

# **Interbasin Compact Committee Basin Roundtables**

## **Rio Grande Interbasin Roundtable**

### ***MINUTES***

**June 11, 2013 @ 2:00 – 5:00 P.M.**

**Introductions** – Welcome to all. **Thanks to State Rep. Ed Vigil for coming.** **Mike Gibson** acknowledged Gloria Gutierrez, Senator Udall's regional representative from his Pueblo office. Erin Minx is on maternity leave.

- **Approval of Minutes of May 14, 2013:** Charles Spielman moved to approve. Lawrence Gallegos seconded. Unanimous approval as written.
- **Administrative Matters: Most of the** appointees from municipalities, counties, and other entities have been reappointed. Don Martinez, Conejos County. Stan Winery, Hinsdale County. Jim Ehrlich, Alamosa County. Position open for municipalities of Hinsdale County. Anyone? Costilla Water Conservancy District lacks an appointment. We need someone to represent water users. Don Koskelin served in that capacity before. Anyone you suggest from water utilities? At next RT meeting we'll elect members to be appointed by the RT.
- **Discussion on Basin Plan Implementation: Greg Johnson, CWCB; Travis Smith, and Mike Gibson:** In response to an Executive Order from Governor Hickenlooper, CWCB will develop the Colorado Water Plan. Each basin must create its own Basin Plan. Mike called the volunteer subcommittee to meet a couple of times. At last meeting they reviewed an initial proposal from Kelly DiNatale Water Consultants to write the plan as a third (outside) party. Debated whether to retain them to help us write the RG Basin Plan. Decision: We will ask our own people in the RG Basin – volunteer as well as paid by DiNatale – to provide the core elements of the RG Basin Plan.

Tom Spezze, a consultant with DiNatale Water Consultants, said they are developing a scope of work, a preliminary budget and a list of local stakeholders. Kelly is familiar with the Basin and wants to meet in next couple of weeks with subcommittee of people who have familiarity with Basin issues.

Travis gave background on Kelly, his role when SWSI was first being developed, consultant with CDM, then he left and took a role in developing the Rio Grande Reservoir study. Now he's working with Nathan, Conejos Water Conservancy District. Travis spoke highly of Kelly DiNatale Water and asked that the Roundtable should consider the Rio Grande Basin Plan a top priority. Copies of related documents are available from Mike.

Greg Johnson: The draft of the Basin Plan guidelines is still under review by the Board. More information at the July meeting. Greg explained that guidelines for WSRA funding have been (are being) revised. Funding to do the Basin Plan? RT cannot be the fiscal agent. Applicant must be a conservancy district, etc..

Feedback from members: Want flexibility. Prefer to use local contractors and resources. This takes us into the next level of detail in our water planning. As we get into the modeling, reoperation of reservoirs, the Plan will help us determine internally which projects are feasible, fundable, and which may have fallen off the list. A Basin Plan Subcommittee will coordinate a meeting with Kelly DiNatale and Tom Spezze.

- **GOODBY TO GREG JOHNSON!** Greg is leaving CWCB and joining a water consulting firm. Greg said this was a tough decision but he couldn't pass up the opportunity. Huge feedback from the RT at this news – their gain will be our loss. “Greg, you’ve been a shining example of what professionalism is – you’ve been a real workhorse – you’re going to be successful – we’re going to miss you!” Mike G. presented a Pen Set to Greg in appreciation of his work with the RGRT.
- **Report from Colorado Division of Water Resources, Division 3, Engineer, Pat McDermott:** Attached is Craig’s ten day report for the current meeting’s minutes. For details contact DWR or Craig Cotten [craig.cotten@state.co.us](mailto:craig.cotten@state.co.us) or Pat McDermott, [pat.mcdermott@state.co.us](mailto:pat.mcdermott@state.co.us).

Display: Pat, standing in for Craig, introduced Andrea Tayak, who has been teaching at Beaver Creek Youth Camp. Involved in hydrology. She illustrated her lesson to kids about what the Rio Grande Compact is all about: bottles of blue and red colored water. Applause and appreciation.

On June 1 only one of the representative SNOTEL sites was active. There is only 2% of the usual snowpack. The snowpack usually peaks the third week of May. Rio Grande preliminary annual flow of 300,000 AF – at 46% of long term normal. Obligation downstream of 7 5,000 AF. Delivery obligation 4%. Might have slight curtailment somewhere around November 1. This is the 4<sup>th</sup> worst year since 1890: 2002 was the worst, with 1977 and 1902. Conejos River preliminary annual flow 130,000 AF - 40% of normal. Obligation 12,000 AF. Expect to extend the Conejos irrigation season this year. Elephant Butte and Caballo reservoirs – total water in storage 187,000 AF. Rio Grande compact usable water, 128,000 AF. Currently in Article VII restrictions so cannot store in post-Compact reservoirs. It’s a very poor situation in New Mexico.

NRCS snowpack map shows southern part of the state has languished. Streamflow forecasts are less than 50% of normal runoff. Entire RG basin will be from a low of 14% on the San Antonio near Ortiz, to an upper RG high of 49% of normal range. Everyone else is in the 30’s and 40s. An extremely poor year. “Yet we are still plowing fields.”

Temperatures: “We’ve found hell and it’s somewhere in NM.” There won’t be any relief until maybe some time in November.

- **Update on Sub-District # 1 Issues, Steve Vandiver:** Subdistrict putting water in the river that would not be there otherwise. CREP signup started the 13<sup>th</sup> officially. Got started on the 30<sup>th</sup> with a good number of people interested. We’re setting up contracts now for next year, with about 9,000 acres from the subdistrict. A lot of fields are not producing. Most have a ground cover of some sort. Getting closer to having model results. Mr. Wolf will complete his work soon. Well rules and regulations are waiting. The State meeting scheduled for late June was delayed because the model numbers were not in yet.
- **Request for WSRA Funding – Kerber Creek Restoration Project:** Jason Willis, Mine Restoration Field Coordinator with Trout Unlimited (TU), works with Trevor Klein, presented the request for funding. He gave a history and legacy of the Bonanza Mining District. Reviewed Kerber Creek Restoration Project accomplishments since 2007. Project partner with TU as fiscal agent since 2008. Requesting \$34,871 from WSRA Basin Account. Total project \$1,284,650.

Discussion of effect on fishery – nature of the ph imbalance and the chemistry. Role of TU as fiscal agent. There is no formal entity for Kerber Creek. JB asked about brook trout and effects of zinc and cadmium. Rio described the excellent results, transformation of the land, a great partnership. Lawrence’s concern about all funds being from the Basin account. Dale asked about restoration in this time of scarce water. Using hardy all native seed mix and erosion control. Great rebound of vegetation. Purpose of grant is to fund a 1,150 ft gap in the stream restoration project. Request \$34,871 total from WSRA Basin funds. Info at 719-655-6107.

**VOTE:** Rio de la Vista moved to approve the funding request. Heather Dutton seconded. Unanimous approval.

- **Preview of WSRA Funding - Willow Creek Flood Plain Restoration – Final Phase, Guinevere Nelson,** Ian helped with technology, Zeke Ward has been involved since the beginning of the project. Request is from Lower Willow Creek Restoration Company, Willow Creek Reclamation Committee, and a collaboration including CDPHE, CDRMS, Colorado Brownfields Foundation, City of Creede, Creede Resources, Inc., and Casey Resources, Inc.. Goal: To reclaim the Lower Willow Creek Floodplain from disturbances caused by legacy mining practices. Request for funding: \$55,000 from WSRA Basin Account. Mike has a copy of the PowerPoint.
- **Preview of WSRA Funding - Continental Dam and Spillway Rehabilitation Phase 2 – Santa Maria Reservoir Company: Keith Holland:** Goals: restore full operating efficiency; Remove state imposed restrictions; Enable effective management of irrigation water; Increase flood control; Hold and manage compact water; Improve ability to respond to

drought; Increase storage for depletion water; Increase options to serve third parties. A pre-compact reservoir – very important to get that capability back. Total project cost \$4,132,000; Basin Account \$50,688; Statewide Account \$963,062; Loan commitment, \$3,071,663.

- **Preview of WSRA Funding – Rio Grande Basin - Upper Rio Grande Basin Radar Project: Snowpack & Streamflow Monitoring & Modeling for Accurate Streamflow Forecasting** – Nathan Coombs. CWCBC has already committed \$215,000 for this project, funds available to spend as of July 1, 2013. Conejos Water Conservancy District (CWCD) is requesting \$237,000 from WSRA funds to expand on earlier Basin studies, using radar installations to significantly improve on current antiquated forecasting methodologies. \$150,000 will be for NCAR modeling; \$60,000 for NCAR additional instrumentation/observations; and \$27,000 to help with District direct costs and administration. District is seeking broad Basin support (including donations) for this project, as every water user in the Valley will benefit from improved streamflow forecasting. Please contact Nicole at 719-588-4109 to contribute.

**Discussion:** Travis - CWCBC and RGWCD have already invested in this project. This pilot project is to upgrade the SNODAS system and improve the hydrological model. It will help prioritize our Basin for the West Gulf Region. Most federal money goes east for forecasting. This project raises the ante for the basin. CWCBC's investment in the Rio Grande study is so the results can be taken to other basins in the state.

Travis - Nathan will be looking for contributions from other entities and ditch companies. Charlie: Is the State Engineer involved? Travis: Dick Wolfe has been very active on this, requesting an additional \$65,000. Mike would like to see NRCS at the table on this. Travis - they've been involved already, working with the other agencies. No one being excluded. Steve: Forecasting : Weather and timing are one of the most difficult things to forecast. This certainly will help in more localized areas. Not sufficient number of SNOTEL sites. Also, in the past few years, the snowline gets above SNOTELs and that's fooled the forecasters several times; could not figure out where the water was coming from. Travis: This is the absolutely necessary next step. We'll gather up some money to make this match.

- **Preview of WSRA Funding – Conejos River System Confluence Management Project: Sanford, Ephraim, and East Bend ditches: Nathan Coombs, Warren Crowther, and Marty Peterson:** The goal of this project extends the CWCD's work to efficiently divert and to accurately track and deliver ordered reservoir water to water users on any reach on the Conejos River system. With new structures, automated gates, and telemetry, these three ditch companies will participate in the CWCD's ongoing whole-river strategy to locate, quantify, and better manage the flows of the Conejos. WSRA request is for \$485,000 in Statewide funds and \$26,000 in Basin funds.

- **Update on Oil & Gas Drilling - Rio Grande County - Rose Vanderpool, Rio Grande County Land Use; Paul Tigan and Rick Bassagoitia, BLM:** Funds are available for micro-hydro studies. Not all ditch companies can apply but should go through a conservancy or conservation district. Lindsay George, from Applegate is available to determine micro-hydro potential. Power authorities make this opportunity available in Colorado, but not every year, so inquire now.

The BLM San Luis Valley Field Office is seeking public input on the preliminary environmental assessment for the proposed San Francisco Creek #1 well. The EA is being conducted in response to an application for permit to drill from the Dan A. Hughes Company. The proposed exploratory oil and gas well would be drilled on a 35-acre lot owned by the Dan A. Hughes Company near County Road 13, approximately five miles south of Del Norte. The federal mineral rights below the private land were leased for 10 years from the Bureau of Land Management in 2006. Comments would be most effective if received by July 18, 2013, and should be mailed to the San Luis Valley Public Lands Center, Attention: Paul Tigan, 1803 W. Highway 160, Monte Vista, CO 81144. Comments may also be submitted electronically to [BLM\\_CO\\_SLVPLC\\_Comments@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_CO_SLVPLC_Comments@blm.gov).

- CWCB July Meeting will be on July 16 in Alamosa at Adams State University. Travis and Rio: grant recipients should try to be there – express appreciation. The Basin needs want to tell our story about high cooperation in the valley. A grant recipient's presentation to express appreciation. The Basin has received a lot of funds.
- Headwaters magazine covering the Rio Grande Basin will be out soon.

### **Next Meeting: July 9, 2013**

**2:00 – 5:00 PM**

Conference Room, San Luis Valley Water Conservancy District  
623 Fourth Street, Alamosa, Alamosa, Colorado

Light Refreshments Will Be Served