Arkansas Basin Roundtable
September 7, 2011
Meeting Notes

Roundtable Business

Chairman Barber called the meeting to order at 12:30 pm. Members and visitors introduced themselves. Twenty three (23) members were present. There are 38 active roundtable members at this time - 18 is a quorum.

August Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the August meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Reviewed agenda

Public comment - none

IBCC Report – Jeris Danielson, Jay Winner, Alan Hamel

There hasn't been a meeting since our last RT meeting.

Regarding Rotating Ag-Fallowing, they met with the Colorado Ag Alliance and Front Range Water Providers, groups that have an acute awareness of the value of agriculture. Next Monday afternoon, the CWCB and IBCC meet jointly.
We have three initiatives around Rotating Ag-Fallowing currently going; a Technical Committee, a Super Ditch pilot project, and a third piece in reaction to HB1068, which is a Public Policy Working Group.

Terry Scanga – Administrative Tool.
The technical committee met on September 6. The plan is to submit an application to CWCB under Alternative Agricultural Transfers by the end of October. Preliminary tasks include 1. Development, 2. Define process of tool usage, 3. Testing and verification and 4. Identification of data populations needed for each region contemplated for rotational lease fallowing.

The total cost to develop is not yet determined but could be as high as $800,000. The Admin Tool will be a common engineering platform that will be used in temporary changes of water rights from agricultural use to M&I use to calculate transferable consumptive use and the impacts of the change to return flows. The pilot project by contrast will test the ability to exchange water from the Catlin Canal to Pueblo Reservoir and is designed to exchange 500 acre feet of water.

We are planning three applications for funding for development of the admin tool: 1. Alt. Ag. Transfer application for $145,000 with approximately $50,000 in cost shares from UAWCD, LAVWCD, SECWCD, BWWP, and CSU, 2. WSRA application in December or early 2012 and 3. Another Alt. Ag. Transfer application/WSRA after July 2012.

Selection of At-Large Members

At-Large – Other
At-Large – Small Muni/Domestic Provider

Applicants were Gary Barber and Rego Omergic. A motion was made by Reed Dils to approve the appointment of Gary Barber to the At-Large-Other seat and Rego Omergic to the At-Large-Small Muni/Domestic Provider seat. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Next month is our Annual Meeting.

Basin Needs Report: IPP's & Storage

Completion of STAG Pre-NEPA Study for the Arkansas Valley Conduit – Jean Van Pelt

Purpose

- STAG – State and Tribal Assistance Grant

- STAG provided opportunity to make progress until federal legislation was passed to fund the Arkansas Valley Conduit
- STAG was designed as a Pre-NEPA study
  - National Environmental Policy Act

Funding Sources

- Total Cost of Pre-NEPA study~ $1.04M
- EPA STAG – 55% Cost share ~ $570,000
- Local Cost Share – 45% ~ $470,000
  - CWCB (WSRA) $200,000
  - SECWCD $100,000
  - LAVWCD $100,000
  - Participants $ 70,000

Conduit Legislation Passed

- STAG was awarded March 2009 and legislation passed to allow a federal cost share that made the Conduit affordable and allowed the project to leap forward
- Reclamation decided the NEPA Environmental Impact Statement would begin in 2010
- Therefore, a need to accelerate STAG timeline from a 18 month timeframe to a 6 month completion

7 Elements of the Pre-NEPA Study

- Participant surveys
- Water Demands
- Facilities and Alignments
- Water Supply Evaluations
- Alternatives and Costs
- Permitting
- Environmental Issues

Participant Survey

- Update of 2006 surveys
- Included additional information needed for NEPA
- Included 41 participants

Water Demands

- Analysis of demands that would flow through the Conduit
- Current and future needs and supplies
- Gap analysis
- Population and growth analysis

Facilities and Alignments

- Overview and the Design Criteria of the Conduit's Components and Options (*Development of Alternatives*)
- GIS Mapping
- Hydraulics
- Participant tie-in locations
- Project Constructability Factors
- 4 Basic Alternatives developed
  - Hundreds of options identified

Water Supply Evaluations

- Fry-Ark Project water and Non-Project water supplies
- Exchanges, ability to exchange and Storage
- Gap analysis
- Other Factors – Conservation, Re-use, non-potable systems, and drought response planning

Permits and Approvals

- List of necessary permits
  - Schedule for permitting issues
- List of cooperating agencies

Environmental Issues

- Potential Scoping Issues
- Water Dependent Resources
  - Surface and Ground Water Hydrology, Water Quality, Flood Hydrology, Geomorphology, Aquatic Life
- Land Based Resources

- Vegetation, Wildlife, Recreation, Socioeconomics, Environmental Justice, Cultural Resources, Constructability Issues, Geology and Paleontology, Soils, Air Quality, Hazardous Materials

Pre-NEPA Study Results

- NEPA Planning
  - NEPA Roadmap
  - Public Involvement Process
- NEPA Content
  - Purpose and Need
  - Scoping
- Preliminary analysis of surface water hydrology – will require further modeling during NEPA
  - Largest effect on the river flows would be in late summer
    - Decrease of river flows by up to 41 cfs (~5%)
  - Lesser effect in remainder of year
    - Decrease of between 6 and 20 cfs (~ 1%-4%)
- Storage in Pueblo Reservoir
- Provided population growth estimates for NEPA
- Provided current and future water demands for the Conduit
    - 2010 – 10,619 A/F
    - 2050 – 13,479 A/F
- Main resource for NEPA
- Came in $10,000 under budget
- Available on the District Website
  - www.secwcd.com

Current NEPA Progress

- Began the process in May 2010
- Reclamation lead
    - MWH
    - SECWCD
- Pre-decisional drafts
    - 4 chapters & appendices
        1. Purpose and Need
        2. Alternatives Analysis
        3. Affected Environment
        4. Environmental Consequences
- Summer 2013 Record of Decision

Ag Gap Update – Reeves Brown

Please meet after the meeting to discuss briefly.

Presentation

Project from Lamar to Elbert County - Karl Nyquist

Southeast Renewable Water Initiative: A New Vision for Colorado's Water Future

Background – Karl and his partner Dave Pressler were small Front Range builders that had grown up in agriculture. As builders, they were concerned about the rising cost of tap fees. As the hardest cost to control, tap fees had gone up the largest percent of any cost. They looked at numerous water projects, and eventually identified water on the Lower Arkansas below John Martin Reservoir, because of the higher priorities of the water. The Colorado/Kansas lawsuit was starting to gel, and the HI model was coming into use. They purchased and own 6,000 acres in Prowers County, east of Lamar. About 4,000 of the acres are irrigated by the Lamar Canal. They own the water and the ground fee simple. Their priorities: 1. Try to make it a win/win for all communities involved. 2. Analyze all the challenges with all the stakeholders. 3. Utilize the tools the Arkansas Basin RT developed regarding water transfers.

Proposed Project

A sustainable, innovative, 21st-century plan to provide renewable water to communities within Elbert County and other Front Range areas while creating economic diversity and preserving our agricultural heritage.

Sustainable
- Meets the needs of aquifer-dependent communities
- Retain agriculture

Innovative
- A win-win solution for all communities

Stakeholders (partial list)
- Elbert County
- Cherokee Water District
- Prowers County
- Other water users on the Arkansas River
- Other end users on the Front Range
- Citizens and state of Colorado
- GP Water Group

This project will keep Ag production. It will convert from canal irrigation to sprinklers and have some dry land farming. They will re-vegetate some areas.

They looked for shared storage possibilities, and identified a need for underground storage. Did drilling & tests that reveal that it would be possible to do aquifer storage. They have looked at treatment systems.

Q&A

About half of the currently irrigated ground would remain irrigated. They would augment. They consulted with Tim Gates about retaining water quality.

Non-consumptive? They will only take the same water that they've always taken.

Is the project speculative or not? They won't file a change case until they have end users in line.

How will you actually use the RTs Ag Transfer Guidelines? They used the guidelines to identify stakeholders.

Prowers County infrastructure. Yes, they will hire folks from Prowers County. Some of the water can get used there. There are a lot of communities struggling with water quality issues. They would try to participate with them on as many levels as possible. Front Range needs make the project financially viable. They have designed a water treatment system that can be added module by module so that it can be added incrementally.

They estimate a $7 per thousand cost to deliver water to NE El Paso County.

Timeline for delivered water to northern EPC? 7 years. They're ready to build infrastructure. Change case will take more time.

How many acres will you dry up? 2,000 would be permanently dried up.

End users in Prower County? Does that have the potential to throw the wrench into the Conduit project? They would like to partner with the Conduit.

The project should create more wages paid than wages lost. THK did a study of the fiscal impact to the area.

What will you do with the salt generated? They hired Courtney Hemenway to analyze brine. Will have a residual stream that would have the brine concentrate. Have proposed deep injection, but are also looking at zero waste brine system. Regarding deep injection, they would inject 4000-8000 feet down into deep aquifers that already have water.

Where will you get the water to augment the wells? Replacement water will come from surface water. They have been purchasing Lama shares to augment.

Are your ditch rights all direct flow? Yes. 1870s water.

In consumptive use calculations have you taken into account Superditch, SDS and the Conduit? Those projects are independent. The limit of the water right is historic use.

How will the downstream users be affected? The change case doesn't allow us to adversely affect the downstream users. We'll show that we won't damage them.

On proposed underground storage, will the storage be under ground that will be farmed or under ground that will be dried up? There will be a certain amount of aggregate between the well and the crop so that the water doesn't wick up to the plants. It will be okay to farm above it, but will have to watch the amount of nitrogen used.

What will your water source be if the Arkansas River goes way down? Our proposal uses average flow per year of the Arkansas River. In a drought year, we get a percentage of that based on our priority. Dry year would be 70% of a regular year. That's why we have storage.

Review of the next meeting's agenda – October 12th - Annual Meeting & Election of Officers

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jay Winner