – RGBRT has had two seats on IBCC, occupied by Ray Wright and Steve Vandiver. Travis said that he would be willing to serve and attend their monthly meetings. JB moved that Travis Smith serve in the place of Ray Wright on the IBCC. Charlie seconded. The vote was unanimous to appoint Travis to the IBCC.

IBCC Report - Steve Vandiver reported the heartfelt memorial at IBCC for Ray Wright. "He consistently stood for our water community." He displayed a resolution from the IBCC, a condensation of the comments made at the IBCC tribute. IBCC is in a lengthy process, working out a vision statement and vision goals to meet long term water needs of the State. They are reviewing different portfolios, different proposed projects, examining what conservation can do, what fraction of the pie conservation can bring versus Ag dry-up. Some projects included trans-basin diversions. Steve felt that the 2050 population projections can't be accurate. Need to have a full view of supply and demand. The Governor wants a report. Alex: We have four more meetings this year, with more opportunities to give feedback to the legislature for 2011.

Need for direct, real, talks – Steve Vandiver expressed to Eric Hecox a mutual need for us to "stop these powerpoints and reports" and really start talking. How can we ensure fairness when water is transferred from A to B. It is vital for RGBRT give feedback to our two reps.

Education Program - Judy Lopez: Judy Introduced Kristin Maharg and Aaron Parker of the Colorado Foundation for Water Education. Each Basin needs to develop an Education Action Plan in order to apply for \$1,800 for 2010-2011 to develop that plan. An educated populace is important and CWCB needs to have informed presenters and speakers. **Kristin:** each RT has an opportunity to write and implement its own plan. Looks forward to working with us. Steve and Travis are on the board of the Colorado Board for Education.

Consumptive Needs Assessment – Discussion of Presentation by CWCB Staff on April 13, 2010: After that meeting MG thought a lot about those numbers and spoke with Steve, Rio, others as to what they might mean. What's the real amount of water needed to grow a crop and how does that relate to the 400,000 AF/year shortfalls between the real need and what is actually available? "We feel the 'shortfall' number was very misleading." A good telephone conference call revealed that other Basins had also asked similar questions. Some RTs asked for this number to be available to them, and clarification as to what they'd like to have, what was really needed, and what was available. It was agreed that certain caveats and notes would have to be added to the RGBRT numbers. We're NOT looking for 400,000 AF of additional water. CDM and CWCB had agreed to make those changes. Rio and Travis: Yes, we want to comply with what other Basins are requesting, but to clarify that we're not EVER in a situation where we have extra water. Eric: narrative on Subdistricts and Ag lands coming out soon. Mike thanked CWCB and CDM for their patience and for listening. We look forward to getting those drafts.

Nonconsumptive Needs Issues – Mike: Mike met with Paul Robertson to help determine the nonconsumptive needs of this RT and they came up with a list of agencies and projects which are working to determine nonconsumptive use, set priorities, establish relationships between consumptive and nonconsumptive values (THIS NEEDS TO BE CORRECTED ??). It is not possible to give a meaningful response to the federal request for this data in the time given. He asked Eric if he could request a little more time in order to attempt to prepare a proper study. Paul said we are likely to get no information or faulty information on this issue. Travis said the guidelines and conclusions committee estimated that 5 years would be needed to come up with a first pass.

Report on Rio Grande Reservoir Studies, including Hydro-Power Potential - Travis Smith, Manager, San Luis Valley Irrigation District

Travis introduced Kelly DiNatale P.E., of DiNatale Water Consultants who gave a project update and hydropower analysis of hydropower potential at the Rio Grande Reservoir. Travis said there is a potential for a 10,000 AF enlargement, although seepage issues present some problems. Travis explained the three phases of this project and the costs involved. Rehabilitation estimated at \$22 Million; enlargement, \$30 Million; a new outlet, enhanced spillway. They will ask for Basin funds of \$100,000 for Phase III. Working to integrate Phases I and II. The question: Is hydropower operationally feasible? What's the potential for other reservoirs in the Valley?

Kelly DiNatale – They are working on a model, did a feasibility study, added some model enhancements, held some stakeholder meetings. Purpose - to show potential changes in operations and effects on reservoir levels, stream flows for potential hydropower generation. Looked at 500 KW option of hydropower transmission using single phase 11 mile transmission line. Explained hydropower generation potential. Would have about 90 ft of head (reservoir gage height). Showed power generated at various flow rates and gage heights; potential based on historical and modified operations.

Hydropower costs vs. revenues. Discussion of peak power. Hydropower permitting is subject to FERC, with exemption for under 5MW. Explained FERC. Good news: Governor's Energy Office is working with FERC and has submitted a draft memo to streamline the small hydro permitting process. \$22 Million gets us a new outlet, a spillway and deals with the seepage issue. To do hydropower we have to rehab the outlet. We think the hydropower can fund itself. Approximately 20 years to pay for the project. Kelly did this study. Travis not so excited now. However, given future mandates, it might become more attractive. Mike: four years ago nobody was looking at hydro, now because of FERC, etc. shift of mentality. Don't start off thinking why a project can't work. This is a starting point for other projects. We need to have the vision and then figure out how to make it work.

Basin-wide Hydro-Power Feasibility Study – Sponsoring Entity RC&D, Tim Garcia and Jim Clare. What is the potential for micro-hydro power of less than 5 MW in the Valley? Tim and Jim approached Mike and Hew Hallock – what interest is there? Would fit WSRA funding? Projects going forward need to address consumptive needs and nonconsumptive needs. In 2008 RC&D started working on this with Jim Mietz and Travis to do a study of hydro potential of the Valley. Lots of new technology in the last two years. Can now decide what's possible? What's worth developing further? Travis, Mike, Charlie, Tim, Jim -- might help the FERC MOU move through process a little faster if we had a few potential projects.

Applegate Engineering doing a study on micro-hydro across the state – Mike called them to see how such a study here might complement other studies going on. Eric: I think it could fit, but not JUST hydropower. Needs to tie in with RG Needs Assessment. If we can make the connection with what hydropower can PAY, it would make it easier to sell. Travis – an overall assessment of dam safety issues might qualify? Yes, as long as it's tied to the storage component. Mike talked to URS who are doing the study for Continental and Santa Maria Reservoirs, where there is huge flow, huge head. Others looking at possibility – McDonald

Ditch, Platoro. Charlie: seems we could do it pretty simply by hiring a couple of engineers to do a Valley inventory.

No other business. Adjourned.

NOTE: Over the next two months June and July meetings were cancelled

**Next Meeting: August 10, 2010 Student Center Room 309
Adams State College, Alamosa, CO 81101**