

Colorado Basin Roundtable

June 25, 2012

Glenwood Springs Community Center
Glenwood Springs, CO
1-4 pm

1:00 Introductions of the Group/River Updates

Stream gauges, drought map. Water rights and calls – Cameo and Shoshone. Target for ES in the 15 mile reach. This weeks HUP call will determine what they need. 500 cfs the target flow in dry years. Flow measured at the Palisade gauge.

Introductions.

Carlyle – The conditions are the worst he's ever seen them. The one salvation is water storage, it's saving the ag and the streams. Windy, dry and hot. Rents excess water from Ute water district, but it will not be available this year.

Aspen is kicking up drought awareness, resolution with City Council tonight.

Eagle River water and san district, three day irrigation, working with golf courses and other large water users.

Grand Valley – Grand Valley water conservation plan, DRIP program, information and voluntary restrictions. Nothing mandatory at this time.

Winter Park under voluntary restrictions.

Summit County the same. Breck moving to mandatory restrictions this week.

Denver Water – stage 1 drought, voluntary restrictions. Peak demand still well below 2002 level. Drought shadow.

Thursday – Grand Valley Canal called, calling out through DW. Right now sitting in CBT 1935 right. By Saturday morning at 1910. 18?

Louis M. People calling about diversions not working, getting into the rivers with bulldozers. Ruedi, requests to buy water have exceeded the water available for the first time.

Chuck O. Where are we with the relaxed call agreement on Shoshone? Protocol, operating as if there were a full call at Shoshone. How does the relaxed call work with the Cooperative agreement? Interrelated. If the drought triggers aren't tripped, the Cooperative agreement comes into play (the Protocol). If the two triggers are tripped DW doesn't have to follow the Protocol. The two triggers have not tripped. Flows are low, but storage is still above the 80% threshold. Cameo will continue to call water past the DW system. Bureau hasn't signed on to this yet. Green mountain isn't set yet in meeting the outage protocol. Northern and Windy Gap will be engaged, but nothing is signed yet. Doesn't include C-BT.

1:15 Grant Presentations? Non-consumptive Committee

Introduction:? Lane Wyatt, Ken Neubecker, Co-Chairs

Keep in mind that the Roundtable will want to discuss the merits of these requests in preparation for official voting at the July 23 meeting.

Compromises may be suggested to adjust the funding requests to fit Roundtable expectations and judgments.

Lane W. – intro of the non-consumptive funding requests from the CWCB. Outreach and project recruitment. This is a work session, feel free to comment, question and help the applicants better shape the proposals for approval. Part of this is looking at the defined need for these projects. The bulk are requesting basin and statewide funds. We have 5 projects, and well balanced between recreation and environment. We are ahead of the other basins.

Grand County -- \$100,000 Basin Funds; \$400,000 Statewide Funds

Lurleen Currin introducing request. PPT and proposal. This project is a big component of the negotiations with DW and other front range entities. We think it's an important part of protecting the upper Colorado River.

Caroline B., hired by GC to coordinate. Requesting 100k from rt, 400k from state, 600k from grand county, ?k from other sources. Explanation of a whitewater park and construction. There are more paddlers in the US than alpine skiers. More kayakers than rafters. This really is an economic development project. There is a 3000 af carve out in the RICD for future upstream development. Site selection was expensive. Talked with property owners, anglers, rafters and kayakers, and Eagle County. Design includes fish passage at all flows, avoids conflict with anglers, uses existing BLM recreation site. Strong support from boating community. CWCB unanimous on RICD support in March because of Grand County's prep and leg work. Funding – this would be the first recreation grant from the basin rt. Yampa and Arkansas have already granted for rec. No water supplier is helping fund this project. Money to be spent on river structures. CRBRT has requested less than any other basin from statewide pool

Carlyle Currier – speaking for the ag industry. 4 projects have been brought from AG for water storage, all voted down. Ag interests feel it isn't important to this BRT because of these votes. Now we are being asked to spend 100k for recreation. Feel like it's a kick in the teeth. Feel like the only thing of value to CRBRT is recreation and non-consumptive needs.

Gary Baumgarner – has water rights, but strongly supports this because it keeps water from going east. Lurline Curren – every drop of water preserved by Grand County protects the environment and helps agricultural interests downstream, as well as in GC. We hear what Carlyle is saying.

Mark Fuller – will there be NEPA work? BLM will conduct an in house EA, \$15000 of in-kind work.

Rachel Richards – How meaningful is this structure? Will it work at all water levels? Yes,

it will work at all water levels.

Louis Meyer - Page 4 costs. Seems there is a high percentage of soft costs compared to hard costs. If anyone looks at this as a model, it seems like the permitting costs are unreasonably high. Lurleen – no, they aren't. Water rights issues and establishing the RICD are expensive. They are daunting, but realistic.

Are there other funding sources? CWCB construction fund? No. The project doesn't qualify for GOCO because it is on public land.

Tamarisk Coalition -- \$259,337, split not specified in request

Grand Valley Riparian Restoration project. Stacy Beaugh and Shannon Hatch. Funds used to further develop the Grand Valley Collaborative. Trying to protect re-vegetation work already done. Has received funding from Colorado State Forest Service. The goal is to restore the riparian corridor through the Grand Valley. Would like to restore multiple habitat types. Also improving some connected upland habitat along the corridor. The project will also improve access to the river corridor.

Jim Pokrandt. – what does the restoration work look like? Physical removal of tamarisk and other invasive species. Tamarisk beetles will be used as well, but most of the work involves physical removal. Advocating for all native plants as part of the re-vegetation work.

Carlyle Currier – Are there any figures on water savings from removal of phreatophytes? The group hasn't done that. Cottonwoods and willow riparian vegetation uses about the same amount of water as the Tamarisk and other invasive species.

Lane Wyatt. – We (Non-Consumptive subcommittee) asked them to bring a project that was tied to the river and non-consumptive water needs. If we stay with the 5% minimum the basin fund amount would be about \$23,000.

Greg Trainor - Has there been a request to get funding from the Recovery Program Fund? No request but we have been working with US Fish & Wildlife Service. There may be other matching opportunities for this work. They are working to identify other sources.

Dave Graff – Will there be work to reconnect the floodplain and back channels?

Lane – Is there coordination with state tamarisk removal funding? They have been coordinating with CWCB, and they recommended applying through the WSRA funds to put more money on the ground. They do adhere to all the criteria of the Tamarisk Fund.

Blue River Watershed Group -- \$350,000, split not specified in request

There are four major sponsors – USFS, Copper Mt, Climax Mine, Summit County. Other partners include CP&W, CDOT, Town of Frisco, Friends of Dillon Ranger District. Keystone Science School is incorporating this project into their curriculum. About ¾ mile of stream will be restored along Hwy 91 near Copper Mountain Resort. Mining, Rail Road and the highway have had negative impacts. There is a lot of sediment. About 1200 feet of direct drainage exists from Hwy 91 into the stream. Traction sand has a significant impact. There is also damage to wetlands and riparian. The project aims to improve floodplain and connectivity. Non-Consumptive benefits – rebuilding fish and riparian habitat. Restoring a healthy stream that can support a fishery is the goal. Summit County is building a recreation path along the hwy. Access will be improved, with signage added. This project is shovel ready. The design is complete and has been reviewed by Brian Bledsoe and graduate class at CSU. Benefits also include periodic flooding of wetlands and riparian areas.

Need to specify the split in funding. Match specifics. \$250k in other funding. Total need is \$600k. Copper Mtn paid NEPA costs. 5% of the 20% match - \$17k?

Boulders will be used to rebuild fish habitat. There is a current data baseline and plans for monitoring.

Eagle River Watershed Council -- \$20k Basin Funds; \$90k Statewide Funds

Melissa McDonald, Tambi Katieb. – most have heard the presentation already, so we'll be brief. ERWC has been around since 1996. Earlier study of the Eagle River worked with Brian Bledsoe of CSU to locate and prioritize projects. This study resulted in identifying three on the ground projects. These are being completed now. This new proposal would duplicate that work for the Colorado River in Eagle County. The ERWC and Eagle County have been working to update the watershed plan, adding the Colorado River to the plan. There has been little study or analysis of the Colorado through Eagle County. Grand County has done quite a bit upstream. This will continue that work downstream. Also looking at major tributaries. This study will look for projects that will offer the greatest bang for the buck. Eagle County has spent millions of dollars to protect and preserve open space and agriculture along the Colorado River. New access points on the river will also be identified. There are 60,000 users on this reach of river.

Eagle County and Open Space Committee are helping fund this study. OSC is looking to

get sound science to support projects. The Eagle River Watershed Council has a strong reputation for projects based on the previous work.

\$20k from basin, \$90k from state. The Wild and Scenic working group is also involved. Trout Unlimited is putting in 3 temperature gauges.

Roaring Fork Conservancy/Coal Creek Project – Info to come

Support within Roaring Fork watershed – Pitkin County Healthy Rivers & Streams Board. The Crystal is the largest sub-watershed in the Roaring Fork. There is poor fish reproduction and significant water quality issues. Coal mining did extensive scarring in the Coal Creek basin, a tributary of the Crystal that comes in at Redstone. There are still significant issues we are trying to address. The disturbed areas are in Mancos shale and steep terrain.

There are also a number of alluvial “hot spots”. We need to determine what can we do to improve the stream channel function.

This project comes out of the Roaring Fork Watershed Plan, which was partly funded by the Basin Roundtable. It was identified as an “urgent” action priority. We need better data to inform the assessments and restoration work. Funding will be more available for project implementation with better data. We also need the data to determine restoration effectiveness and monitoring program.

Pilot Project – did get 40k from CWCB, and are asking 35k from PitCo HR&SB. Need to construct alluvial fans. Biochar, made from Colorado beetle kill wood, will be applied. Helps with soil nutrients and moisture retention.

What are the water quality problems? Sediments or mining? Both. Sediment and iron. Coal Creek has been 303D listed as an impaired stream.

Next step? Start fixing the problems.

What is the Non Consumptive sub-committee process from here? All applications must be finalized two weeks prior to July meeting – July 9. Looking at about \$155k from Basin funds total.

How do Denver Water and Northern feel about the Grand County project? They have removed all objections. Jim Lockhead will get a support letter, although he’s not fond of the WSRA funding. Northern said they’d help if 20% can come from boaters and other users.

Greg Trainor. – It would be good for all proposals to add a funding matrix that clearly shows the funding sources and breaks down the requests.

Caroline Bradford – how do we address the ag question Carlyle raised? It's a perception and trust issue. Try and recruit ag projects. We should look at the minutes to see just why these projects were rejected. Private ownership with little public benefit? Art Bowles said there could be another one coming in that could improve safety for a ditch in Basalt – a public safety factor.

Do we need to develop a means test, criteria for consideration based on benefit and funding sources. Also need to vet the projects better by the RT as a whole. This NCN grant process could serve as a model for evaluating and requesting future projects of all stripe. Need to define what we mean by public and "private" benefit. Is there a rule on this from the State? There is no explicit rule with the State. There are specific needs that must be met by basin, but they are broad and general. Other basins have created criteria with grant request evaluation committees.

A comment was made that its remarkable how we have all this education and restrictions on fire, but nothing on water. There needs to be better media coverage of the drought in terms of water supply, as well as dry forests.

2:45 Roundtables Roadmap Update, Portfolio Tool Update and Scenario Planning

Jacob Bornstein, CWCB

Short term vs long term planning and implementation. Categorize projects and methods. Need to broaden projects statewide.

What are the CWCB's criteria for evaluation? Statewide criteria, and threshold for all applications.

Scenario planning and adaptive management. Narrow down portfolios from the RT's. These have been narrowed down to 10 by the IBCC. Developing evaluation metrics for the various portfolio scenarios. Identify "no regrets" actions and projects – projects we need to get behind now, with "no regrets" or at least little regret.

Chuck Ogelby - It sounds like you are going to average our recommendations in with other basins scenarios. Yes. There were enough similar portfolios that they could be "grouped". The concern is that our concerns will be "washed out", watered down.

Where in this process do we have the opportunity to circle back? That is being planned and will come back to the Roundtables. There has to be a feedback loop.

IBCC issues and options raised – such as a suggestion to eliminate RICD's. There are a

number of Non Consumptive and Consumptive activities being looked at that could limit future projects and options such as TM diversions, these include RICD's. But RICD's are one of the few tools the west slope has to protect water. Anytime there is a TM diversion it cuts off options and opportunities for the west slope.

We haven't had the opportunity to air a discussion on the program Ken Ransford gave. His proposal for solving the states water needs is not getting the attention it deserves. It needs to be taken seriously, soon. GPCD demand drives the whole ship.

3:30 Reports

CWCB

Pass to next month.

Flaming Gorge

Meeting on Friday. FG Exploration committee grant (WSRA). As of the meeting Friday some interesting discussion is developing. We are pulling away from talking about specific projects. Controversial BOR assertion about upper basin states approval for any tapping out of FG. Letter from boss to Harris Sherman backed that up. There is an assumption that you can develop 200k af without recovery program consultation. Not quite.

Friday meeting – presentations on what people think of the project. Upshot was that we shouldn't be talking about a specific project, FG or otherwise. What the committee should be looking at what are the principals that would apply, would govern the discussion of any project? Compact matters are important. Any project shouldn't create a situation that increases chance of compact curtailment. New supply projects from the Colorado Basin should include provisions for preemptive curtailment. The West Slope needs to retain the ability to develop west slope water for west slope uses. If we can't develop water for use, it'll come from somewhere else. Agriculture. New supply projects from the Colorado Basin are to decrease ag dry up on Front Range for municipal supply. But solving that problem should not be done by creating the same problem on the west slope. West Slope ag dry up is just as bad as Front Range ag dry up.

Lake Powell – St. George pipeline and compact curtailment? The line of available supply and demands is converging. If you look at this the trend is heading toward a compact problem, even though we aren't there yet.

Is the water there? What are the impacts of removing a couple hundred thousand af from the west slope regardless of where it comes from. It doesn't make sense to dry up farmland in California any more than it does in Colorado. Can we work with California? Front Range wants to make sure Colorado uses all its water, that no water is left on the table for California's use from our share.

As the west slope we cannot ignore the issue or the idea of a new supply from the west slope to help fill the gap. There is increasing pressure for a new supply project in the Colorado Basin. If water supplies on the Front Range aren't addressed there are

economic implications that affect all of us. It is incumbent that the West Slope be sitting down with the Front Range to solve these problems. If Douglas County runs out of water it will be "Katie bar the door". At the same time we need to make sure our concerns and needs are identified and addressed equally with Front Range needs.

July 23 will be the next regular Colorado Basin RT meeting

4:00 Dismiss