

NPBRT Minutes: 8-27-13
USFS Conf. Room (7-9 PM) 100 Main Street, Walden, CO

Members/Liaisons Present

*Mike Allnutt
Deb Alpe
Mike Alpe
*Jimmer Baller
*Kent Crowder
*Blaine Evans
*John Rich
Hunter Townsend
*Carl Trick II
*Barbara Vasquez
*Ty Wattenberg
*Rick Wyatt

Members/Liaisons Absent

*James Carothers
Pete Conovitz
*Mike Honholz
*Scott Fischer
*Tom Hackleman
*Randy Miller
Paula Belcher
Jason Brey
Ann Timberman

Others Present

Chris Brown
Erin Light
Rick Light
Cade Waldron

I. Agenda Review

The agenda was accepted as published with the addition of Deb Alpe's update on the 7/17/13 Tour of State Forest & Distribution of North Platte Roundtable notebooks.

II. Approval of Roundtable Minutes: July 23, 2013 Meeting

Minutes of the July 23 meeting were approved.

III. State Forest Tour & North Platte Basin Notebooks- Deb Alpe

Deb passed out the North Platte Basin Notebooks with the presentation CDs to those members in attendance. She also passed out copies of the cover sheet and 'take home' management

messages from the 7/17/13 Beetles & Forest field tour in the State Forest. The full document for the tour was not available electronically according to Hunter Townsend.

IV. Presentation and discussion on the annual delineation of irrigated lands in North Park and irrigated acres accounting for the Nebraska v. Wyoming Supreme Court Decree –

Chris Brown, Colorado Division of Water Resources, GIS Program Manager and Erin Light, Division Engineer

Chris's presentation material is being sent out separately in parallel with the meeting minutes. Chris has worked for the past three years on irrigated acres accounting using annual datasets for the North Platte and the Rio Grande. Landsat 5 & 7 have provided the data. 5 has 'died', leaving only 7 for 2012 data. Landsat 8 was just launched and will provide data for 2013. 2012 is the first year they've pulled analysis in-house. Also, USDA will be flying all of Colorado providing color aerial images through a NRCS gateway. Master coverage was reviewed with the Division 6 staff. If ranchers said they 'irrigate down to the river and the cows eat the willows', then the irrigated acreage included 'down to the river'. The only ground truthing done was to determine crop type. Kent: Was 2012 reviewed by the two local water Commissioners? Chris: Yes. Carl asked: how did you determine 'potentially irrigable'? Chris replied it was the biggest extent possible for each irrigated area. Kent: is there a 2013 image before the first call? Chris: No...the first usable image was 6/18 due to cloud cover in earlier passes of the satellite. Only way to get early irrigation information without satellite images is from the diversion records. For 2011, we had 4 scenes, one per month over the growing season (April-Oct). They were hurt in 2012 by having only one functioning satellite. They'll have 2 starting this year, allowing scene capture every 10d or so.

NDUI provides a measure of 'greenness'. NDUI ranges from 0-200 with <150 interpreted as no crop, 140-150 being marginal and >150 definitely indicating the presence of an irrigated crop. For North Platte Basin, the figures are:

2011: 116,674 acres (92% of max potentially irrigable)

2012 84,607 acres (67% of max potentially irrigable)

2013....tbd

Carl: In the past, WY and NE accepted the way we've accounted for irrigated acreages previously. Have WY and NE accepted this new methodology? Erin: we made a phone presentation to WY and NE; no questions were raised. The new methodology was applied with the goal of more accurate and consistent method for compact reporting. Carl expressed concern over the timing and the relationship of the NDUI value to a high mountain hay crop. Have you 'groundtruthed' the NDUI of 140 and how does it relate to North Park hay fields? Chris said he's combined data from various sources (LandSat, color aerial photos, info from water commissioners, diversion records, etc) and believes his numbers are solid. Carl: historical records show 134,467 acres irrigated in 1952 and this provides the baseline for the 3-State Agreement between WY, NE and CO. Chris said the maximum data he has shows~117,000 acres irrigated in 1956. Erin mentioned that they are keeping the info on 'potentially irrigable acreage' in house and not sharing it outside the State. Carl asked when the data would be compiled for 2013. Chris: March or April, 2014.

V. Discussion regarding irrigation decrees not being decreed for livestock – Erin Light, Colorado Division of Water Resources, Division Engineer

Erin passed out a information sheet (sent with these meeting minutes) that explains the state's position regarding water rights for irrigation that are not also decreed for livestock watering. She gave an example of some ranchers on Elk River where there are two In-Stream Flows decreed in 1977. Erin called an end to the irrigation season in October, shutting off ditches that many ranchers had been running late season for livestock watering when they didn't have a right for that use. They backed everyone down to 3 CFS unless their right was smaller. When the ranchers complained, Erin suggested the ranchers apply for a livestock watering right, recognizing that if it granted with a priority date later than 1977, then the new livestock watering right would be junior to the ISF. Two rights were applied for, with an attempt to argue that historic use starting in 1892 should be taken into account when setting the priority date, but CWCB said 'no'. The applicant needs to provide an affidavit from an individual who personally can attest to the historic use for livestock watering. Lots of ranchers got supplemental adjudications in the '80s for livestock use here in Jackson County. The Cattleman's Association in Routt County asked Erin to approve livestock use for the ~130 irrigation water right holders in this situation. The State Engineer did not agree, and advised them to apply for livestock watering rights. Carl Trick expressed a concern that if the State Engineer entertained a method for granting a blanket extension of irrigation water rights to livestock watering, it would take from the late season flows used for storage. Erin assured him this was not going to happen. Carl asked Chris and Erin if satellite imagery that is used for determining irrigated acreage could also be used for determining the end of irrigation season. Chris said 'no' because the data is not timely. It's not available for 30-40d, and it's not analyzed until the following spring.

VI. CWCB/IBCC Update - Ty Wattenberg/John Rich & Mike Allnutt

CWCB: Ty Wattenberg – no report.

IBCC: John Rich reported on the 8/6/13 IBCC meeting where they discussed of the 'No regrets/Low regrets Scenario and commented that this was the best IBCC meeting he had yet attended. IBCC members were polled to determine whether they could or couldn't live with the proposed scenarios. New Supply scenarios were described as the 'stickiest' part of the state water plan. Peter Nichols and Denver Water's proposal for new supply included a 'map' for development. The New Supply discussion got postponed until the next meeting.

VII. Old Business

John Rich reported briefly on the September 4th Intermountain West Joint Venture Colorado State Conservation Partnership tour of North Park. The agenda with locations, topics and speakers is included below.

9:00 a.m.

Hebron Slough (#1)

- Welcome to North Park
Seth Gallagher, Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory/Colorado State Conservation Partnership Chair & Chris West, Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust
- Hebron Slough Project & Partnerships
Ann Timberman, Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge Complex, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- North Park Waterfowl Habitat & Populations
Brian Sullivan, Colorado Parks and Wildlife

- History of DU Conservation Work in North Park
Matt Reddy, Ducks Unlimited, Inc.
- 10:20 a.m. **Thompson Ranch (#2)**
 - Riparian & Wetlands Restoration Project
Bob Thompson, Landowner & Bob Timberman, Colorado Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- 11:15 a.m. **Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) (#3)**
 - Overview of the NWR & Public Lands in North Park
Ann Timberman, Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge Complex, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- 12:00 p.m. **Brocker Overlook (#4) onto ANWR**
 - Greater Sage-grouse Study
Liza Rossi, Colorado Parks and Wildlife
 - NRCS Projects in North Park
Deb Heeney, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
 - Future Sage Grouse Initiative (SGI) Habitat Projects
Noah Bates, SGI Strategic Watershed Action Team, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- 1:00 p.m. **Lunch at River Rock Café, Walden (#5)**
 - History & Current Status of Water Use, Laws & Issues in the North Platte in Colorado
Kent Crowder, Jackson County Administrator/Chair of North Platte Basin Roundtable/Chair of Jackson County Water Conservation District
 - North Platte Basin Wetland Habitat & Plants
Joanna Lemly, Colorado Natural Heritage Program
- 3:00 p.m. **Coyte Ranch (#6)**
 - Overview of Conserved Ranch Landscapes, including the North Platte River Watershed in North Park
Coy Meyring, Landowner & Carolyn Aspelin, Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust
 - North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) & SGI Investments
Chris West, Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust

VIII. New Business

Carl & Kent reported on a meeting they attended in Steamboat Springs on Friday, the last day of the water Congress. They mentioned that the Public Trust doctrine, Referendum 46, was filed 8/17 and they have a hearing on 8/26 with legislative staff for comment. Kent is to send out the material.

IX. Next Meeting date is September 24 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

X. Meeting Adjourned