

INTERBASIN COMPACT COMMITTEE BASIN ROUNDTABLES
Rio Grande Interbasin Roundtable
March 8, 2011

M I N U T E S

Attending: Greg Johnson, Nicole Langley, Mike Gibson, Mike Willett, Ron Peterson, Lewis H. Entz, Jay Yeager, JB Alexander, Mario Curto, Peter Clark, Charles Spielman, Nathan Coombs, Karla Shriver, Ed Nielsen, Greg Higel, Rodney Smith, Cindy Medina, Travis Smith, Larry Sveum, Theresa Corless, Remy Halm, Mike Serlet, Erin Minks, Ruth Heide, Eugene L. Farish, Dale Pizel, Brian David, Ralph Curtis, Matt Hardesty, Heather Messick, Rick Basagoitia, Lawrence Gallegos, Allen Brown, Leon Moyer, Steve Vandiver

Introductions: Attendees introduced themselves. Mike G. announced that Travis had been reappointed to the Colorado Water Conservation District Board. Everyone applauded this !

Colorado Division of Water Resources, Division 3 – Matt Hardesty, Assistant Division Engineer – Report: Requests have been received requesting the irrigation season start before April. Craig Cotten, Division Engineer is considering these requests and will decide this week. Forecasts call for continued below average precipitation and above average temperatures. The west side of the Valley is at 98 percent of average based on SNOTEL measurements, with Wolf Creek summit at 105 % of average; Lily Pond was at 71% and Upper Rio Grande SNOTEL sites were at 88% of average. On the east side, the Sangre de Cristo Mountains were not looking so good with a total of 77% of average as of today. That percentage took into account the high points at North Costilla and Whiskey Creek, both over 100% of average. Hardesty explained that these readings are from high sites, and we have some concern for the low and intermediate snowpack. March could still end up being a snowy month.

Rio Grande Compact Obligations – Rio Grande and Conejos River: Based on a March 3 forecast, the Rio Grande could produce about 440,000 acre feet this year with an obligation of 137,200 acre feet. With the amount of water which has passed downstream already and with expectations for the rest of the year, irrigators could face a curtailment of 12% to meet the Compact, depending on return flows. That could change for the better if we get some snow in March. On the Conejos, the initial forecast is 243,000 acre feet, with an obligation of 88,600 acre feet. This could result in a 21% curtailment based on current streamflow projections. The Rio Grande Compact will hold its annual meeting in Santa Fe on March 5. Printouts of this report are available.

The modeling effort is continuing and we hope to have some model runs by the end of the month so subdistricts can have some numbers to work with as they begin to do subdistrict plans. We will advise you once the committee advisory meetings will resume. We're hoping to start the irrigation season before April 1st and we'll make that announcement once Craig has made that determination.

Discussion on the importance of reservoir capacity, need for additional storage, deteriorated condition of infrastructure. Importance of having storage availability as subdistricts get going.

- **WSRA Funding Request: Platoro Reservoir Crest of the Dam Repair – Conejos County Water Conservancy - Nathan Coombs, Manager**

With copies of the proposal distributed, Nathan presented the PowerPoint presentation, clarified some points from the previous Preview; answered questions relating to the cause of the loss of grade, nonpermeable portion at the crest. This is a Bureau of Reclamation project – not really a dam safety issue – it's preemptive measure, additional insurance in case there were a catastrophic event. State engineer's support. Roles of CWCD and BOR.

VOTE: Karla moved that the Roundtable approve funding as requested. JB seconded. Unanimous approval. .

- **WSRA Funding Request: Santa Maria & Continental Reservoirs: Priority Studies to Restore Capacity – Santa Maria Reservoir Company – Ron Peterson**

With copies of the proposal distributed, Ron Peterson presented the PowerPoint presentation. Nicole Langley explained the shifting priorities from previous funding, the transfer of funds from tasks in previous proposal to this proposal, and the need for additional funds.

Discussion: Travis reinforced the critical need for funding reservoir capacity infrastructure repairs and upgrades. Mike G. said it is important to take this in steps. Entz said it's important to start at the right end of this project.

VOTE: Cindy moved that funding, as requested, be approved. JB seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.

- **Discussion of SWSI 2010 Basin Reports – Greg Johnson and Nicole Rowan:**

Greg reviewed the components of the Rio Grande Basin needs assessment report for the SWSI 2010 and the report schedule: Technical refinement of consumptive and nonconsumptive lists to be done in March. What else should be included? April write-up of what's been learned and accomplished over the last five years that helps address the basin's needs. June produce basin reports. Showed map of nonconsumptive report and asked for input.

Discussion: Mike G. we want the wetlands focus committee to critique what's written in the report. We need to form a consumptive group to go through that portion of the document. Next will be future projects and how the basin will meet its future needs. Our primary focus, in addition to subdistricts and groundwater issues, will be an effort to rehab our reservoirs. Where is the water going to come from if we don't have the capacity to store it? Need to address subdistricts and depletions and also the bigger picture of climate change, impacts

and changing runoff patterns. Having additional storage will only help us meet those needs.

Volunteers: Lawrence, Travis, Charlie, and Ed offered to help on the consumptive side. Mike G. will set up a meeting before the end of March and will also send out Nicole and Greg's document before the end of March. Nicole spoke with Rio last week and they will meet soon.

Questions: JB said that "M&I" is always lumped together, so how do we separate out what's Municipal and what's Industrial? Nicole explained this is broken out for the RG basin only for solar power. Although some references made to oil and gas, all of these numbers are dwarfed by ag issues. Very small when compared to ag issues

Greg Johnson congratulated Travis on being re-elected as the Rio Grande Basin representative to Colorado Water Conservation Board.

- **Automated Headgates – Mike Serlet & Remy Halm – Rubicon Water**

A video of automated headgate applications in Australia showed Rubicon Water's products and applications. They are "the world leader in open canal irrigation control and water management technology." In partnership with the University of Melbourne engineering department, they have developed "super accurate gates with a technology that measures up to 1 millimeter accuracy – patented ultrasonic systems, flow systems. Objective to reduce up to 65% of water lost or uncontrolled throughout an irrigation distribution system. Used to be two people in Fort Collins. Rubicon Hydraulic Flow laboratory. Headgates on diversions most appropriate use here, but probably can't handle big diversions off of major rivers like ours. More appropriate for irrigation and ditch companies -- actuated gates, meters, remote control, software, on-farm irrigation automation, and "total channel control." All are 12-volt powered. DC based. Software. Solar powered, fully self powered with battery backup 12-volt system. SCADA – system with control from an office or a vehicle. Contact Remy Halm P.E. 970-482-3200.

- **Report on Statewide Roundtable summit March 3:** 300 people attended.

Lawrence spoke with admiration for the process, "We spent a lot of time in separate groups. Very interesting. Different basins. Many ideas, including discussion of the Superditch. Some basins are creating water banks. Sounded like it could apply here. Each watershed has distinct issues."

Travis: This culminated about five years of work, and we gave the results to the governor. "Many of us actually do agree on many issues." Travis thanked those from the Valley who went. Erin Minks – "I was really proud of our Basin. Many people spoke out on the issue of ag transfer, and it WE who shaped that conversation. This basin is an example for how well we work together. "I will take your messages to my boss – finding funding mechanisms [for increased reservoir storage]."

Mike G. complimented CWCB for organizing the event – Viola did a spectacular job – staff were really great. John Stulp reiterated that filling the gap cannot be done just through ag transfers. Recognition from many that ag contributes to the entire economy and way of life

in Colorado. Mike G., Travis and Steve were on a panel considering the IPPs. They discussed role the State should play in these projects and when it might be appropriate for them to weigh in on a project. Suggestion – have a task force made up the various state agencies, to encourage coordination with State and Federal agencies whenever appropriate. Ag is very important to everyone across Colorado.

Greg: Everyone felt comfortable speaking up, passing the microphone. Had to deal with specific questions on the IBCC document. Got great feedback. Stulp recognized everyone for their efforts – they characterized each roundtable and the RGRT got the title of “The Cumbaya Roundtable!” Yes, we respect each other and have good dialog.

- **Oil and Gas Drilling – Rio Grande County – Dale Wiescamp**

Discussion: With increased projections for I&M, needs to be a discussion on the influx of people and population growth. Cannot legislate where people live. Utilities say water has not been priced at its full value – need to cover current and future costs. Erin – don’t look for feds to work on water projects, as there’s no such thing in the foreseeable future for as earmarks. Travis: These are some of the things that IBCC is beginning to agree on. In the question relating to IBCC, “do you think your basin is giving up more than its gaining?” Most basins felt they were losing, but RGBRT felt it is gaining we should take comfort in the fact that these kinds of conversations were not happening 6-7 years ago. We’ve come a long way. Mike G. asked Michelle to send us the statewide results of the clicker-based surveys.

A meeting on Fracking and oil and gas drilling in the Valley will be held at the Monte Vista Coop at 9 am March 19th. Oil and gas company declined to come. Mike and Dale encourage everyone to come.

- **Presentations to Other Roundtables**

Mike and Rio will be going on April 4th to Gunnison Basin. They will discuss the sustainability of our water as the primary issue confronting our RG Basin.

**Next Meeting: April 12, 2011
Inn of the Rio Grande, Alamosa
2:00 - 5:00 pm**