

**Interbasin Compact Committee Basin Roundtables
Rio Grande Interbasin Roundtable**

MINUTES
January 14, 2014

Attending: Ed Nielsen, Ron Brink, Mike & Marilyn Willett, Craig Godbout, Brock Canty, Rodney Smith, Jim Bagwell, Dwight Martin, Tom Spezze, Hew Hallock, Nicole Langley, LeRoy Salazar, Dale Wiescamp, Robert Mathis, Mike Blenden, Travis Smith, Ralph Curtis, Bob Kirkham, Ruben Sandoval, Ruth Heide, Marvin Reynolds, Stan Whinnery, Peter Clark, Karla Shriver, Marty Asplin, Charlotte Bobicki, Don Thompson, Charles Spielman, Bea Ferrigno, Paul Tigan, Joseph B. Old Elk, Keith Holland, Stan Moyer, Kirk Thompson, Virginia Christensen, Cindy Medina, Margy Robertson, Adam Moore, Lindsay George, Zeke Ward, Negussie Tedela, Steve Vandiver, Erin Minks, Lawrence D. Gallegos, Eugene Farish, Jack Sowards, Eugene Jacquez, DH "Mac" McFadden, Ann Steinhage, Tracy Miller, Felix R. Lopez, Mike Collins, Rick Basagoitia, Craig Cotten, Dale Pizel, Kevin Terry, Brenda Felmlee, Rio de la Vista, Monty Smith

Introductions – Congratulations to Travis on being reappointed to be the Basin Representative to the CWCB Board. Thanks to Craig Godbout for attending. Travis introduced Patt Dorsey, SW Regional Manager of CPW and Alex Davis, CPW Water Unit Manager, formally IBCC Director, and working with DNR. Thanks to Dan Dallas for their huge efforts relative to the West Fork Complex fires. Welcome to Linda de Herrera, Conejos County Land Use Administrator.

Approval of Minutes of December 17, 2013 – Cindy Medina moved to approve. Dale Weiscamp seconded. Unanimous approval as written.

Administrative Issues, Chairman Mike Gibson (Mike): Annual review of membership and resolution regarding legal address of office and for the posting of notices to be 623 Fourth Street, Alamosa, Colorado 81101. Moved by Stan, seconded by Karla. Unanimous approval.

Mike has been working on the status of Roundtable membership and reconciling the various appointments with provisions of the 2006 Roundtable Bylaws. The Bylaws specify the regulations for membership and for members at large. Over time we have tried to include people who participate. "Zeke Ward is to remain a member, but not a voting member, if that's OK with the Willow Creek group."

Request for Membership: Mike reported he had received a letter from the Conejos River System Water Users Association (CRSWUA) requesting membership on the Roundtable. Brock Canty, President of the CRSWUA, gave a history of the Association's forming in 2012, its mission, and its role as a collaborative voice of surface users and also including well owners on the Conejos River System. Membership in CRSWUA is by individual with a \$50/year fee. Must own or lease water rights on the Conejos. Annual meeting is coming up soon, so hoping to have membership by then. Their Board includes upper and lower Conejos, representing the whole system.

Cindy asked how they are different from the Conejos Water Conservancy District. Brock explained that the District is a quasi-governmental entity, with appointed administration and specific issues it must deal with. The Conejos Water Users group does not have the constraints or limits which the District has. Brock explained the need, especially now, for all water users to have a voice so they can come together around many difficult issues -- RG Compact, legislative issues, subdistrict formation and administration, augmentation plans, etc. Mike thanked Brock, explaining that "I slipped these people into a slot and included them in the list as members, subject to further consideration in February."

Discussion: Rio asked if we have a seat for the RG water users. Some people do represent them. The Bylaws do not specify exactly. Lawrence asked if there are enough slots for all sorts of other groups. Travis stated that it's simply a procedural question, guided by the Bylaws, and that at-large members also participate as voting members. "This has always been a very open group where people's opinions get heard. We've never had to count yea or nay on votes on issues and I'd like that to continue." Mike: we've come a long way in getting people from the southern part of the Valley to be interested and involved. This is an opportunity to increase the geographic representation of the Roundtable. Decision: the request for membership is tabled until next month.

Availability of WSRA Basin Account Funds – Mike: As of January 1, the Basin account has \$75,000. Craig Godbout anticipates \$120,000 will come in January, making it \$195,000. Projects at CWCB total Basin requests of \$136,500 and two projects being considered today ask Basin funds of \$8,000 and \$21,150, so we'll meet these Basin requests, but we will not have much in the Basin account again until April.

Procedure for Grant Requests: Mike suggested the RT adhere to the practice of providing a Preview of a project request's one month prior to the formal funding request to the Roundtable. This allows members to give feedback so that project proponents can improve their proposal or make it more rigorous or competitive so they have a good chance of getting approved. "I recognize the urgency of doing the SLV Irrigation Well Owners' hydrologic tests this spring to help make up depletions, but I question the timing of the Manassa Pipeline Project. Mike said was told it would save a lot of money to go before CWCB in March rather than September, so I reluctantly allowed it to come before this group today, but I'm not comfortable with this situation. Sometimes there will be projects which will be time dependent but this is not the case here." For Statewide WSRA Funding requests the March (CWCB Meeting) deadline is February 1st. September (CWCB Meeting) deadline will be August 1st.

Request for WSRA Funding: Hydrologic Recharge Feasibility Study for Rio Grande Basin Augmentation -- San Luis Valley Irrigation Well Owners, Inc. – Presented by Monte Smith and Kirk Thompson. Total project \$180,000; Request for Basin WSRA funds \$8,000; Request for Statewide WSRA funds \$142,000. Project will conduct a feasibility study to determine if surface water rights owned by SLV Irrigation Well Owners Inc. can be used to offset depletion requirements for various subdistricts throughout the Valley. Monty explained the feasibility study will first find the locations most appropriate for the recharge zone. Steve Vandiver: most of the impact where pumping causes depletions is in the Alamosa-La Jara reach, right at the Confluence. "We need any water that can keep that river whole at the lower reaches of the Conejos." Of all the wells from Rock Creek south, the bulk of depletions show up in the lower Rio Grande and the Conejos. The original idea for this proposal comes from the Solutions Committee as we try to find the spot where we can augment the rivers directly. LeRoy Salazar and Steve Vandiver supported this project as key to help maintain water tables. Trinchera, Conejos, Alamosa and Rio Grande all have common depletions to the Rio Grande, so we must collaborate.

VOTE Rio de la Vista moved to approve funding. Cindy Medina seconded. Lawrence asked why there was no loan component. Mike explained relatively low amount requested in this phase. Unanimous approval.

Request for WSRA Funding: Manassa Land and Irrigation Company's Pipeline Project, Phase I Implementation for the West Lone Star Lateral System – Presented by Jack Gilleland and Nathan Coombs. Total project \$790,000 including matching funds of \$200,000 NRCS EQIP, \$70,000 NRCS engineering, and \$20,000 from Manassa Land and Irrigation. A CWCB loan is in process for \$500,000. WSRA Basin Funds requested \$25,000; Statewide funds requested \$475,000. Nathan explained the bottleneck effect caused by low water conditions on an earthen ditch system designed 150 years ago. Throughout the 18,000 acres irrigated in the ten miles between Antonito and Bountiful, individual water users bear all the costs of conveyance loss of Reservoir water,

with the West Lone Star lateral losing 1.5 cfs/mile; the East Lone Star lateral losing 1 cfs/mile; and the Bountiful losing .5 cfs/mile. This loss, born individually by water users comes to \$571,248 worth of water every year, with irrigators maintaining two “wet” ditches, and with water often never reaching the fields. He explained that several alternatives have been considered over the years, with the final decision to implement a parallel pipeline system to be used in conjunction with the existing ditch system.

Discussion was lengthy and involved, with several members saying they had not had time to review this proposal sufficiently, with supporting comments from water users who want to retain the value of their Manassa shares, and with some visitors from the Conejos stating their objection to the use of a pipeline system at all. The decision was made to hold a separate meeting with a core group of people and Nathan to discuss this project. The request for funding was tabled until a future time.

Update - Rio Grande Basin Water Implementation Plan, Tom Spezze / Kelly DiNatale Water Consultants –The various subcommittees have been meeting and doing their work. Ron Brink heads up the Agriculture subcommittee; Charlie Spielman heads the Municipal and Industrial subcommittee; with Rio working on nonconservative and Judy on the Education and Outreach subcommittee. All are working on Goals and Measurable Objectives with their deadline being end of January. We need to have the major elements of the Basin Plan identified by the end of June. Judy is away due to an injury and Emma is working on press releases and perhaps a “Water 101” pamphlet. We want to put together a PowerPoint, a newsletter, have a logo, etc. and we want public involvement at our meetings. Contact Emma at 589-2230 X 13.

Update on BLM Oil & Gas Drilling Permit- Paul Tigan, Assistant Field Manager, BLM – Paul reviewed the history of the Hughes Application for Permit to Drill (APD) near San Francisco Creek, the BLM’s 520-acre 2006 lease, the application in 2011, and the Geohydrologic Study funded by the Rio Grande Basin Roundtable in May 2012. In December 2012 the results of that study were released. After a 30-day public comment period, the BLM released their decision on Monday of last week, stating that the entire Conejos Formation will be protected, as recommended by the Hydrogeologic study. He explained their conditions of approval for drilling, with details on the surface casing, were contained in Sections # 5 and # 7 of their record of decision. The BLM decision requires surface and ground water sampling by BLM and COGCC of San Francisco Creek of wells closest to operations. It sets forth the full operational period to occur between July 15 and November 30, with local permits obtained by the operator. Mike thanked Paul for BLM’s following most of the conditions recommended in the Hydrologic Report. Charlie asked Bob Kirkham “Will the induction log satisfactorily take the place of a resistance log?” Bob said yes. Rio asked what would happen if water quality impacts show up. The State is requiring the company to put up a bond of \$25,000 to address corrective measures if necessary.

Report from Colorado Division of Water Resources, Division 3 Engineer Craig Cotten – The Preliminary year-end reports for the Rio Grande and the Conejos River are attached. Last year the rivers’ flows were way below average on both of those systems, but Colorado met the Compact obligations and probably have a small credit. At the March 20 meeting in Santa Fe the state will get the numbers ratified and find out how much credit Colorado has. They have received the first NRCS stream snow level predictions for this year, ranging from a low of 66% on the San Antonio up to a 99% on Ute Creek, with most streams now at 80-90%. They are projecting lower than average flows again over the next few months, but if we get more moisture that could go up. The next day-long Rules and Regulations meeting will be January 23, starting at 10 AM at the Inn of the Rio Grande. CDWR is getting close, working on details, and it is hoped to get them signed by the State Engineer by springtime. Latest chart of the unconfined aquifer storage shows an aquifer jump of 80-85,000 AF in just the last few months of 2013. There has not been any similar jump in many years. The State Engineer is working on concerns about the listing of the cutthroat trout by Fish & Wildlife Service. Mike offered to send a letter but it appears that Trout Unlimited and others have provided the information needed. Mike asked Tracy Miller for an update on NRCS snow survey issues. The State Conservationist has decided they will keep the snow survey and SNOTEL programs going this year as in the past. Mike: A group of us in the State will be working with NRCS to determine future funding, but it will probably be a year-to-year budget, as Colorado’s Office of Management

and Budget is under the pressure of a lot of budget cuts. Tracy: This is really important because Colorado is a headwater state. "I will push as hard as I can." Mike is working with a group to work with Phyllis Philipps, State Conservationist regarding future funding for the program.

Mike G. reported that last Friday the City of Alamosa was informed by Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment about imposing stricter arsenic standards for drinking water than those put into effect in 2006. The new standard drops the standard from 50 parts per billion to 10 parts per billion. Alamosa was one of only a few cities to address the problem initially and has already spent over \$12 Million on an arsenic treatment plant. At a teleconference with CDPHE tomorrow they will ask why the drop and why now. This is likely to hit small municipal communities hardest, so they need to keep water quality issues on their radar. This water quality issue needs to be in our Basin Plan.

Update - Activities of the Rio Grande Watershed Emergency Action Coordination Team, RWEACT Coordinator Tom Spezze and Travis Smith -- RWEACT hibernated in December and put the Little Squaw project on hold. Tomorrow is the first meeting in Lake City for the core team as they move into long term strategic planning for the burn area. RWEACT is functioning in an advisory capacity on some issues like the cutthroat trout. Full meeting will be in February. The burn scar in the Upper Rio Grande will play a role in the Basin Plan.

Update on Sub-District # 1 Issues, Steve Vandiver – A new program manager, Cleve Simpson, has been hired to work on the remainder of the subdistricts, numbers 2, 3, and 4. They have also hired an assistant for Amber and they are working on the replacement plan for Subdistrict #1. Craig mentioned the modeling effort and attempts to finish up calibration on the north end of the valley.

Leroy Salazar explained the work of the Solutions Subcommittee, helping to coordinate Rules and Regulations requirements for the Alamosa-LaJara, Conejos, and Trinchera, all of which have similar impacts to the Rio Grande and the Conejos River. They are working to coordinate the activities of those three work groups.

Report from IBCC Representatives, Travis Smith and Steve Vandiver – Next meeting will be in the first week of February. The Roundtable Summit will be March 6th. IBCC is trying to build on the no/low regrets statements, pairing people from different perspectives to try to get agreement. Finding new water supplies is the biggest issue. Seems to be a matter of definition between the Front Range and the Western Slope

NEXT MEETING

February 11, 2014

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

Light refreshments will be served

RIO GRANDE COMPACT
Final 2013 Analysis
Closed Basin Project Split: 60/40

RIO GRANDE BASIN

Actual
 April - September Index
 Flows = 344,500

Index Supply

		January	7,700 *
		February	7,300 *
		March	11,800 *
		April	26,200 *
		May	120,400 *
		June	51,300 *
		July	21,000 *
		August	45,500 *
		September	80,100 *
		October	54,100 *
		November - December	34,500 *
J-M & O-D volume	115,400		
		Total	459,900

Obligation = 115,000

Deliveries

January	7,600 *
February	8,200 *
March	15,200 *
April	8,600 *
May	5,100 *
June	2,900 *
July	1,800 *
August	4,600 *
September	12,600 *
October	15,700 *
Nov - Dec native	33,600 *
Total	115,900

Adjustments	Net Carryover Credit in E.B.	-1,000 estimate
to the	Paper Credit	5,000
Delivery	SC Norton Drain Flow	-1,000 estimate

Delivery Credit 118,900

Expected Dec. 31, 2013 Compact Delivery Status 3,900

- * = Actual measured flows (Deliveries include Closed Basin Project share)
- All values in acre-feet
- 100% of the Closed Basin Project flows are creditable to the Rio Grande
 (Delivery of creditable CBP production to the Rio Grande is 7,998 acre-feet)

CONEJOS RIVER BASIN

- * = Actual measured flows (Deliveries include Closed Basin Project share)
- All values in acre-feet
- Assumes none of the Closed Basin Project flows are creditable to the Conejos