

Minutes of NPBRT Meeting: 3-25-14
USFS Conf. Room (3-5 PM) 100 Main Street, Walden, CO

Members/Liaisons Present

*Mike Allnutt
Deb Alpe
Mike Alpe
*Jimmer Baller
Paula Belcher
Jason Brey
*Kent Crowder
*Blaine Evans
*Tom Hackleman
*Rick Wyatt
*Carl Trick II
*Barbara Vasquez
*Doug Waldron
*Ty Wattenberg

Members/Liaisons Absent

*Scott Fischer
Debbi Heeney
*Mike Honholz
*Randy Miller
*John Rich
Ann Timberman
Hunter Townsend

Others Present

Craig Godbout (Program Manager, Water Supply Planning Section, CWCB)
Alan Jenkins (Silver Spur)
Greg Johnson (Wilson Water Group)
Erin Light (Div.6)
Caid Waldron

I. Agenda Review

The agenda was accepted as published.

II. Approval of Roundtable Minutes: 12/17/13 plus 1/21/14 & 2/25/14 Meetings

Minutes for all three meetings, with the correction requested by Ty Wattenberg in section VI of the 2/25/15 minutes, were approved unanimously by the RT.

III. Election of Chairperson, Vic Chairperson and Recorder - *This March 25, 2014 meeting will also serve as the annual meeting that has to be held prior to April 1 of each year for the election of officers*

Rick Wyatt made the motion, seconded by Jimmer Baller, to delay election of officers until the next meeting. The motion was carried.

IV. Summary of North Platte Basin Implementation Plan Technical Workshop Meeting for Consumptive Projects and Acreage Identification, February 20, 2014 - Greg Johnson, Wilson Water Group & Kent Crowder, Chair NPBRT

Greg and Kent traded off giving a summary of the technical meeting held Feb.20 for consumptive projects and acreage identification. The meeting ran for approximately 4 hours and focused on irrigated acreage. It was attended by Greg, Kent and a number the RT members who are also members of Jackson County Water Conservancy Board as well as other irrigators. By overlaying and comparing map layers of irrigated acreage from the historical 1940 map (previously digitized), the 2001 map and the 2005 map (which was created from aerial survey data), Kent specifically

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invited irrigators to attend who owned parcels that were showed as irrigated on the '01 map but not on the '05 map, homing in on these differences one sub-basin at a time. In some cases, the attendees reported acreage that was actually irrigated that didn't show up on the aerial survey data for 2005. In other cases, there were areas shown as irrigated that Cade Waldron and the irrigators could say definitively was not irrigated (headgate never turned on). These discrepancies as well as details of the current aerial survey methodologies will be discussed with Erin Light (Div.6), Chris Brown (who maps the data from the aerial surveys), Kara Sobieski and Greg Johnson (both of Wilson Water Group) at a follow-up meeting on April 7, 7PM at the River Rock restaurant in Walden. Kent also mentioned that the unofficial preliminary figure for irrigated acreage in Jackson County for the 2013 season was approximately 106,000 acres. Because of the focus on irrigated acreage at this meeting, there was little time devoted to potential projects or the topic of storage. Additional modeling work will be required to determine water availability for potential new or enlarged reservoirs...sites to be determined. Jimmer Baller commented that there is a small site on Owl Creek Ranch that might be considered. He also suggested an 'out of the box' idea...installing a long snow fence near the ridge line along the south end of the Medicine Bow Range from Diamond Peak to Clark Peak, to hold the snow in this county (much of it blows over into Larimer County) in the winter and benefit from the greater spring runoff. Implementation would require the agreement of the State Forest and Roosevelt National Forest. Blaine Evans commented that Dave Meyring had looked into the possibility of a reservoir that might have held approximately 10k AF and would have flooded some of John Rich's ranch. The impoundment would have been on the cutoff road where it crosses Slough Creek. Since both J Rich and Bob Swift are in discussions about possible conservation easements, the question of new storage should be decided before the opportunity is precluded.

Greg offered that drafts of Sections 2 & 3 of the NP BIP will be ready for the next RT meeting.

Carl asked whether Greg was familiar with the report that just came out from Colorado Cattleman's Association about 'common ground' with conservation organizations and whether there was a middle ground on storage between CCA and conservation NGOs? Kent explained that the report entitled "Finding Common Ground on Water" was published by the Partners for Western Conservation, affiliated with CCA, and was mailed out just a couple days ago to CC stakeholders. Kent agreed to scan the document so a copy could be distributed with the meeting minutes.

V. Summary of North Platte Basin Implementation Plan Technical Workshop Meeting for Non-consumptive Projects, March 24, 2014- Greg Johnson, Wilson Water Group & Barbara Vasquez, Environmental Rep. NPBRT

Presentation materials used by Greg and Barbara are distributed with these meeting minutes. Greg kicked off summarizing the technical meeting held yesterday afternoon to solicit non-consumptive project input for the NP. He reviewed the ground our Basin covered in 2009 and 2010. The Non-consumptive Needs Assessment Subcommittee enumerated the NC attributes. These were brought to the full RT for approval. The Subcommittee then employed a survey to gather RT opinions on relative importance. A summary of that survey led to a prioritized list of non-consumptive attributes for the Basin. This is the only Basin in which that has been done.

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Mapping was done with the support of CDM, the consultants made available to the RTs at that time by CWCB. Maps of the attribute locations, shown as stream segments or lakes/reservoirs, were created. Then a 'stacked map' was created where the number of attributes mapped to a particular stream segment and/or lake/reservoir were indicated. Finally, in 2010, the list of NC projects/studies was created and a map created to show the project locations as had been done for the attributes. TNC, subcontractor to CWCB to support NC work by the basins during the creation of the BIPs, debuted a Gap Analysis tool at the latest BIP Coordinator's meeting (Feb.10) so it's new to everyone. The approach takes the known attribute locations (from the 2009 map) and uses the NC project locations (2010) plus stewardship (land ownership & conservation easements) to produce a 'NC Gap' map. The map itself was generated by CDM. Greg reviewed the methodology to produce the map. On the gap map, NC attribute locations without NC protections or projects are shown as red (see page 6 of Greg's presentation). Many of the stream segments in our basin mapped red. Several of the RT members asked what good that would do the RT in making good decisions about NC projects going forward. Greg emphasized that this was a new tool in draft form being offered to the RT for potential use in developing their BIPs. It is not mandatory to use it. Ty asked what the gap analysis maps look like for other basins, like the Gunnison. Greg was able to show the NC gap analysis maps for several other basins, and it's clear that they're all different. It was noted that the S. Platte Basin NC gap map had very little red, in sharp contrast to what's known about needs to protect NC attributes in that basin.

Barbara showed the list of NP NC attributes again with their prioritization, highlighting which were recreation-focused:

- 1) Stream fishing
- 2) Lake fishing
- 3) Waterfowl hunting & wildlife viewing
- 7) Whitewater rafting & flatwater boating

and which were species- or habitat-focused:

- 4) Waterfowl/Shorebird Habitat
- 5) Amphibians of concern
- 6) Significant Wetland Plant Communities
- 8) River Otter
- 9) Bald Eagle and Osprey
- 10) CWCB Minimum Instream Flows, Minimum Lake Levels
- 11) Class 1 (Nondegradation) Waters
- 12) Lake Chub

When we went through the rating and ranking exercise in 2009, many RT members chose to use a lens of economic benefit to the County to prioritize the attributes. However, we all recognize that the health of the underlying wetland and riverine habitats is critical to support those types of recreation. Carl asked, since this list was hammered out so long ago, whether it was still valid. There ensued considerable discussion, ending in good agreement by RT members that this list and the ranking were still valid and appropriate. Barbara reviewed the potential NC projects that were proposed by Colorado Parks & Wildlife, US Forest Service, USFWS (Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge) and Ducks Unlimited. Kent had asked at the Technical meeting earlier today whether we could get a feel for readiness or timing of the proposed projects. Barbara has already

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sent out a query to the organizations that proposed projects to categorize them as 'conceptual', 'planned' or 'ready to go' (even if funding and/or design is not complete). Next steps include refining the NC project list from 2010...deleting projects that have been completed or abandoned, adding new proposed projects and continuing the outreach to other organizations and individuals for potential proposed projects/studies. In addition, with support from Greg Johnson and Wilson Water Group, CWCB consultants, project 'owners' & NPBRT members, Barbara plans to

- Map the proposed NC projects onto existing maps of NP NC attributes
- Model physically available and native flows in selected reaches of concern for NC attributes
- Attempt to optimize the existing gap analysis tools to specifics of the NP basin
- Include priority of NC attribute(s) benefitting from project into a weighted calculation
- Using the maps and gap analysis tool where appropriate, determine if there are major unmet protections that would suggest additional NC projects
- As the NC input develops, the NPBRT and solicit feedback

There is little time left to get this accomplished given the July deadline for the BIP. Greg underscored that the 'product' the Basin delivers in July is considered a draft and that there may be time through fall 2014 to revise it.

Carl asked whether the NC input would evolve past a wish list of projects. There was considerable discussion about the importance of making good strategic decisions for all projects (non-consumptive, consumptive and multi-purpose) that address the needs of the basin. Barbara commented that it's more straightforward for the consumptive needs in that they can be expressed numerically as acres irrigated, AF stored, AF used for municipal or industrial purposes. This is a straightforward and easily compared. In absence of quantified flows or amounts of water to be stored for habitat or recreation, the challenge is getting enough information integrated into a useful format to support good strategic decisions in our basin, and in the state. Barbara expressed the opinion that the gap analysis tool may be quite helpful if we can adapt it to local knowledge and the prioritized attributes in our Basin.

VI. Timing and Integration of BIPs, SWSI 2016 & Colorado Water Plan

Although not on the agenda, Kent asked Craig Godbout, Program Manager, Colorado Water Conservation Board Water Supply Planning Section, to give us a little overview of how the SWSI 2016 update, the BIP plans and the State Water Plan will come together.

Craig explained that the SWSI 2016 update will not be ready in time to inform the BIPs. The BIPs for all the basins in the state are working off of SWSI 2010 data. The BIPs will be delivered to CWCB staff by the basins in July, the draft Colorado Water Plan will be presented to the CWCB Directors at their September meeting. The Colorado Water plan will respect the priori appropriation doctrine and all interstate compacts. The Governor will receive the Draft Colorado Water Plan, as revised by the CWCB, in December, 2014. It will be published and open for public comment for one year, until December, 2015. CWCB is redoing the gap analysis and IPPs after the BIPs are completed. The BIPs and the State Water Plan information will then flow into the SWSI 2016 update. Carl asked how vague the Colorado Water Plan would be. Craig explained that the Plan would not include any specific projects and that it would be intentionally vague. Barbara asked whether other states have state-wide water plans. Craig said this was the first

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formal state water plan for Colorado. The SWSI was a start, but the Governor asked for a formal plan to be completed by the end of this year. Several other western states have water plans.

VII. CWCB/IBCC Update - Ty Wattenberg, John Rich and Mike Allnutt

CWCB: Ty Wattenberg made a couple comments about the Colorado Water Plan. The integration of the BIPs into the Colorado Water Plan should help drive projects. CWCB Directors discussed the need to advocate with the legislature to bump up the WSRA funding. In addition, they felt that completion of the Plan should create more political will to execute projects and may facilitate the coordination with the Federal nexus. At the March CWCB meeting Mike King reported on some proposed changes to oil and gas regulations that came out of the experiences of the flood. Well sites in flood plans will be required to have automatic shut-offs and reinforced (rock) berms. John Salazar reported that the tamarisk removal (insect mediated) was almost 100% complete on the Colorado and about 50% complete on the Arkansas. He also reported that CSU had demonstrated a fungus for control of thistle. It's not yet known whether it will work at high altitudes and survive long, cold winters like in North Park. CPW will be ready to publish their water inventory by next month. The State of CO received \$4.4M from the US Government for the 46 acres occupied by the Animas-LaPlata pumping plant near Durango. Lake Powell is at 40%. A Contingency plan is in negotiation by the 7 basin states. In first place to deliver water to Lake Powell is the Flaming Gorge; second place is the Navaho and Aspinall. What remains is to ensure that the state delivering the water gets 'credit' for it under the compact. Finally, he shared that a SWSI glossary had been provided to the CWCB Directors. He found very helpful and suggested we should all review it. (It is attached with these minutes.)

IBCC: There was no report on the IBCC because the meeting was running concurrently with our RT meeting.

VIII. Old Business

Deb Alpe handed out a draft of the "North Platte Basin Implementation Plan Fact Sheet" that communicates key messages about the Colorado Water Plan and the NPBRT BIP. In addition, it announces the public outreach meeting planned for this evening.

New Business - None

VIII. Date for the next meeting

Date for the next meeting: Tue, May 13, 7-9p.m. (note beginning of summer hours) to be held in the FS Conference Room at 100 Main Street, Walden.

IX. Meeting Adjourned