

**Interbasin Compact Committee Basin Roundtables  
Rio Grande Interbasin Roundtable**

**M I N U T E S**

**Tuesday, February 14, 2012 @ 2:00 – 5:00 P.M.**

**Attending:** JB Alexander, Judy Lopez, Mike Willett, Gene Farish, Ed Nielsen, Eugene E. Jacquez, Larry Sveum, Peter Clark, Bill Hobarken, Charlotte Bobicki, Mario Curto, Perry Cabot, Stan Moyer, Ralph Curtis, Cindy Medina, Nicole Langley, Bea Ferrigao, Rod Reinhardt, Craig Cotten, Charles Griego, Jerry Freeman, Dale Wiescamp, Paul Robertson, Leah Opitz, Erin Minks, Ruth Heide, Charles Spielman, Travis Smith, Lawrence Gallegos, Karla Shriver, Heather Dutton, Jeanna Paluzzi

- **Introductions & Welcome:** Vice Chair Rio de la Vista welcomed all. Quorum was established by a count of members present.
- **Approval of Minutes of January 10, 2012:** Lawrence Gallegos moved and Cindy Medina seconded that minutes be approved. Unanimous approval.
- **Report from Colorado Division of Water Resources - Craig Cotton, Division 3 Engineer:** The Rio Grande and the Arkansas basins have the highest snowpack in the state with 88% of average. Other basins are lower, with some down to 60+ percent. In the northern part of the state they have the lowest percent so far, very different from last year, when they had the highest snowpack. Snowpack this year for the Rio Grande basin is very close to what it was last year, but still far below the 2009 and 2010 snowpack. With February's estimated annual index at Del Norte on the Rio Grande at 550,000 AF, that forecast would be 85% of average. Last year's was 77% of average. 144,000 acre feet would need to be sent downriver to meet Rio Grande Compact obligations. Curtailments at the start of irrigation season would have to be 14% at that rate.

The Conejos River system February forecasted annual index flow is at 83% of average, or 260,000 acre feet, with Compact delivery of 81,800 acre feet required. This is about the same as last year. At the beginning of irrigation season, if that forecast remains steady, the curtailment would have to be about 20%. From February through April the National Weather Service predicts below average precipitation, and this could also hold from March into May.

The proposed groundwater rules are still waiting for the model runs to be completed. Computer model runs for Subdistrict 1 were completed last week and model runs for the other subdistricts still are not completed. Craig answered several questions about why this was taking so long. He explained that an optimistic guess was that the models would be completed in the next couple of months. After that the groundwater rules advisory committee would be able to resume its work.

The Rio Grande Compact Commission will be held in Austin, Texas Wednesday March 21, 2012 in the House Appropriations Committee Room E1.030 at the state capitol extension, 110 Congress Avenue. Next year the meeting will be back here.

Question: Why don't the NRCS projections include variations in the summer rainfall? If more rainfall happens in the river than predicted, how come we're not entitled to it?

Craig: NRCS just assumes an average rainfall each year. The National Weather Service and NRCS together estimate the rainfall and that figure is included in the snowpack calculation. We're looking at bringing some new technology to the Valley, maybe radar, and that might help us refine the rainfall calculations.

- **Formal Request for WSRA Funding – Terrace Reservoir, Rodney Reinhardt – CWCB** has adjusted the formula for Basin Account participation in the Water Supply Reserve Account grant process. The amended amount came after this Roundtable approved the funding, so now, with the matching amount bumped up from 25% to 50%, Terrace Reservoir Company is requesting an additional \$50,000. Rodney gave a brief review of the grant proposal, which was approved at the last Roundtable meeting.

**Vote:** Lawrence Gallegos moved to approve the additional amount requested from the Rio Grande Basin Account. Dale Wiescamp seconded. Unanimous approval.

- **Water Supply Reserve Account – New Funding Criteria – Greg Johnson:** Travis explained that the contributions for the WSRA account come in three installments, January, April, and July. For the past two years there was some uncertainty about the severance tax revenues. That's why CWCB changed their meetings to only once a year. Now it's looking better. The WSRA account distribution was summarized in a handout and is available online. The match amount now needs to be 25% of which 5% needs to be Basin Funds. CWCB wants to make sure that all roundtables contribute to the grants. Our basin has done this faithfully, but many other basins have not.

Although the WSRA account has always been a grant/loan program, now the RT process is maturing and the program is going to get more competitive, with some substantial projects coming forward. Rio explained that with large projects coming down the pike, and with the requirement for Basin matching funds, we need to make sure our money is going where it's most important to the Rio Grande Basin.

- **Review Portfolio and Tradeoff Tool Options Developed at Workshop – Greg Johnson & Travis Smith:** The seminar in Monte Vista on December 13 was an opportunity for our Basin to get acquainted with the tool. About 20 people attended and went through the exercise, with all roundtables to report at the Statewide Roundtable Summit on March 1. Rio pointed out that we can do this again, and that we're seeking a general consensus of what we did. It's a tool, an interactive spreadsheet in which certain variables can be changed or turned on or off, so we can see what the impacts are. It looks at the four legs of the stool. We ran lots of "what ifs" with this portfolio tool. At the Summit we will present a summary – an opportunity to see how other basins identified their scenarios.

Travis explained that our basin's needs might be quite different from some Front Range needs. We agree with IBCC's main identified concern being how to preserve agriculture, keep water on farms and ranches. On the Colorado River the issue is too much development, with lots of risks and pitfalls. We deal with the Rio Grande Compact and we are struggling with an over appropriated situation. We have a lot to teach.

**Vote: Cindy Medina moved and Kara Schriver seconded** that these portfolio exercises, as worked out in the various scenarios, accurately reflect the tradeoffs and risks of the Rio Grande Valley and should be carried to the Statewide Roundtable Summit on March 1. Unanimous approval.

Charlie reminded folks that one of the "what if" games should include the piping of water from the Mississippi River.

- **Update on the Plaza Project – Heather Dutton:** Heather presented a review of the completed "Final Report" – The Plaza Plan -- the result of the 5-month Plaza Planning Project, a scoping and feasibility study completed last summer by a partnership between the Colorado Rio Grande Restoration Foundation and the McDonald Ditch Company. The Plaza Plan is a restoration master plan for a 2.8-mile reach of the Rio Grande at Sevenmile Plaza. The Plaza Planning project was funded in part by a grant of \$40,000 from the WSRA account. The Foundation provided \$9,174 of in-kind services, NRCS provided \$23,445 of in-kind engineering services, Stakeholders provided \$5,988 of in-kind services, and the ditch companies provided \$4,100. The Partnership hired Nicole V. Langley as the Planning Project Coordinator. Heather thanked Nicole and all 34 stakeholders for their contributions to the completion of The Plaza Plan. Bound copies of The Plaza Plan are available at the office. We'll start moving rocks in the fall.

Karla: What's exciting about this project is that 13 years ago we got \$200,000 initial funding for the Rio Grande Master Plan. Now it's nice to see that we're implementing some of those things which that plan recommended.

- **Statewide Roundtable Summit – March 1, 2012 – Denver –** Some funding is available to help with travel expenses. Contact Judy to coordinate. Rio encouraged all to try to go, as it is a great opportunity to learn about other basins. IBCC is meeting the afternoon before. Rio: as we invest in our community, it's good to meet our peers from other basins.
- **"Water 2012" - Leah Opitz** - Leah reviewed the excellent quality articles coming out in the Valley Courier front page every week. Judy explained the River of Words, writing projects, and art work involving participation from all fourteen school districts in the Valley. Cindy Medina asked Judy whether some of that art work and creativity might also be available for our own local organizations, not just the Water 2012 organization. If you have an event get in touch with Leah Opitz. For a full schedule of events and other information, the web page is <http://water2012.org/committees/calendar-of-events.html>
- **Rio reminded all that the Crane Fest takes place March 9, 10, and 11 !!!**

- **Report from the Interbasin Compact Committee – Steve Vandiver/Travis Smith:**  
Travis explained that the main project was the portfolio tool, and he outlined the importance of this project not only for our basin but for all of Colorado.
- **Update on Oil & Gas Drilling- Rio Grande County – Dale Wiescamp** - Dale gave a history, starting in the 1980s, of how he got involved in this issue, because of his concern for water quality. Dale said we need to have a NEPA process, and he asked the RGBRT to “join us if you believe we have a problem – if you believe that we have the serious potential to pollute our water forever.” Pete suggested the Roundtable ask Andrew Archuleta to give us the real scoop, and perhaps a presentation, since BLM has all the mineral rights. There was much discussion on this topic. It is clearly a concern to many. Attached are some comments from Andrew Archuleta that he sent to Mike G. prior to the meeting but were not forwarded.
- **Future Meetings – Topics / Locations / Site Visits – Rio de la Vista:** We have discussed the possibility of meeting at other locations around the Valley, bringing the Roundtable to other communities. Cindy suggested that maybe Joe Gallegos might invite us to a ditch cleaning, maybe in April, which would not just be a meeting, but an event. Nicole said she was working with the Vallejos Ditch in preparation for a grant request and she suggested that the Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association might be a good hosting organization. They have created a Watershed Plan and will be holding a Congress of Acequias in the fall. Cindy suggested we could meet at a location where we have funded a project, and perhaps have a site visit an hour prior to the meeting. Many spoke up for the acequia communities: Nicole, Paul, Travis, Dale. Eugene Jaquez who is a native of Chama, explained about the vara strips, the Vega commons, the People’s ditch, and the historic Culebra River communities. The Congreso de Acequias will take place October 27-28 and the Roundtable members should be aware of these happenings and support them.
- **Next Meeting Topics:** March possibilities – Anna Mauss - CWCB Loan Program / CWCB In –Stream Flow Program – Amy Beatie – Colorado Water Trust. Charlie said we should learn about magnetic water. Paul suggested we have someone come and talk about global warming. Paul knows a PhD scholar on this topic. Erin suggested we might get someone from Creede to talk to us about the mine, maybe Zeke Ward could tell us about that. Mike Willett suggested that if there is a particular issue somewhere, maybe we could hold our meeting there, on location. Jeanna knows a professor at CSU who has a great presentation on global warming. Jeanna also offers to talk about her work on energy consumption in Valley as related to water. Pete suggested Ray Archuleta, who gave an excellent talk at the Ag conference on soil health, no-till methods, and better soil management. Mike Collins might speak. Perry suggested an expert on tree ring data. Lawrence suggested someone from Subdistrict #1 might talk about their annual plan for replacing depletions.
- There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 5:00 PM.

**Next Meeting: March 13, 2012**  
**“Ramada Inn” – Previously named The Inn of the Rio Grande**

**East Highway 160, Alamosa, Colorado  
2:00 to 5:00 PM**