

Interbasin Compact Committee Basin Roundtable
Rio Grande Interbasin Roundtable
MINUTES
February 10, 2015

Attending - Those who signed in are as follows: *JB Alexander, Suzanne Beauchaine, Ed Nielson, Junita Martinez, Nicole Langley, Mary D. Brown, Lindsey George, Stan Moyer, Tom Spezze, Jason Willis, Karla Shriver, David Marquez, Jay Day, Lisa Wade, Ralph Curtis, Dale Wiescamp, Gilbert Garcia, Nathan Coombs, Judy Lopez, Travis Smith, Steve Vandiver, Cary Aloia, Christi Bode, Ron Brink, Ruben Sandoval, Eugene Jacquez, Kevin Terry, Rio de la Vista, Dale Pizel, Wayne Schwab, Bea Ferrigno, Adam Moore, Sam Scavo, Ruth Heide, Gene Farish, Mac McFadden, Anne Steinhoge, Tom Acre, Greg Higel, Joseph Old Elk, Charlotte Bobick, Keith R Holland, Rick Basagoitia, Don Thompson, Craig Cotten, Heather Dutton, Paul Tigan, Charles Spielman, Emma Regier, Mike Gibson.*

Welcome and Introduction: Chairman Mike Gibson called the meeting to order at 2:02 pm at the offices of the San Luis Valley Water Conservancy District, Alamosa, CO. A quorum was established, those in attendance were introduced and all were welcomed.

Approval of Minutes of January 13, 2015: Charlie Spielman requested the January minutes be amended to include his comment that the Roundtable should not include a representative from Mineral County. With this correction noted, Ed Nelson moved that the amended minutes be approved, Ron Brink seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Administrative Issues: At next month's meeting the Roundtable will be approving a new Chair, Vice-chair, Secretary, approving the revised bylaws, and reviewing the Roundtable membership. Attendance is important for this meeting as these issues will be discussed and input from members is needed.

Rio Grande Basin Water Plan: Tom Spezze with DiNatale presented an update on the progress of the Rio Grande Basin Implementation Plan: Delivery of the final Plan to CWCB will be on April 15. An Executive Summary of the Plan is currently being created. All comments on the Plan are due to DiNatalie water by the end of February. Public Outreach on the Plan will begin again in April. Meetings will be scheduled around the Valley to spread the word. Thanks to all the hard work and volunteered hours that have gone into the Plan.

Consideration of Proposal from Southwest Roundtable for "Alternative Water Sources to Meet the Front Range Urban Water Demand" in Water Plan: Mike Gibson presented a proposal from the Southwest Roundtable suggesting the use of alternative water sources to meet the Front Range Urban water demand, including water from the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. It has been suggested that this document be referenced and included in our Basin's

Water Plan and the State's Water Plan. Mike asked the Roundtable if this proposal has merit and should be included in the R.G. Plan.

Proposal was discussed: Travis Smith stated that the proposal should not be included last minute as it undermines the work we have been doing the past year and a half. Nathan Coombs suggested that the Roundtable shouldn't discard the idea, but there should be more discussion on the topic. Judy Lopez said that the Roundtable needs to be careful with this proposal. By not including this in the Plan doesn't mean that down the road other alternatives can't be explored. Mike urged the RT to keep an open mind about these issues and reminded the RT that we are in changing times, the population is growing and we have to think about the future. Travis said that this proposal would undermine the Conceptual Agreement that spells out what would be an appropriate transmountain diversion and this proposal has come up last minute and shouldn't be included in the Plan. Steve Vandiver said that we do need to be forward thinking, but this is too last minute to be included in the Plan. Karla Shriver added that this could cause a lot of political upset.

Rio de la Vista moved not to include this proposal in the Rio Grande Basin Implementation Plan. Ron Brink seconded the motion and the motion carried.

“Rio Grande Compact Decisions Support Tool: Using NWS Flow Forecasts for Compact Administration” - Jay Day and Lisa Wade, Riverside

Technology: Lisa Wade and Jay with Riverside Tech in Fort Collins presented on their Rio Grande Decision Support Tool that uses the National Weather Service (NWS) Flow Forecasts to improve Compact Administration. After providing a brief history of the project, Jay and Lisa explained how the Decision Support System Compact Compliance Tool uses NWS forecast products and leverages existing information to enhance Compact decision support. The benefit of this updated tool is that it uses additional sources of forecast information, provides real-time natural flow calculations, uses weekly forecasts that update year around, evaluates a range of forecast values, and gets updated as the NWS updates their forecasting. Future improvements to the tool will make it more valuable to DWR for Compact administration. Craig Cotten added that DWR will continue to use the NRCS forecasting, however this gives them an additional tool to better administer the Compact. Steve commented that it is important to keep the curtailment as consistent as possible and these tools help, but there will always be variability that will be difficult to predict. Mike summarized that these tools are important and will continue to be included in the Roundtable Discussion.

Project Overview — WSRA Funding: “Kerber Creek Restoration Project — Middle Parcel” — Jason Willis, Trout Unlimited, Mine Restoration Project Manager

Jason presented a Pre-Funding Proposal on the Kerber Creek Restoration Project - Middle Parcel. Kerber Creek exceeds Cd and Cu water quality standards because of mine tailings. Funds will be used for phytostabilization to reduce soil toxicity and metal mobility. Phytostabilization includes the adding of soil amendments (lime, limestone,

organic compost) and the planting of native, metal tolerant plants with the goal of establishing “a self-sustaining system that does not rely on artificial inputs and provides nearly equal ecological value similar to undisturbed adjacent landscape”. This project will coincide with 5,900 feet of NRCS in-stream improvement work funded through EQIP. Prior projects using these methods have been very successful. Work completed on the adjacent site in 2008 has greatly improved stream condition, water quality, and riparian vegetation. Current contributors to the project include BLM, TU, and the landowner. Trout Unlimited is requesting \$30,000 of WSRA Basin Funds which will cover 40% of the phytostabilization budget. Judy Lopez noted that this project has already been very successful and the Middle Parcel work is very important.

Report from Rio Grande Watershed Emergency Action Coordination Team

(RWEACT): Executive Director Tom Spezze was present to give the following update for RWEACT: This summer will be the third summer that RWEACT is implementing public safety work. This will include Oklahoma University’s Doppler radar, and continued collection of streamflow and water quality data. In addition, RWEACT will shift its focus from emergency management work to long term watershed and forest health work. RWEACT will be forming a 501c3 to partner with the Forest Service to implement watershed protection projects, including biomass utilization. RWEACT is moving into a new phase of implementing these projects.

Snow Pack and Water Content - Colorado Division of Water Resources: Craig Cotten was present from the DWR to give an update. In 2014, the Rio Grande Compact will have over delivered 7,000 AF to New Mexico. A final number will be discussed and agreed upon at a meeting in New Mexico. The Rio Grande Compact meeting will be held on March 24 in Austin, TX. Streamflow forecasts for 2015 show Conejos at 60% and Rio Grande at 70% of average. The new Well Rules and Regulations will be available soon. Craig noted that there are still a few vacant positions in the DWR office that need to be filled. Costilla County Rep, Junita Martinez asked that DWR take into consideration the importance of the acequias culture and history when hiring the Water Commissioner for Costilla County.

Update on the Sub-Districts - Rio Grande Water Conservation District: (see notes)

Steve Vandiver gave an update on the Sub-Districts: Subdistrict No. 1 had 13,463 AF in storage in both Rio Grande and Santa Maria Reservoir at end of 2014. Subdistrict No. 1 is actively pursuing forbearance agreements for the 2015 irrigation season. Approximately 1,330 AF of replacement water was saved during the 2014 irrigation season from forbearance exercised by the Subdistrict from the 6 ditches that participated. Land and water rights purchased by the Subdistrict in past years diverted approximately 1,000 AF toward recharge to the aquifer. Subdistrict No. 1 has 32 CREP contracts in place that include 3,819 acres and 71 wells that incurred approximately 6,000 AF of past groundwater pumping. Subdistrict staff has been working on the 2014 Subdistrict No. 1 Annual Report that is due to the State Engineer by March 1st. Subdistrict No. 1 2015 Annual Replacement Plan is due April 1. The Board has met over the winter to come up with plans to restore aquifer levels, including possible variable fees. Pumping was reduced in Subdistrict No. 1 by 30%, but hasn’t been

enough to keep up with the drought conditions in restoring the aquifer level. Subdistrict #2 is moving along with about 40% of wells having completed their petition process. Other subdistricts are moving along in the formation and petition process. Three bills, SB055, SB084, and HB-1156, are being watched by the District.

Report from IBCC Representatives: Travis Smith shared that he attended a meeting at Colorado Water Congress discussing the transmountain diversion conceptual agreement between the Front Range and the West Slope. Travis also announced that the Statewide Roundtable Summit will be on March 12 and encouraged people from the Rio Grande to attend and represent the basin. Mike mentioned that there are funds available for travel and hotel expenses to help those that are interested in attending this event. Steve encouraged those who plan to attend to read and understand the conceptual agreement between the Front Range and West Slope in order to contribute to the discussion.

Rio Grande Leaders Course: Emma Regier with the Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project announced that they will be partnering with the Rio Grande Water Conservation District, San Luis Valley Water Conservancy District, and the Rio Grande Watershed Conservation and Education Initiative to once again offer a Rio Grande Leaders Course for 20 community members. The course will take place in the evenings on April 6th-10th at the SLVWCD office. Applications are due March 13 and are available online at www.riograndeheadwaters.org and at the SLVWCD office.

Adjourn

Next Meeting: March 10, 2015
Conference Room, San Luis Valley Water Conservancy District
623 Fourth Street, Alamosa, CO