

HB 1177 Southwest Basins Water Roundtable
Jan. 9, 2008 Minutes

Chairman Steve Harris called the meeting to order at 3:15 p.m. Roundtable members in attendance were: Harris, Porter, Schwindt, Koppenhafer, Hunter, Smart, Preston, Weiss, Fisher, Sicscoe, Wanner, Wolff, Kroeger. Due to snow and overall bad weather there would not be enough members present for a quorum so after checking the bylaws, Steve emailed those not present to let them know they could join the meeting via teleconference. Also most of those not present were also called and asked if they could attend via teleconference.

The following people joined via teleconference, resulting in a quorum:

Robin Schiro	Mark Garcia	Larry Deremo
Ken Beegles	Hal Pierce	Mark Ragsdale
Pat Greer	Russell Kennedy	Jerry McCaw
Steve Fearn		

With 14 members present and 10 members on the phone there were enough for quorum. A quorum was important because the funding applications would have been delayed at least 2 months and 6 months for the State fund request.

Officer/IBCC Reports:

Steve reported that, based on some controversy from one member of the Roundtable, he will not be consulting with the consumptive & non-consumptive studies and will remain as Roundtable Chair until March when the regular elections will be held. After the March meeting Steve will volunteer to be on the consumptive workgroup.

March is the normal meeting for electing the Chair and 1st & 2nd Chairs for the next year. The bylaws are silent regarding term limits for IBCC members; after some discussion, the Roundtable members agreed that all positions (Chair, 1st and 2nd Chairs, and two IBCC reps) will be up for election in the March meeting. John Porter reminded the board that they used secret ballots at the first election. Chairs require a regular majority and the IBCC representative requires a supermajority (75%).

Meeting dates for 2008 will be the 2nd Wednesday of odd-numbered months and will continue to alternate between Cortez and Durango. John Porter suggested that meeting locations should be expanded to other locations during good weather months. It was voiced that it might be nice to give the public in other locations an opportunity to attend meetings. Chuck Wanner reminded the board that May 14 is the Colorado Water Workshop and that two SBWRT members will attend and therefore not attend the roundtable meeting.

Dan Birch - CRWCD

Dan Birch from Colorado River Water Conservation District and a member of the Yampa-White Roundtable was invited to speak to our roundtable regarding a meeting between the Yampa-White Roundtable and the South Platte Roundtable. Dan began by saying that HB 1177 will

heat up and the Colorado River Water Availability Study, and it will be important for the West Slope roundtables to “hang together” and keep communications open.

There was a meeting Sept.26 in Walden, Colorado between a delegation of the Yampa -White and South Platte Roundtables at the request of South Platte. Dan is traveling the West Slope to share what happened at the meeting. Northern Colorado Water Conservation District prepared a study to investigate building a pumpback and pipeline from the lower Yampa River to the front range (Multibasin Water Supply Investigation). The results of the study included:

- Pumpback would yield water at a cost of approximately \$15,000 af (capital costs)
- Would yield about 300,000 af per year
- Would pumpback from the Yampa River at Maybell (30-40 miles west of Craig, CO) to a very large reservoir north of the Yampa---a 500,000 af reservoir
- Would pump from there 250 miles to the front range. It would entail all new plumbing
- The project cost would be \$4 billion and operating costs would be \$150 per af.
- Take about 15 years to implement.

Northern WCD does not want to be the proponent of this project. They would prefer that possibly a consortium would propose the project, or that it be a state-wide project. Northern's stated interest is to provide an additional supply of water to the front range that might help minimize further agricultural conversions to municipal purposes.

South Platte Roundtable made presentations and expressed their concerns. Their position is that if you want to develop additional water supplies in the South Platte, the ratios they use are 7:1 storage-to-yield. The ability to develop additional supplies in the South Platte is very limited.

Yampa made their presentation. They have a fair amount of water supplies relative to their demands. The Yampa flows 1-1.5maf of water and their usage is about 100,000 af, projected to increase to 130,000 af over the next 30-50 years. They don't have major federal projects. Storage in the Basin is limited. Water rights relative to the compact are for the most part junior. They feel vulnerable in the case of a compact call. The caviat is what's going on with energy production. They're involved with the CWCB study to examine what the water needs might be for oil shale production.

Dan felt that the meeting provided an opportunity for good honest exchange. The Upper Yampa district and the city of Steamboat have both adopted resolutions that they are opposed to a pumpback concept unless a number of issues are addressed. Very important to the Basin is the Yampa Programatic Biological Opinion that consults on existing water depletions and provides a measure of certainty for water interests in the Basin. Endangered fish species and the recovery program would be a MAJOR issue. There are also environmental and recreational impact issues. They want to ensure that future basin water needs would be preserved.

Yampa indicated that they would be willing to meet again, and Dan felt that it would happen in a couple of months. Dan felt that nothing can be done without first determining what the water

availability would be. Fred Kroeger added that any Yampa diversion would impact the Southwest. Dan will send copies of the resolutions he mentioned earlier. The bottom line is: how much are you willing to pay for the actual resulting af that can be delivered?

Department of Wildlife

Department of Wildlife representatives David Graf, Mike Japhet, Jim White, and Dan Kowalski were at the meeting. Jim and Dan made a presentation on fish management in general, within the San Juan Basin, and specifics for the Dolores River basin. David and Mike answered questions. DOW has developed five management categories which categorized the issues. A Dolores River basin draft management plan was presented and comments were requested by DOW. Our non-consumptive workgroup has and will continue working with DOW. Electronic copies of the presentation will be available. Please contact Dan Kowalski, 2300 S. Townsend Ave., Montrose, CO 81401. Jim will bring maps to the next meeting and he's creating a geo-database for this basin. The DOW data could be beneficial to our consumptive studies.

Funding Requests:

1. Bauer Lake

Bob Scott made a brief presentation on a project that has been previously discussed at this Roundtable. He reported that Bauer Lake members have modified their funding request so that the members pay 50% of the cost through cash and loans. They've received a grant from SWCD for \$15,000 and their loan with SWCD has been extended and increased. The request for the Roundtable is for an additional \$20,000, for a total of \$40,000. The purpose of the request is to repair the outflow pipe on the Bauer Lake dam. Bruce Whitehead shared that SWCD has visited the site and strongly supports the request as a wise investment. Fred Kroeger replied that keeping dams operational (rehabilitation) is just as important as building new storage. It is a given that this system will fail and when it does, the cost will be extreme. Jerry McCaw said that this request would be a "steal" at this point. Mike Preston moved to approve a grant of \$40,000 and Fred Kroeger seconded the motion. The request passed by unanimous consensus.

2. Sawpit

The town of Sawpit is requesting \$25,000 from the Southwest Basin. Mike Kimball (on the phone) said the money will be used for engineering and planning to upgrade their domestic water system. This is the 2nd of a 3-phase project. Phase 1 was to replace spring boxes, this phase will include replacing about ½ mile of pipelines, and Phase 3 will be water storage upgrade and replacement. When they complete the engineering & planning, they will need to obtain additional funds for construction. Tap fees would be \$15,000 after the renovations are complete and 100% of that would be used for construction costs. Mike Preston raised the question of where the roundtable's responsibilities lie in terms of multi-phase projects. His thoughts have been that we should be involved in raw water projects. Tim Hunter added that his interpretation was that our money should be "seed money" for new projects and that there is a lot of other resources for rehabilitation. Bob Wolff moved to grant \$25,000 and Tim Hunter seconded the motion. Mike Preston wanted to add that his opinion is that grants for

treated water pipelines or treatment plants would be outside our responsibilities. The request passed by unanimous consensus.

3. La Plata West Water Authority

Tom Brossia gave a presentation and said that since the last time before this board, an Authority has been created (La Plata West Water Authority). He introduced other board members Roy Horvath, Fred Kroeger, and Ryan Huggins and Eric Bikis, Program Manager. The grant will fund final engineering design, legal fees and an internal environmental assessment through BOR. An intake structure is still the best option – design, permits and construction is estimated at \$6.5million. The Authority has applied for a DOLA grant for \$400,000, and SWCD has granted \$100,000. The state level request for \$1 million would be used for construction. Potential financial partners include both tribes and the Upper La Plata Water Users Assoc (NM). Tim Hunter raised the idea that this kind of project is land use-planning related, and as such, doesn't know that construction costs are under our purview. Tom Brossia answered that La Plata County Commissioners are on board and very supportive of the project. Roy Horvath added information regarding district planning issues. Fred Kroeger added an historical perspective of irrigation versus the ALP Project. The La Plata River is capable of providing about 8000 acres of irrigated land and there is presently 25,000 acres of land being irrigated there. The original ALP Project would have added 62,000 acres. Eric Bikis added that even though some of the irrigators don't want growth, having a domestic water source would take some pressure off irrigated water usage. There was a lot of verbal support for the rural water source for this area. The BOR will entertain a license agreement to use the land and will give input to design before construction occurs. Federal appropriations may be requested for design and construction of the backbone. Jim Siscoe asked "Is there enough certainty in the long-term to justify giving this money now"? Steve F. recapped that the ALP water exists, the little water that is there in wells is questionable, and continuing depletion of aquifer makes the situation worse. Bruce spoke for SWCD and ALPWCD saying both are supportive of this project. Don Schwindt stated that the state request may not be specific enough and may require some more work. Gerald asked how many taps would be needed to supply population right now. Tom responded roughly 1000. How many people will go off wells—Pat Greer replied about 80% because wells keep dropping and that the well water is not treatable. One question that would be asked at state level is why are they going after the state money before the first study is completed. Don and others gave them advice and input about the state application.

The Authority submitted two grant applications. Regarding the request for \$100,000 from the Southwest basin fund, Fred moved that a grant in the amount of \$100,000 be approved. Carrie seconded the motion. The request passed by unanimous consensus.

Regarding the request for \$1 million from the State fund. Don Schwindt said he thought the application may need additional work but he'd work with the Authority to make modifications that may be necessary between now and the March CWCB Board

meeting. Jim Siscoe moved that we approve to send it to State, and Bruce Smart seconded the motion. Chuck Wanner registered his concerns. The request passed but Chuck Wanner was neutral on the motion.

Steve adjourned the meeting at 5:50.