

Arkansas Basin Roundtable
March 14, 2012
Meeting Notes

Roundtable Business

Chairman Barber called the meeting to order at 12:30 pm. Members and visitors introduced themselves. Twenty four (24) members were present. There are 39 active roundtable members at this time - 18 is a quorum.

Public Comment –

Taryn Hutchins-Cabibi, CWCB - Colorado participates in the US Drought Monitor tool. The Arkansas Basin has some data sparse areas. We need more information. The Farm Service Agency uses the Drought Monitor Tool to declare a drought condition. Please help us fill in the network, especially in Baca, Otero, and Kiowa counties. Gary Barber can give you Taryn's contact information.

Reed Dils – In the spirit of the Statewide Roundtable Summit, it seems as if the state is moving towards increased collaboration. The Family Farm Alliance, Coalition of Agriculture and other conservation groups are calling for the passage of the Farm Bill this year. Many conservation groups are joining in for the call of passage of this bill.

Perry Cabot – Arkansas River Basin Water Forum is April 25 and 26, at Colorado Mtn College in Leadville, CO. This year's theme is "Snowing to Growing". Register at www.arbwf.org.

February Minutes

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

Reviewed agenda

Sub-Committee Reports –

Non-Consumptive Working Group – SeEtta Moss

A brief history of this group's work: The group identified Environmental and Recreational attributes. These attributes were prioritized, mapped and overlaid. This map showed environmental and recreational attributes in the basin, and made clear crucial areas that need the most help. The Roundtable adopted the map in 2008.

They used that to identify one of the first quantifications – for studying two locations in the Lower Basin; Queen's Reservoir and the wetlands around John Martin Reservoir. One of the problems in this basin is that we don't have as much data compared to other basins. We decided to begin Risk Assessment on those high priority needs areas in the basin.

Four preliminary high priority/high risk areas have been identified; Grape Creek, Lake San Isabel, Greenhorn Creek and Big Sandy Creek. In Grape Creek, inconsistent flows are the main problem. Lake San Isabel is in Custer County. It is a high country lake, and the problem is keeping water in the lake that will sustain recreation and the fishery. Greenhorn Creek's concern is also insufficient flow to sustain the riparian corridor. Big Sandy Creek is in El Paso County. The concern there is due to increased development, and the possibility of fracking. The Arkansas Darter, a fish species that is listed as threatened in Colorado.

Todd Doherty – CWCB has set aside some resources (CDM) for consumptive and non-consumptive scoping projects, and to assist in locating funding. CWCB will have a series of workshops for Roundtables and providers to help them identify multi-purpose projects.

Statewide Roundtable Summit follow-up

We have been invited to attend the Gunnison Roundtable meeting, May 7th, 4pm, in Gunnison. The purpose of the meeting will be to talk about Conservation. We really need our utilities to come together and start talking about conservation. We can decide next month whether we would still have our own meeting.

IBCC Report

Jeris: February 29th IBCC meeting. It was a short meeting, to prepare members for the Roundtable Summit. Dialogue is increasing between East and West Slope.

We will talk next month about the Portfolio Tool one more time.

WSRA Grant Applications ~285,000 in Basin Grant Funds available

Mt. Pisgah Dam/Wrights Reservoir Outlet Works Rehabilitation – Alan Frantz

Wrights Reservoir is located in Teller County on Fourmile Creek. It's about 12 miles from Cripple Creek. The dam was built in 1907, and is decreed for irrigation. It's a significant hazard earth embankment dam. The reservoir serves multiple water users:

- Catlin Canal Company
- Canon Heights Irrigation & Reservoir Company
- Park Center Water Company
- City of Rocky Ford
- DOW
- Recreational: fishing-bird watching-hiking
- Environmental habitat

The State Engineers Office inspected the dam in July 2011. They determined that the existing outlet valves, valve house and operators are in extremely poor condition. They will allow conditional full storage if repairs are made. Use has not been officially restricted.

This grant/loan request will be for the entire project, from final design through construction. Requested funding is as follows:

Pisgah Reservoir match:	\$ 73,923
Basin funds:	\$ 25,000
Statewide funds:	\$136,345
CWCB loan:	\$161,345

The DOW is working on a letter of support for this project, and is working toward Public Access. Not yet restricted. The valves and actuators still work, but just barely.

This application was approved by consensus.

Groundwater Quality Study, Phase 2 – Upper Black Squirrel Creek Alluvial Aquifer – Sean Chambers

Betty Konarski introduced this grant application. El Paso County funded Phase 1 of this study. A 2006 Geo-survey project identified over 200,000 acre feet of possible storage in the Black Squirrel Aquifer. That project was partially funded by Basin funds.

This phase is to collect data regarding base conditions of the aquifer. It will study groundwater quality, baseline data, oil and gas indicator constituent data, groundwater age dating, and contamination vulnerability mapping.

A Groundwater Quality Study Committee was formed in 2009. It is comprised of public, private and nonprofit sector members. The Aquifer is located due east of Colorado Springs. There are a lot of wells in the aquifer, which has been over-appropriated for a long time, which is why there is a significant amount of storage available.

The aquifer's water support approximately 10% of El Paso County. Continued urban and rural suburban growth in the Upper Black Squirrel Basin coupled with the rush to Develop Niobrara formation oil and gas reserves threaten to further impair water quality in the Basin and threaten its long-term viability as an alluvial storage resource.

Protection of the Upper Black Squirrel Resource is key to controlling the growth of the water supply "Gap" in El Paso County.

Tasks 1 and 2 are research. Tasks forward will be data collection. The scope document is available for anyone who would like it.

Preliminary Commitments total \$199,800:

- * UBSCGMD - \$5000 + in-kind
- * Cherokee Metro District - \$15,000 + in-kind
- * Meridian Service Metro District - \$10,000
- * Woodmen Hills Metro District - \$10,000
- * Colorado Springs Utilities - \$5,000
- * Colorado State Land Board - \$10,000
- * USGS - \$144,800

Requested CWCB Basin Funds - \$35,000

Potential CWCB Severance Tax Trust Fund Account Grant - \$60,000

Potential El Paso County - \$ T.B.D. + significant in-kind and admin.

Total of Preliminary Commitments and Potential CWCB - \$289,150

Total Budget \$343,350 – Prelim and Potential \$289,150 = Deficit of \$54,200 (\$143,550 without CWCB)

Letters of support from:

- * Division of Water Resources
- * Upper Black Squirrel Creek Groundwater Management District
- * Pikes Peak Regional Water Authority
- * Colorado Springs Utilities

This application was approved by consensus.

Presentation – Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife – John Tonko and Jay Skinner

Now that Parks and Wildlife have been combined, unique opportunities have presented themselves. This presentation shows the Division's interests in the Arkansas Basin.

Water Operations in the Arkansas Basin – John Tonko

The Division of Parks and Wildlife holds a lot of water rights in the Arkansas Basin. John described some of the property holdings and recreational projects:

State Wildlife Areas

Granada Mid-Western Farms Parcel
Granada
Dawn Pond
Oxbow
DeWeese Reservoir (500-acre feet storage)
Skaguay Reservoir (water storage with exchange agreement)
Beaver Creek (below Skaguay – old farm)
Sands Lake
Runyon Lake

Hatcheries

Las Animas Warm Water Fish Hatchery
Mount Shavano Hatchery – Cold Water Fish Rearing
Chalk Cliffs Trout Hatchery

Frantz Lake Trail Access
Lake Pueblo State Park
Arkansas River below Pueblo Reservoir
John Martin Reservoir State Park
Arkansas Headwaters
Mueller State Park
Lathrop State Park

Jay Skinner - Voluntary Flow Management Program

- Year-Round Program
- **Goals & Objectives:**
 - Supplement Arkansas River Streamflows

- Enhance and Protect the River's Fishery Resources
- Provide Certainty to Commercial and Private Recreational Boating
- Successful Operation Since 1990

Aquatic Resources

- Minimum year-round flow of 250 cfs
- Provides conditions for good trout feeding and growth late summer and early fall
- Pre-spawning "conditioning"
- Spawning & incubation flows – 250 to 400 cfs range
- Stable flows during incubation
- Favorable emergence flows

Recreation

- Certainty for rafting season July 1 – August 15
- Water supply dependant
- Target flow: 700 cfs
- Water made available for flow augmentation: up to 10,000 acre-feet
- Evaporation off-set
- Current VFMP agreement good through June, 2016

VFMP – What Makes it Successful?

- Annual Coordination and Communication
- Parties are Committed to Success
 - CPW
 - Water Users and Bureau of Reclamation
 - Recreational Boating Industry (AROA)
 - Trout Unlimited
 - County Commissioners
 - Department of Natural Resources
- Honors Water Rights and Water Operations
- Annual Operation Depends Upon Hydrologic & Reservoir Condition

Management Opportunities That Come As A Result of the CPW Merge

- The merged mission of CPW has many on-the-ground commonalities
- Adjacent/Adjoining properties in the Arkansas Basin:
 - Pueblo Reservoir
 - John Martin Reservoir
 - Arkansas Headwaters
 - Mueller SP/Dome Rock SWA
 - Lathrop
- The obvious on-the-ground day-to-day
- In the water management realm:
 - Pooling of resources
 - Coordination of releases of water
 - Development of augmentation plans and other water court activities
 - Look for opportunities to benefit/work with other basin water users

Conclusions and Summary

- While fish, wildlife, and recreation have to be CPW's primary interest, we can do more in the process
- Preservation of agriculture in the basin IS in our interest
- To a large degree, CPW is in the ag business
- CPW is interested in making sure that water stays in the basin and in ag production
- If transfers of water occur, let's make sure that they happen responsibly
- CPW has land and water assets that could be used in an integrated fashion with other water uses in the basin
- We are all looking for flexibility and cooperation
- CPW wants to be a partner with other water users as there are things that we want/need to accomplish
- Foster and develop partnerships
- With agriculture and other water uses in the basin
- Promote CPW's mission while furthering the missions and needs of others

Presentation – Western Resources Advocates – Drew Beckwith

Filling the Gap: Meeting Future Urban Water Needs in the Arkansas Basin, a joint report produced by WRA, Trout Unlimited, and Colorado Environmental Coalition

The Big Picture

- Colorado's water future – the next 40 years
 - Significant work by CWCB, BRTs, IBCC, etc...
 - M&I demand to double → "gap" by 2050
- *Filling the Gap: Arkansas Basin*
 - Solutions-oriented
 - 21st century approach
 - Sustainable, balanced, innovative
 - Protects Colorado's future

Our Portfolio

Combines APPS, Conservation, maximum Reuse, and Ag/Urb

- Arkansas River, CO
 - Most popular white water river in America
 - Most popular fishing waters in the state

Colorado needs to break its habit of satisfying its water needs at the expense of rivers and the environment.

Population Projections

The population of the Urban Counties of the Arkansas Basin is expected to increase by 70% over the next 40 years under a medium-growth scenario. To put this growth into perspective, this would be equivalent to adding in the basin a new city the size of Colorado Springs, or five additional cities the size of Pueblo, by 2050.

Future Urban Water Needs

Using the most current CWCB data, we assume the Urban Counties will need an additional 88,000 acre-feet of water by 2050 to fully meet projected demands.

Traditional Structural Water Supply Projects

Huge water supply projects are not necessary – Supplies can exceed demands without them.

Issues:

Cost, controversy, delay, evaporation, sedimentation

Smart Principles and Acceptable Planned Projects

- Make full and efficient use existing of supplies before making new diversions.
- Design ag-to-muni transfers to maintain agriculture and mitigate adverse impacts to rural communities.
- Expand existing projects before building new ones.
- Invoke all stakeholders in decision-making processes and fully address the environmental and socioeconomic impacts of water supply projects, especially new trans-basin diversions.
- Maintain adequate flows in rivers under all future scenarios, even if future water availability decreases.
- Integrate systems and share resources among water users, and seek to develop "multi-purpose projects" to spread project benefits as well as costs.

PSOP is not included.

SDS is included.

Water Conservation

- Managing Demand
- State Statute
- Tools available to providers
 - Rates
 - Rebates
 - Retrofits
 - Land use planning

Urban Water Needs with APPs and Conservation

An estimate of water needs for the urban counties including the acceptable planned projects and conservation strategies. Urban counties would have an additional 39,000 acre-feet of annual water supply by 2050 if 60% of active conservation savings are dedicated to meeting new demands.

Water Reuse

- Increases supply
- Reusable water supplies in the Basin

- Arkansas Basin already a leader

Urban Water Needs with APPs, Conservation and Reuse

New reuse in the Urban Counties could total 46,500 acre-feet of additional annual water supply by 2050.

Ag/Urban Cooperation

- Voluntary
- Temporary
- Compensated
- “Buy and Dry” alternative
- Super Ditch
- Much interest from farmers

Urban Water Needs with APPs, Conservation, Reuse, and Ag/Urban Cooperation

This balanced portfolio more than fills the projected needs of the Urban Counties of the Arkansas Basin while protecting Colorado's environment.

Recommendations

- Close the “gap” with balanced water supply strategies.
 - Protect CO rivers and streams in all future water developments.
 - Pursue only IPPs that can be constructed and operated according to “smart” principles.
 - Implement more aggressive water conservation.
 - Maximize water reuse, and work to improve public perception and acceptance of reuse projects.
 - Cooperate with agriculture on voluntary water sharing agreements that benefit both municipalities and the agricultural community without permanently drying irrigated acres.
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- Jorge Figueroa, Water Policy Analyst
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Filling the Gap Series is available online at: www.westernresourceadvocates.org/gap

Roundtable members participated in a lively discussion regarding this presentation.

Review of the next meeting's agenda – April 11th.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Terry Scanga