

NPBRT Minutes: 6-4-13 Meeting
USFS Conf. Room (3-5 PM), 100 Main Street, Walden, CO

Members/Liaisons Present

*Mike Allnutt
Deb Alpe
Mike Alpe
*Jimmer Baller
*Kent Crowder
*Blaine Evans
*Tom Hackleman
*Barbara Vasquez
*Ty Wattenberg
*Rick Wyatt

Members Absent

Paula Belcher
*James Carothers
Pete Conovitz
*Scott Fischer
Deb Heeney
Charles Mathis
*Mike Honholz
*Randy Miller
*John Rich
Carl Trick II
Ann Timberman
Hunter Townsend

Visitors Present

Kurt Davies
Greg Johnson
Ken Kehmeier
Eric Richer
Cade Waldron

I. Agenda Review

The agenda was accepted as published.

II. Approval of Roundtable Minutes: March 12 & April 23, 2012 Meeting

The minutes of the March 12 meeting approved as modified at the April meeting. The minutes of the

April 23 meeting were accepted with one change to the CWCB update. Both sets of minutes will be distributed after this meeting.

III. Presentation on CWCB Nonconsumptive Toolbox – Greg Johnson, Colorado Water Conservation Board Staff, Water Supply Planning Section

Greg notified NPBRT that this will be the last meeting he will attend because he's leaving CWCB for a position with Wilson Water Group. We all wished him well and appreciated his work with us over the years. Kent mentioned that we may be seeing Greg again in his new capacity as he plans to request the Wilson Water Group to work with the Jackson County Water Conservancy District to submit a WSRA grant application to develop our Basin Implementation Plan. Erin Wilson worked on the DSS for the North Platte and therefore is familiar with the water rights & physical structures in the basin.

Greg talked us through the Draft Nonconsumptive Toolbox March 2013(no presentation materials). The Toolbox arose from general recommendations by the NonConsumptive (NC) Subcommittee of the IBCC in 2011. They also recommended that each Basin define and implement a minimum of 3-5 NC projects, encouraging projects that meet multiple needs. Data from all the roundtables was put into a database.

The 15 page Draft NC Toolbox document plus the 7 appendices are available on the CWCB website: <http://cwcwweblink.state.co.us/WebLink/ElectronicFile.aspx?docid=170187&searchid=4950d47c-0257-4c6e-959d-351d0ad6f90b&dbid=0>

The appendices contain the majority of the detailed information.

- A. Scientific Information Related to Environmental Attributes
- B. Examples of Measurable Outcomes
- C. Tools and Resources for Project Planning
- D. Projects and Methods Mapping
- E. Nonconsumptive Projects and Methods
- F. Funding Opportunities
- G. Case Studies Existing Programs

The steps for NC work in the basins was outlined as

- a) high level basin goals
- b) Define measurable outcomes
- c) assess needs and opportunities
- d) NC project selection & implementation

Barbara projected the map of NC attributes for North Platte Basin, then map plus list of projects consolidated for the North Platte Basin by CWCB and their contractors in 2011. Some updating is required of the projects list/map is needed. It should at a minimum include updated information from CPW on proposed/planned projects. And Kent reminded everyone that the CWCB acceded to the request from the Jackson County Water Conservancy District to withdraw pending InStream Flow recommendations. Greg indicated these and other updates could be made in the context of the Basin Implementation Plan.

Appendix A contains a wealth of scientific data. Appendix B refers to direct and indirect protections for non-consumptive needs. Contributions to the definition of measurable outcomes came from CNHP, TNC, CPW, American White Water and other organizations. Appendix C contains tools and resources for project planning, support from CWCB and other entities to get help the Basins get the work done. Greg mentioned that on the CWCB website (but not printed with the NCN Toolbox), Appendix D contains all the maps for the basins. Appendix E has specific non-consumptive projects and methods listed and mapped for each basin. Appendix F lists a variety of funding opportunities (CWCB, DOLA, GoCo, etc) and G offers very helpful case studies of some selected existing programs.

IV. Presentation on WSRA Application – North Platte River Stream Restoration: Verner State Wildlife Area – Kurt Davies, Aquatic Biologist, Colorado Parks and Wildlife

Kurt Davies gave a very detailed presentation on the current status and plans for stream restoration within the Verner State Wildlife Area (SWA) along the North Fork of the North Platte. The actual WSRA application, supporting documentation plus the powerpoint presentation discussed at this meeting will be sent out to our distribution list shortly after this meeting.

The Verner SWA is perpetual conservation easement for fishing along approximately 7000 feet of the North Fork of the North Platte. There are few areas on the North Platte with public fishing access, so maintaining the quality of the reaches within the SWA system is of critical importance to both locals and visitors. The project, when realized, directly addresses the number 1 non-consumptive attribute ranked by the NPBRT

- important stream fishing

and has the potential to enhance several of the other NPBRT NC priorities including:

- wetland wildlife viewing
- amphibians
- significant wetland plant communities

The project will also benefit consumptive use in the Basin by working with the landowner of the lease to enhance cattle watering, developing better riparian grazing and reduce loss of pasture to the hungry river.

The monitoring of the Verner SWA done over the past 4 years has shown unequivocally that the reach is not sustaining a healthy fish population. In 2009 CPW conducted a fisheries assessment. In 2010 CPW conducted an in-channel survey. In September 2012 a geomorphic survey of the entire reach was conducted which included a longitudinal profile, pool to riffle and several cross-sections. There is very poor riparian vegetation, severe bank erosion and over-width channels. Fencing improvements have been made to separate the bull pasture on the east side from the riparian corridor. A conceptual design has been completed based on the 2012 assessment.

The project objectives include:

- 1) Identify and stabilize site-specific problem areas along the reach
- 2) Control eroding banks, narrow over-width channels, re-establish bank-stabilizing riparian vegetation, enhance in-stream habitat
- 3) Increase in-stream habitat for sport fish
- 4) Reduce in-stream temperatures
- 5) Study cost-effectiveness of different (but well-known and often used) stream-bank stabilizations and habitat treatments

The anticipated benefits include

- substantial improvement in fish habitat

- decreased erosion of the adjacent pasture
- improved quality of water downstream (reduced siltation)

Final design is scheduled to be completed by April 2014 with requests for bids closing in June 2014. Construction would take approximately 2 months. Post-treatment evaluation would be conducted for at least 5 years including:

- fisheries surveys
- geomorphic evaluation with side-by-side comparison of the well-known stream-bank stabilization approaches implemented for this project

The grant applications is requesting \$200,000 each from Basin and State-wide WSRA accounts for a total budgeted project cost of \$577,195. The majority of the spending will occur during the construction phase (Task 4) scheduled for late summer, 2014. Any savings achieved relative to the budget will be returned to the Basin account.

Ty asked about fence maintenance. Kurt said CPW would be responsible, but is working closely with the landowner (Tointon), including discussion of off-channel watering of cattle to keep them off the banks. Willow stakes will be harvested on-site for planting along the reach and will be monitored as the riparian vegetation recovers. Once the willows are well established, flash grazing will be instituted to prevent bank damage while benefitting the vegetation. Ken Kehmeier underscored that this method will reduce erosion and therefore siltation downstream. Ty asked how many bid proposals would be sought. Ken replied that the statewide process requires at least 3 bids. Kent asked why final design not being completed at this time and Kurt answered that they wanted to wait until they had approval for funding before incurring the costs for final engineering design. Kent also asked about alternative funding sources, including the Pittman Robertson. Ken replied that these funds (~\$13M this year) must be used on terrestrial projects. He also mentioned that the direct benefit to the CO economy per fishing day is \$67/resident and \$118/nonresident. In response to questions about how the budget for this project was set, it was explained that the costs for a recently completed project on the upper Arkansas served as input. CPWs experience if the design was contracted out is approximately \$200/linear foot (LF). Using inmate labor brings the costs down to \$65/LF. With in-house design and contracted labor, projects runs approximately \$100/LF and this was used as a starting point for the Verner SWA project proposal.

V. Evaluation Process by the CWCB for Allocation of Funds- Part 3 – Kent Crowder

Kent handed out paper copies of the guidelines revised Nov. 15, 2012 and made effective February 1, 2013. The entire document is available at Kent's office.

Key elements of the revised guidelines include:

Statewide Account: Applications due by 1st of the month the month prior to the March or September CWCB board meeting. Matching requirements specify that there must be at least 25% match. A minimum match of 5% of the total grant shall be from Basin funds. A minimum match of 5% of the total grant shall be from either the applicant or 3rd party sources. Given limited resources of some

entities, in-kind services will be eligible to be considered matching if the expenditures occurred within 9 months of the date of the application submission to the CWCB.

Basin Accounts: Applications must be received by the 1st of the month, the month prior to the bimonthly CWCB board meeting in which the applications will be considered for funding.

General: The grant applications must satisfy the threshold appropriate threshold criteria. They must be accompanied by a written recommendation to the CWCB board from the appropriate Roundtable.

VI. CWCB Update - Ty Wattenberg

Ty gave a brief update of the CWCB meeting held May 14/15. General CWCB updates: The Governor has signed several bills including one to continue the Habitat Stamp, HB1248 to authorize a pilot project for alternative agricultural transfers and SB243 authorizing \$30M returned to the Construction Fund. There is continued difficulty with the Republican River with Kansas. Chad Bishop (Assistant Director, Wildlife & Natural Resources) is looking to fill the Water Section position because of Jay Skinner's departure from CPW to take the ISF post with CWCB. A new product, 'smart ditch lining' was introduced at the meeting. It's plastic & expandable but no info was provided about price, lifetime, etc.

The IBCC meeting is not until June 5, so no IBCC update was given by our representatives Mike Allnutt & John Rich.

VII. Old Business/ New Business

Old:

Kent summarized the plans for participation from the North Platte Basin in the July 10 CFWE Platte River tour. He's been in touch with Kristin Maharg of CFWE and there will be very little time allocated for our basin since the bus will be taking participants from Fort Collins to the Pathfinder reservoir on that day. Clyde Greenwood is scheduled to meet them at the Michigan Ditch and talk about the transbasin diversion to Fort Collins. Jimmer Baller will speak to them about the Supreme Court Decree that defines the legal structure for water use out of the North Platte Basin, either at the stop at Michigan Ditch or on the bus as it proceeds north.

New:

Hunter Townsend, State Forest Manager and John Twitchell, District Forester, Colorado State Forest Service have extended an invitation to NPBRT members and interested citizens to participate in a tour of forest management project sites. The tour will run from 10 am to approximately 3pm on July 17th. (Water and some snacks will be provided, but participants should bring a lunch. Tour participants should meet at the State Park's Moose Visitor Center parking lot at 10 am on Wednesday, July 17th.) The Colorado State Forest Service and the Society of American Foresters will be hosting a tour of research and management project sites on the Colorado State Forest. The intention is highlight management and research collaboration, as well as to provide a general overview of forest management activities and the multi-

agency collaboration on this important State Land Board property. The particular research project we'll be reviewing in the field is entitled the "Effects of Mountain Pine Beetle and Forest Management on Water Quantity, Quality, and Forest Recovery." This research was made possible by a WSRA grant supported by the North Platte Basin Roundtable. Featured speakers include Rob Hubbard, Chuck Rhoades, and Kelly Elder from the Rocky Mountain Research Station and Hunter Townsend, the forest manager for the State Forest.

VIII. Next Meeting Date tentatively set for Tuesday, July 23, 2013, 7-9PM (NOTE: SUMMER HOURS) The WSRA grant submitted by CPW at this meeting will be discussed further and voted on at the July meeting. The meeting date was chosen late in the month because Kent said the Jackson County Water Conservancy District intends to solicit a WSRA grant proposal from Wilson Water Group for a basin implementation plan. Given that a vote by NPBRT is required before Aug 1 to hit the deadline for submission to CWCB for their September meeting, and given that this grant proposal has not yet been written, Kent preferred a date late in the month.

IX. Meeting Adjourned