

**HB 1177 Southwest Basins Water Roundtable-
May 14, 2008**

Chairman Mike Preston called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. Copies of the IBCC Quarterly News were distributed. Mike asked that introductions be made and welcomed the new representative, Elyse Salazar, Town Administer of Silverton.

Administrative Reports:

Review & Approve Minutes

Fred Kroeger moved and Jim Siscoe seconded that the minutes from March 12, 2008 be accepted as written. The motion passed.

Officers & IBCC Representatives Report

Steve Harris thanked Jenny Russell for her efforts and time on the IBCC. Jenny will send an outreach organization list for updates. She will continue to work on the consumptive and non-consumptive committees.

Report by Rick Brown –

“Incorporating SWSI (Statewide Water Supply Initiative) II information into basin-wide water needs assessments”

Rick is leaving CWCB on June 6. He thanked the Roundtable for our efforts in SWSI I, particularly Steve Harris, Janice Sheftel, and John Porter. This Roundtable produced the **best** results in the state. The overall study produced eight key recommendations:

- Ongoing dialogue was needed in each water basin
- Track & support identified projects & processes
- Develop program to evaluate, quantify and prioritize environment/recreational water enhancement goals
- Create a common understanding of future water supplies
- Develop implementation plans towards meeting future needs
- Assess potential new State roles in implementing solutions
- Develop requirements for M&I reporting

The IBCC/Roundtable process’s overall goal has been to help Colorado maintain adequate water supply for its citizens and the environment. This needs to be remembered as we get involved in the details of our Basin.

Rick highlighted two of the conclusions from SWSI I:

- 1) If the projects and plans that providers are being pursued are completed, we could meet 80% of our 2030 M&I needs
- 2) There remains a 20% gap in M&I needs. We have shortages in ag and environment and recreation enhancements that had not been addressed.

The CWCD Board elected not to identify solutions to the gaps, but rather begin SWSI Phase 2 so that solutions come from the grass roots. The overall goal for SWSI II is to search for solutions that address conservation, ag transfers, environment and recreation needs, and new water development. Rick's opinion is that conservation, re-use, ag transfers, and new water development of multi-purpose projects will be the most successful. They created technical groups (conservation efficiency, ag transfer, environmental, and a "gap" group) to start talking about issues cross-basin. This was before H.B.1177 had been passed.

Rick shared his opinion that conservation and water resource development should be pursued concurrently. Both take time to implement. There is not state-wide support for this concept at this time. Another opinion is that Colorado needs to do much more to prepare for drought; we need to update a state drought plan. We need to develop stronger relationships between the municipalities and agriculture. Ag still has 85% of our water use. It would be important to any future drought plan to link those partnerships on a willing-buyer, willing-seller basis in terms of how we could use interruptible supply agreements. We need to do more than say, "we've got to be ready for drought". Conservation as a source of future water supply remains a challenge. We still need to work on ag transfers. Preserving agriculture in the state is a very important goal.

Rick continued, saying that each Roundtable needs to go through the same process using a common methodology. It's expected, of course, that results will be different between the roundtables. He briefly touched on Policy 18 and described it as an attempt to do partnership projects such as Long Hollow.

John Porter asked what source of funding is there for in uninterruptible supply using ag supply for non-consumptive use? Rick responded the current primary source is from legislation passed this year in the amount of \$1 million to do some acquisitions. One source is the Fish and Wildlife Mitigation funds that are not an exact fit. The Water Supply Reserve Account is also available.

Jenny Russell shared that it is still unclear how non-consumptive needs analysis will be implemented. Rick said it is complex and would depend on the issue. Possibly include in regulatory agreements; wild & scenic processes; could be incorporated into watershed plans, wildlife plans.

Kay Hartman thanked Rick for his years of service and said that the Roundtable will miss him.

Report from Consumptive Work Group

Mike Preston reported that they are waiting to get back with consultants to do their analysis and then to work with non-consumptive group.

Report from Non-consumptive Work Group

Jim Siscoe reported that they have built the non-consumptive attributes, about 120 in number. He is hesitant to put maps together because he needs information on endangered fish from DOW. Another missing puzzle piece is the projected future use. The committee needs to meet to establish priorities. And they need to get the “Non-consumptive Principles” document from Rick.

There was discussion about the benefit of the consumptive and non-consumptive groups doing integrating their work around a common hydrology and there was general consensus that this was the right approach. It was suggested that we need to get a lot of public comment on non-consumptive use priorities—there was a fear that younger-aged priorities are not being represented at this table.

Inter-Basin Roundtable Talks

Mike Preston shared that some East Slope roundtables wanted to dialogue with the West Slope about state-wide water needs. We’re willing to participate, at least to begin to understand each other’s issues. But it was suggested that the West Slope Roundtables discuss their positions together and then go to the East Slope roundtables. The question for us: is dialogue between the West and East Slope roundtables redundant with IBCC work? Rick shared that the Metro Roundtable doesn’t have anything to meet about because they have no water. They have to look outside their basin for water in order to meet statutory requirements of the roundtable. They feel the only thing they can work on is transbasin diversions. They’re the most vocal, but the South Platte is getting anxious because of the loss of irrigated acreage. Rick felt that Harris Sherman will take the IBCC input on future vision, give them to CWCB to do work plans around the vision and then give the work plans back to the roundtables and IBCC for discussion. John Porter added that there can be good synergy between the roundtables and the Conservation Districts. An example is that SWCD and the Colorado River District are having on-going dialogues about Colorado River Compact issues.

Rick said we need to balance our compact responsibilities with keeping the most amount of water in the Colorado possible. Rick added there is a working group, a Front Range Water Council which is a coalition of transbasin diverters. It includes Denver, Colo. Springs, Northern, etc. They are somewhat conflicted with their own basin. Mike added that the concept of the roundtables is good in that it gets diverse people together to discuss issues and understand more about a larger picture, but the issue of staff support is critical and we’re still not sure how to tap into the support that’s available. Steve Fearn asked why the process can’t be worked through the IBCC and felt that we should start there. Mike stated that we should tap into the groups that are staffed such as the IBCC, CWCB, and Water Conservation Districts that have staff and resources to contribute to the process. Steve suggested that we use the November meeting to focus on the Compact. Steve made some suggestions on information that could be reviewed prior to the meeting. Jim Siscoe added that we should also hear from someone who has insight to the more political aspects of the Compact.

Mike reported that the next meeting will be spent reviewing the non-consumptive data. Fred Schmidt from SJWCD will present a brief update on the Dry Gulch Project. Carrie Weiss thanked Rick Brown for all his support.

Water Supply Reserve Account

Jim Siscoe distributed a summary on the Montezuma Valley Irrigation Company request. There is an opportunity for the Summit Irrigation Company and the MVIC to merge. MVIC hired Applegate to analyze what Summit would bring to the merger and what improvements to Summit would be needed and what the benefits would be to MVIC of doing those improvements. They are requesting \$100 - \$150k to be used to cover engineering costs including an underwater survey. The formal request will be made at the next meeting.

Rick Brown was asked to talk about the state's position on purchasing their share of water (5,000 af) from the ALP Project. He distributed a memo from Randy Seaholm. The general sense at the state level is that they are not sure it's in their best interest to invest in the water. They need to know more about potential demand because they'll need justification for purchasing the water.

He asked if the Roundtable could help fund a study to evaluate market opportunities, infrastructure options, cost and benefits for development and distribution of the water. The cost of the study would be in the \$25 - \$30,000 range. Chuck Lawler asked if this would be an appropriate use of roundtable funds. Steve Fearn asked why the State wouldn't approach SWCD first. General consensus was that the State should approach SWCD first.

Gary Kennedy thanked board for funds for the expansion of Jackson Reservoir—they should have an update by the end of the year.

Basin Needs Overviews –

Still to be presented are Upper San Miguel, La Plata, Florida, Piedra

Next meeting:

July 9, 2008

2:30 p.m.

Durango

Mike adjourned the meeting at 5:30 p.m.