

Rio Grande Basin Roundtable – Meeting Minutes

January 11, 2010 2:00 to 5:00 PM

Adams State College –Student Center

First Street, Alamosa, CO

Meeting called to order at 2:03 by Chairman Mike Gibson

Attending: Craig Cotton, Paul Robertson, Ruth Heide, Mike Willett, Ron Peterson, Jim Rhett, Kurt Johnson, Rio de la Vista, Judy Lopez, Travis Smith, Cindy Medina, Corey Kanuckle, Don Thompson, Hew Hallock, Mario Curto, Greg Higel, Ray Wright, Doug Shriver, Steve Vandiver, Lawrence Gallegos, Bill Yohey, Charles Spielman, Jerry Gallegos, Gloria Gutierrez, John Shawcroft, JB Alexander, Rod Smith, Matt Hildner, Ralph Curtis, Tracey Miller, Jim Clare, Diana Cortez, Conrad Trujillo, Mike Blenden, Dale Pizel

Annual Meeting

Need to formally appoint officers.

Current: Mike Gibson as Chair, Doug Shriver as Vice Chair, Rio de la Vista as Secretary/Recorder, JB Alexander moved to extend current officers, Paul Robertson 2nd, Vote was unanimous.

Need to identify office place of business. Has been SLVWCD office.

Rio de la Vista moved to continue in same location and to continue to use Mike Gibson's office for notices, Doug Shriver 2nd, Vote was unanimous in favor.

Regular Roundtable Meeting

Minutes of November 2009 Meeting

Mike Gibson recreated the minutes from his recollection of what took place. Discussion.

Moved again for acceptance by Travis Smith, followed by further discussion and corrections, Corrections: Travis was here at meeting—on P2—additions from Travis re Bob Robins was here, correct JB Alexander's name spelling. Judy Lopez 2nd, unanimous.

Updated regarding October 2009 Minutes to reflect approval of funding request for Trinchera Irrigation Company- Lawrence made motion, JB 2nd, unanimous.

Report from Colorado Division of Water Resources

Rio Grande Compact

Report from Craig Cotton on Rio Grande flows and, compact: prelim #'s through 12-31-09 show Rio Grande at Del Norte at 593,100 AF flow, (Average 650,000 AF), owed 27% to downstream, will have over delivered about 1,000 AF.

Conejos- indexed 349,400 AF - owe 42%- over delivered about 1,500 AF.

In 2009, only had a few days of compact curtailment on ditches- 30 days on the RG --50 on the Conejos. Preliminary 2010 forecast from the NRCS is 475,000 AF for April-Sept. Total for year 575,000 AF.

2010 Conejos flows estimated at about 289,000 AF, April – Sept. very close to 2009. Still very early in season, much more winter to come!

Rules and Regulations Committee on Wells in SLV

Discussion included: Proposed policy regarding wetlands irrigation, most have seen and made comments—if anyone else wants to see & comment, State Engineer allows until end of this week and then will try to finalize policy.

Committee is making fairly good progress—was hoping to have it to the Court by end of 2009 – this did not happen but should be ready in next 2 to 4 months. Snag at last meeting when “Sustainability” requirements popped up—formed Subcommittee to discuss. Outlined in SB222, in addition to wells replacing depletions, has to be “sustainable” for aquifers for long term use. Irrigation Season Subcommittee is fairly set with their recommendations. When finalized, will have to be submitted and approved by Court.

Rio Grande Compact Meeting

Noted, that the Rio Grande Compact meeting will be in Alamosa this year on March 26, 2010, at Inn of Rio Grande at 10 AM.

Consumptive Needs Assessment - Report from Mike Gibson

Need to look at meeting the Rio Grande basin’s consumptive needs. SWSI in 2005 indicated that we’d be short of water for potential needs by 2020 by 4,000 AF. Have had a Subcommittee that met several times and discussed #’s.

- 1) Figure for potential municipal use was based on average determined for number of gallons per day per person—but we are one of the highest in state—projected population growth at 1 to 1.5 %
- 2) No component for industrial use—renewable energy was not in the picture when SWSI done. Best guess at this time, for significant solar power here, would have to have a new power line come in and based on the size of the power line, would determine potential development in foreseeable future. Also looked at different technologies and their potential water needs.

Mike noted that he could not get clarification from CWCB on whether domestic the water was being measured by “water in the pipe” or consumptive use.

Report to year 2050 - explained by Mike G. - sent to Greg Johnson at CWCB.

Travis noted - this is just an assessment, if get more data, we can adjust it.

Lawrence Gallegos moved to approve, pending spell check! JB Alexander 2nd. Unanimous.

Overview of Water Supply Reserve Account Balance

Rio Grande Basin Account will have about \$50,000 left if today’s projects get funded- see below.

Funding Request, San Luis Peoples Ditch

Diana Cortez and Conrad Trujillo: See application for details-asking for funds for Phase 1 only for reconstruction of main headgate- built in 1945- deteriorated to point of causing problems. Diane thanked NRCS, water commissioner and Mike Gibson for help in grant preparation.

\$20,000 committed from People’s Ditch, \$40,000 requested from RG Roundtable, still awaiting balance of funding from NRCS. If that doesn’t come through, they must proceed and look for funding elsewhere.

Craig Cotton has not yet prepared a letter of support as he had not yet seen the proposal, but has now and definitely supports it in order to prevent future problems.

Cindy Medina & Travis Smith advised that CWCB will want more detailed budget for approval.

Mike G—if we pass today, will go to March CWCB meeting, 60 to 90 days to get contract in place—can't happen before irrigation season—by March may know about matching funds from NRCS—CWCB funds won't be released until all funds are committed.

Greg Higel moved to approve requested \$50,000.00 of Basin funds, with condition that the budget be improved and the approval contingent on balance of funds being made available. Doug Shriver 2nd. Passed unanimously.

Funding Request – Education Specialist

Judy Lopez-- see application. Mike Gibson disclosed that he is on the Board of the Rio Grande Watershed Conservation & Education Initiative, established in December 2009, the new non-profit funding Judy's position. Mike went onto introduce this application and Judy Lopez answered questions. Request for \$25,000.00 from Rio Grande Basin funds.

Rio de la Vista moved to approve- Mario Curto 2nd. Unanimous.

Funding Request – Colorado Rio Grande Restoration Foundation (Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project)

Mike Gibson made the presentation as Coordinator of the Project, and gave an overview of history of effort from original 2001 Study to today.

See application - Colorado Rio Grande Restoration Foundation (Foundation) asked for money from both Statewide (\$148,000.00) and Rio Grande Basin (\$50,000.00) funds. Mike said that if no Statewide funds were available, the Foundation may come back for more Basin funds.

Discussion on future budget and funds availability. Looking forward, expecting state's fiscal issues will surely impact future WSRA funding. Varying opinions about supporting this project with additional funds since funding already been allocated to the Foundation for use by the RGHRP.

Ray Wright commented on dynamics of this group over time and Valley-wide participation and supporting of projects. Discussion on this.

Rio de la Vista reminded group that the Restoration project is OUR project, not just Mike Gibson's. In light of this, she supports this project and hopes the reduced funding from the State is not forever, and that funding will be forthcoming for future requests to the Roundtable.

Ray Wright-- concerned that we as a state cannot even maintain what we have now and that the future will be tight for a long time.

Doug Shriver reminded us that funds available are dollars coming into SLV and will help the overall economy here.

Cindy Medina would like the Roundtable Members to consider the future funding of new projects and the future availability of funds for these projects, and if projects that had previously received WSRA funds should be eligible for additional funds under these circumstances.

Rio de la Vista moved to recommend the requested funding by the Foundation. Bill Yohey 2nd. Note that Mike G and Greg H did not vote as they are Board Members on the Colorado Rio Grande Restoration Foundation. Approved with one vote against.

Other Business:

Corey Kanuckle introduced himself – new USFWS Partner’s for Wildlife person, filling Scott Miller’s former position. He is available to do projects on private land wetlands restoration and improvements.

Kurt Johnson- Telluride Energy- made a presentation on Micro-Hydro Opportunities for the Rio Grande Basin - see his power point presentation for details.

The presentation was followed by a discussion on shifting attitudes to hydro power from environmental perspective—especially micro hydro.

Hew Hallock added points regarding FERC licensing. Governor’s Energy Office (GEO) trying to put together a pilot project of 10 potential micro-hydro projects to move through licensing process. Encourage people to go to GEO website and fill in forms to be considered for this. Hope to have up and running by July. Also have a funding opportunity for feasibility studies.

Travis Smith suggested that Senator Udall and Bennet’s offices can help with this in DC. Discussion of related issues, SLV REC looking at trying to do an inventory of potential hydro-power sites in the SLV.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:45 PM.

Approved: _____ April 13, 2010