

IBCC Colorado River Basin

1. **August 25, 2014 – Shoshone Call discussion led by Xcel; Tamarisk Coalition presentation regarding work in Mesa and Delta Counties; Discussion of Basin Implementation Plan rewrite.**
1. **August 25, 2014 CBRT Minutes –**
2. **Next Meeting: October 27, 2014, Glenwood Springs Community Center, 12:00 – 4:00.**
3. **Reporter:** These minutes were prepared by Ken Ransford, Esq., CPA, 970-927-1200, kenransford@comcast.net.
4. **Upcoming Meetings:**
 - a. September 19, 2014 – Colorado River District annual meeting Grand Junction.
5. **CBRT Members Present:** Kim Albertson, Linda Bledsoe, Jacob Bornstein, Art Bowles, Caroline Bradford, Stan Cazier, Don Chaplin, Lurline Underbrink Curran, Carlyle Currier, Fred Eggleston, Xcel (new industrial rep), Mark Fuller, David Graf, Karl Hanlon, Kathy Chandler-Henry-Eagle County Commissioner, Mark Hermundstad, Diane Johnson, Mike McDill, Louis Meyer, Ken Neubecker, Chuck Ogilby, Ken Ransford, Rachel Richards, Mel Rettig, Steve Ryken, Karn Stiegelmeier-Summit BOCC, Mike Wageck, Lane Wyatt, Bob Zanella,
6. **Guests:** Paul Bruchez, John Currier, Colorado River District, Angie Fowler-SGM, Brent Gardner Smith, Andrew Gilmore-Bureau of Reclamation, Richard Hart, Shannon Hatch, Tamarisk Coalition, Annie Henderson, Upper Colorado Private Boaters Association, Hannah Holm-CMU, Eric Kuhn, CRD, Brendon Langerhoizen-SGM, Merritt Linke, Holly Loff-ERWC, Kate McIntire, Christina Medved, Roaring Fork Conservancy, Dave Merritt, Colorado River District Board, Peter Mueller-TNC, Max Schmidt, Tam Scott, John Sikora, URS Engineering, Bill Thompson, Chris Treese, CRD, Richard Vangytenbeek-Trout Unlimited, Dennis Webb, Janet Williams, Leonard Rice Engineering
7. **River Flow.**
 - a. The Colorado River near Cameo is running 3,200 cfs, higher than the average on that date of 2,430.
 - b. 1,810 cfs at Shoshone, 300 cfs higher than average for August 25. Both of the Shoshone and Cameo calls are on; in addition extra 10,825 water is being released from Granby Reservoir for endangered fish.

8. Shoshone call presentation. A team of Xcel representatives discussed the Colorado Basin Roundtable's recommendation to make the Shoshone Call permanent on the West Slope. The team included CBRT member Fred Eggleston, Xcel's lead representative on the West Slope based in the Grand Junction office, Richard Bell, Jerome Davis, Regional VP of Xcel Energy (Colorado is still operated by the Public Service Company of Colorado), and Mark Stutz, Xcel corporate communications.
 - a. Xcel has 4 operating companies – Public Service Company of Colorado has 1.4 million electricity customers and 1.3 million natural gas customers, 3,800 employees, \$4.2 billion revenue; it serves 60% of Colorado. Xcel is in 8 states in the upper Midwest, and the Southwest states of Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas.
 - b. Xcel and Colorado will achieve 30% portfolio standard by 2020, the highest in the United States except for California at 33%.
 - c. CO2 emissions have been reduced in Colorado by 22% compared to 2005 levels. Xcel projects a 35% reduction by 2020. Xcel is the nation's #1 wind energy producer. CO and MN have both been selected as top renewable energy states in the US, and Xcel is the leading electricity provider in each state.
 - d. Xcel announced purchases of 450 MW of wind and 170 MW of solar in 2013. Xcel is retiring 600 MW of coal fired electricity generation; this saves 15% of water consumption. The Comanche Station in Pueblo has a hybrid cooling system that saves 50% of the water previously consumed by the plant.
 - e. The projected source of electricity generation for 2020: wind and solar 29%, coal 48%, and natural gas 23%; coal was 56% in 2013.
 - f. Xcel rates are 11% below the national average, and reliability is over 99%.
 - g. The Cherokee coal burning plant in Denver just south of Mile High Stadium on Interstate 25 uses 5,200 af of recycled municipal water from City of Denver.
 - h. Shoshone history – construction began in 1905, and the plant began producing electricity in 1909. Since 2007, Xcel has invested \$21 million in the plant to rehabilitate the penstocks, for spillway replacement, and to repair the Shoshone dam works. The Shoshone power plant and water right is not for sale. Shoshone is one of the oldest hydroelectric plants in the Western US; water release from the dam on I-70 in the midst of Glenwood Canyon runs through a 12,453' tunnel and has 165 feet of drop, capable of producing 15 MW of electricity. Although that is not a lot of electricity, it helps with grid stability and reliability.

- i. Shoshone is the most senior water right on the Upper Colorado River. The 2007 agreement between Denver and Xcel provides that if Denver storage on July 1 is projected to be 80% full and the Dotsero gage is projected to be less than 85% of average, then the Shoshone call is relaxed to 1 turbine (releases are cut by 704 cfs). The agreement takes place between March 14 and May 20, and it is expected to occur about 2 out of every 10 years. If flows are rising, the Shoshone call is totally taken off the river.
- j. The Colorado River Cooperative Agreement (CRCA) was negotiated with 42 different stakeholders. The Shoshone Outage Protocol keeps water in river even when the plant is partially or completely shut down for maintenance and repairs.
- k. John Currier – remote operation from Cabin Creek. There’s a perception on the West Slope that it takes longer to get the Shoshone plant on line once it’s been shut down and operations were shifted to Cabin Creek. Shoshone is still trying to recover from the 2007 problem. Additional issues relating to the plant’s 100-year age have continued to crop up. Now a trash rake has been installed to eliminate debris accumulating at the dam from interfering with power generation. The Cabin Creek operators are trying to
- l. Karn Stieglemeier asked how much energy in PSC’s portfolio was produced from hydroelectric power. Davis answered that it is under 2%. He said hydroelectric power isn’t counted toward the 23% renewable percentage.
- m. Don Chaplin – If there’s a Compact Call, will this have an impact on the Shoshone call? No. PSC doesn’t use WAPA power; Tri-State and Colorado Springs use a little bit of Glen Canyon power by virtue of participating in the WAPA power distribution system.
- n. Rachel Richards expressed concern that Denver will make an offer to purchase the Shoshone power right that Xcel cannot refuse. She asked if Xcel would grant the West Slope a right of first refusal (RFR) to purchase the water right in case it ever comes up for sale. Davis replied that Xcel has been removing RFRs from its agreements, including the 2007 Shoshone agreement. Denver no longer has a RFR to purchase the Shoshone water right.
- o. Fred Eggleston said that Xcel is a West Slope company because of its assets – two coal-burning electrical generating plants in Hayden and Craig as well as the Shoshone hydroelectric plant all demonstrate that Xcel is a West Slope company. Shoshone is a valuable asset and Xcel is a Western Slope company. Xcel has an annual picnic in Grand Junction and 400 current and retired employees living on the West Slope attend.

- p. Colorado River Cooperative Agreement (CRCA) – Colorado River District attorney Peter Fleming said that as long as the 2007 call reduction agreement stays in effect, Denver has foregone any right to purchase the Shoshone water right without West Slope agreement. The CRCA has been fully implemented, although some Moffat mitigation measures haven't been done and won't be until the Moffat Firming project is approved.
- q. Chuck Ogilby – “Denver Water has agreed to pay 1/3 of the cost up to \$160,000 to begin the process of preserving Shoshone flows on a permanent basis. Everyone on the West Slope wants this water right to stay whole – how can we be assured this will be the case?” Jerome Davis said, “Xcel sees no change in its historic operations. Xcel listens to all stakeholders and ensures they are heard.” Davis is unwilling to commit to sell the Shoshone power right because it must obtain maximum value for its assets, and the best way to do that is to let Denver Water and the West Slope get into a bidding war to bid up the price of the Shoshone water right, without interference from any a priori agreements.
- r. Caroline Bradford – we need more assurance than this – will this water right exist in 20 years? Jerome said, “I hear you. I can only talk about right now. If you prescribe what will be in long term agreements, that creates problems. I can say we'll operate this plant as we have the past 100 years (except for the agreement entered into with Denver Water in 2007 – ed.).
- s. David Graf – The past isn't necessarily a guide for future hydrology. Would Xcel be willing to grant an easement to assure that the water will remain in the river? Jerome was unwilling to answer this question. Peter Fleming said the Colorado River District has initiated a process to discuss the best ways to preserve the Shoshone flows, as called for in the CRCA. The Colorado River District's interest is to preserve the flows; it has no interest in purchasing the power generated by the Shoshone power plant. Purchasing the plant is not a good option for the Colorado River District since it does not operate power plants.
- t. Steve Child – Is there anything we could do to promote a project that Xcel would like to do on the West Slope. Jerome said that Xcel was always looking for support for projects. Xcel is looking at decommissioning the Cameo coal burning electricity-generating plant as a pilot project.
- u. David Graf – Is Shoshone only a base load facility? Yes, and it does not generate peak power.
- v. Max Schmidt – Operations in Shoshone affect the Grand Valley. Max took over the Grand Valley Project power plant at Palisade.

- w. Louis Meyer – The BIP is suggesting many smaller, off-channel, reservoirs high in the headwater communities. Does Xcel want to participate in these as pumped storage facilities? Xcel gets a lot of requests for “new to market” projects, and Xcel is open to looking at them. They do this at some locations now. Permitting this is difficult.
 - x. Ken Ransford - Is wind as cheap to purchase as coal fired electricity? Yes, but only because wind involves tax credits that make it cheaper to purchase. Xcel likes all generation sources. Right now, wind tax credits make electricity from wind competitive.
 - y. Lurline – The water right is what is important to us. To remove this right from the West Slope will upset the balance in the state more than you could ever imagine.
 - z. Max Schmidt - In April 2013, you could walk across the river in the 15-mile reach when the call was relaxed and one turbine was shut down. When the 2 triggers on drought occur (80% of storage capacity and 85% if Dotsero flow), the river is under the most pressure already. The Colorado Basin Roundtable should have been a party to the 2007 Shoshone Agreement; Dave Merritt said the Colorado River District was involved in discussions after the 2002-03 drought that led to the 2007 agreement, so the West Slope was aware of the 2007 agreement. Jerome Davis said Xcel had 100% agreement by the participants when the 2007 agreement was reached.
9. Grand county RICD update – Grand County has received its water right, the BLM has granted a permit, the CWCB, Eagle County, DOLA, and American Whitewater have granted funds and almost all of the \$500,000 funding gap has been collected; it is awaiting a 404 dredging permit from the Army Corps of Engineers and plans to begin construction in September. The water park will be just above Launch 2 at Pumphouse, which is located about half-way along the Trough Road between State Bridge and Kremmling. The Colorado Basin Roundtable was instrumental in getting the CWCB to support Grand County’s RICD application. The RICD has a priority date that will be senior to any further To help fund this, go to the Grand County Website and make a donation.
 10. WSRA Basin Grant Request for ditch improvements in the Colorado River between Hot Sulfur Springs and Kremmling. ILBK – Irrigation Land and ____ of Kremmling. The CBRT WSRA grants evaluation committee came up with a .55 average score, which is a high score. Bill Thompson and Paul Bruchez attended the meeting. Emergency action was taken at an irrigation diversion; Paul showed a picture of the river where an “accidental ripple” remains today after the work. Stoneflies were present here, as well as lots of other species. It demonstrates that the river environment will improve with this project.

- a. Kim Albertson made a motion to approve the grant request; Ken Ransford seconded it. The motion passed unanimously. The Applicant's goal is to begin work this fall. The stream and bank stabilization work is scheduled for 2015, but they are looking for additional funding. Caroline Bradford encouraged them to get the State controller's signature before incurring any expenditures.
 - b. The WSRA Basin Reserve Account balance is \$547, 405, after paying \$100,000 to SGM to continue working on the Basin Implementation Plan.
11. Tamarisk Coalition update on grant received for the Desert Rivers Collaborative Project. Shannon Hatch, Restoration Coordinator, made the presentation. In January 2013 the Tamarisk Coalition received a \$250,000 WSRA grant, of which \$42,726 came from the CBRT. Bank stabilization and tamarisk removal was purpose of the grant.
- a. Mission – Maintain tamarisk-free rivers on Lower Gunnison and Colorado River in Mesa and Delta Counties. Restore riparian habitat. 19 parties signed an MOU including Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), Delta and Mesa Counties, and the City of Grand Junction. The Tamarisk Coalition has held plant identification and re-vegetation trainings, and done geomorphic monitoring along the Colorado River. They also have determined where the river has eroded after tamarisk has been removed. They've also been developing plant materials to replace tamarisk.
 - b. Lessons learned – Importance of new partnerships, and learning community goals for areas where tamarisk is to be removed.
 - c. \$33,237 has been spent; they've supplemented this with additional funding from GOCO, the Colorado River District, the Bacon Family Foundation, and the Gates Foundation (from the Gates Rubber Company in Denver).
 - d. Tamarisk is being removed at Riverbend Park in Grand Junction; 1,000 feet of the riverbank is being repaired. The existing riprap bank has been planted with locally harvested willow and native seed.
 - e. Another project is at the 5th street Bridge/Jarvis Complex downstream of the confluence with Colorado and Gunnison River. Removed 8.1 acres of Russian Olive and Tamarisk, secondary weed work, and re-vegetation planning. The grant award for this project was \$51,000. They planted 1.300 perennial species plus seeding to create a pollinator garden.
 - f. Connected Lakes site – CPW spent \$61,300 to treat 23 acres of tamarisk and Russian Olive trees; partnered with Colorado Mesa University to complete secondary weed mapping and eventual removal.

- g. Redlands Parkway - \$51,932 was awarded to remove 9.4 acres of tamarisk and Russian Olive; also secondary weed removal, and replacement with willows and other native plants.
 - h. In all, \$260,000 has been raised. There are 1,300 acres remaining to do in Mesa County. Also need to retreat projects done over past 2 decades. They've treated about 750 acres over 20 years.
 - i. The beetles are effective at stopping re-sprouts, and limiting additional seed propagation. They help but they don't remove the plants – that has to be done manually.
 - j. Water savings occur when tamarisk is removed from upland benches, but not along river bottoms since willows move in and consume the same amount of water that the tamarisk trees previously consumed.
 - k. What caused the tamarisk trees to take over – change in flow regime, land use disturbance like gravel mining creates a window for the invasive species to get started. There is no biological control for Russian Olives, in part because a lot of people like them.
 - l. The Tamarisk Coalition's next meeting is Oct 21, 9-11 AM, and its next conference Feb 10-12, 2015, Albuquerque NM.
12. Basin Implementation Plan. The July 14 version is the most current draft. Comments are still needed. The Executive Committee has agreed to re-format to 8.5 x 11 format; the 11 x 17 version is too difficult to read online.
- a. Karp Neu and Hanlon will bid on the re-write.
 - b. Tiers – come up with 3 levels for consumptive and non-consumptive projects, similar to what the Gunnison Roundtable has done. Tier 1 projects are expected to be completed by 2020, Tier 2 by 2025, and Tier 3 by 2030. What the CWCB envisions is similar to the prioritized projects list that the Colorado Department of Transportation prepares each year. The CWCB envisions a similar product. SGM will provide a bid on what this will cost.
 - c. The deadline for the final plan is April 30, 2015.
 - d. The Nature Conservancy wants to keep working on non-consumptive processes. This is the logical next step.
 - e. Steve Child – was specific land identified as being the subject of the agricultural gap? Dave Kanzer is working on this.

- f. Lurline – Let's use terms that the public understands.
 - g. Modeling – What will the river look like if these projects are done?
 - h. Outreach – CBRT members will do instead of SGM.
 - i. Social media website – please friend the Facebook page and visit the webpage. SGM will provide a price on continuing this.
13. Recap of meeting before the Water Resources Interim Committee on August 21, 2014 in Glenwood Springs – Rachel Richard. The turnout was very good with many Roundtable members and members of the public present. Ninety people attended. The message that there isn't any water available for delivery to the Front Range was widely made and shared.
14. Kim Albertson – Feels that the statistic that agriculture consumes 85% of water consumed in Colorado is too high. Kim thinks this presents the wrong picture.
- a. Kim said the Bureau of Reclamation produces a water consumption report; it says that agriculture consumes 68% of water; adding phreatophyte consumption to this brings the number up to 85%.
 - b. For example, the water leaving the state is more than 5% of total water consumed in Colorado.
 - c. What is being said is that 85% of the water consumed in the state is consumed in agriculture. Jim Pokrandt recommended that we bring a professor over from CSU Fort Collins to discuss this issue. Louis Meyer also said he could address the subject of how much water is consumed in agriculture.