

Minutes of NPBRT Meeting: 5-26-15
USFS Conf. Room (7-9 PM) 100 Main Street, Walden, CO

Members/Liaisons Present

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

Members/Liaisons Absent

Paula Belcher
Pete Conovitz
Russ Gross
Debbi Heeney
*Mike Honholz
*Randy Miller
*Doug Waldron

Others Present

Craig Godbout
Dan Henrichs
John Treacy (W.W.Wheeler & Assoc.)
Caid Waldron

I. Agenda Review

The agenda was accepted as published.

II. Approval of Roundtable Minutes: 4/28/15

The minutes from the 4/28/15 NPBRT meeting were approved unanimously without correction.

III. Submittal of Revised WSRA Grant Application for The Jackson County

Basin-wide Augmentation Plan –Kent Crowder, Board President, Jackson County
Water Conservancy District

Kent delivered 15 paper copies of a revised WSRA grant application from the JCWCD to cover engineering and administration costs for development of an augmentation plan for the Jackson County portion of the North Platte Basin. Since the JCWCD met immediately prior to the NPBRT meeting this evening to approve this revised application, the electronic version had not been distributed prior to our meeting. It will be included with these meeting minutes.

Kent explained that the requested funding has been dropped from \$250,000 to \$161,000 because some legal fees, which had been included in the original application distributed electronically last month, are not eligible for funding from CWCB. The total includes \$15,000 for administrative costs for JCWCD. Kent indicated that this grant application was the product of internal discussions within the JCWCD as well as consultation with Wilson Water Group and the attorney for the JCWCD. Barbara asked how the legal fees, which presumably would be necessary to finalize an augmentation plan, were to be funded. There was no clear answer but presumably they would be paid by the JCWCD. Reviewing the deliverables, it was explained that by the end of Task 4 (Present Augmentation Plan Recommendations, to be achieved by the selected engineering contractor by July 2016), the JCWCD will decide whether to proceed further. At that point, assuming the project stays in budget (\$82,000 plus 10% administrative costs), a little more than half the grant will have been expended. Barbara asked and was assured that the grant

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application specifies that any allocated funds that were not spent would be returned to the Basin account. It was pointed out that the map included as Exhibit B shows the entire North Platte Basin, which may lead to some confusion, since the Augmentation Plan will only cover the Jackson County portion of the Basin. Comments were made about the need for augmentation, especially for industrial uses (pellet mill & oil development). The study would determine how much of the basin could be covered based on existing supplies and the willingness of storage right owners to sell some of their water to the JCWCD to make available for augmentation. Kent mentioned that the Yampa White spent approximately \$400,000 on their augmentation plan.

IV. Update on the McFarlane Reservoir Project – Blaine Evans, Mike Dixon (USFWS) and John Treacy (engineer for USFWS)

Blaine gave an informal update on the McFarlane Reservoir Project. This project to improve the dam, which was built is being driven by state safety concerns. Matt Reddy, DU could not make the meeting tonight but will present the WSRA grant application for the non-federal costs of the project at our June meeting. Blaine had some rough figures, which he handed out to the attendees, to explain the cost breakdown. Because they were preliminary, they aren't being distributed with these minutes. The total project cost is estimated at \$1.4M. The water rights in the reservoir are owned 50% by USFWS and 50% by Blaine Evans. So approximately half of the total cost of the project will be contributed by the USFWS and they will be shown as a partner in the WSRA grant application. Craig clarified that anything spent by the USFWS within 9 months of the contract signing can be considered as partner contributions. The BLM will contribute 15% of the total through the USFWS based on an interagency agreement, because approximately 30% of the USFWS water is managed to benefit wetlands on BLM land. The cost figures for the total project are still being refined.

The design of the project by W.W.Wheeler for the USFWS is only approximately 30% completed and they have a target of 90% completion by July 10. John Treacy and others made a site visit on May 7. He said the original dam construction in the 70's and 80's was not correct. For this project, they plans to use local suppliers and contractors where they can. He pointed out several components of the project that might be less expensive than the current estimates under discussion this evening. The access road needs to be improved to support heavy equipment traffic. This portion of the construction will be done by a team being brought in by USFWS which will also add road base and level the dam top while they are on site. The construction administration by W.W. Wheeler & Assoc. is covered in the 'contingency' line item of the informal budget that was passed out tonight by Blaine.

The WSRA grant application will be presented to the NPBRT at the latest at the June meeting. The application will request both State and Basin funding. If the application is ready by June 2 for electronic distribution, then the RT might vote on the application in June, but July is still soon enough to meeting the deadline of Aug 1 to get the application and a letter from NPBRT to CWCB for timely consideration of State and Basin funding. Kent handed Blaine a copy of the application process and deadlines.

There was considerable discussion about some of the construction details, in particular the outlet works and the plan to use a grouted HDP liner to minimize the costs. There appears to be an open question between USFWS and Blaine Evans on how the costs will be allocated for the spillway, which will be resolved before the grant application is submitted.

Carl Trick and Ty Wattenberg suggested that Blaine consider a combination of a CWCB loan application (estimated interest rate 2%) with the WSRA grant application. Craig explained that the minimum ratio of loan to grant for preferential consideration by CWCB is 1:1, and the higher the ratio, the more favorably it will be received. Blaine will discuss this further and seriously consider creating such a combination package.

Craig G. asked about the schedule. John replied that since they can't start work until Aug 1 to prevent disturbance of nesting ducks, they plan to complete improvements on the access road

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this summer and start the main dam construction and improvement Aug 1 2016. Barbara asked where any residual funds would be allocated if the project came in under the contractual budget. Craig explained that any allocated funds that were unspent remain in the State account.

V. Public Education, Participation and Outreach Update – Deb Alpe, Education Liaison
Deb reported that she spent \$800 of the 2015 budget to purchase 100 of the latest (version 4) of CFWE “Colorado Water Law” booklets. They cost \$8 each rather than the \$4 estimate. Deb confirmed that Allen Berryman of the Northern District is coming to speak at the July 8 “Hay Day” at the Grizzly Ranch and will update attendees on the Platte Recovery Plan.

As discussed last month, Wendy Ryan, the cornerstone of the climatology project here in North Park, moved on to Wilson Water Group. Deb had hoped to work with Wendy on the project, but the WWG charge for her time is far above the budget created when she worked for CSU. Erin Light is supposed to be pursuing discussions with Nolan Doesken to determine how we can fill that gap. There will be a delay to 2016 to get the lysimeters installed. When lysimeters were mentioned, Dan Henrich (new water commissioner) shared his (negative) experiences with lysimeters in the Arkansas Basin. He felt the data, at least for the installation they had there, was useless because of the way it was (or wasn’t) watered. The lysimeters to be installed in North Park are a more modern design. The question was asked whether the European manufacturer of these lysimeters will send a rep to help with the installation. Deb will followup on that question.

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

CWCB: Ty gave a brief update on the meeting held last week in Sterling. High ground water levels in Gilchrist are being addressed by a pumping station. Apparently there was some initial confusion that caused the pump to be shut down shortly after being turned on, but is back on now. It is expected that the pumping should reduce the water table by approximately 2 feet in the next 6 months. The State Water Plan has garnered approximately 24k comments so far. Ty requested feedback from the NPBRT on how they anticipated moving forward with the NP BIP. Will the focus be on projects? Will more studies be needed?

Ty asked we ‘hold the date’ for 9/14. The Interim Water Committee of the legislature will be in Walden at the Wattenberg Center for a meeting around noon.

IBCC:

John gave a summary of the latest IBCC meeting. The task groups are to have a preliminary readout by July and a final by September.

VII. Old Business/New Business

Old: Barbara asked about projects that we’ve funded which have not yet given a final report to the NPBRT. Kent said he was still trying to get a date for presentation from Kelly Elder on the beetle-kill project. We still need a final report on the Irrigated Hay Meadows project (Matt Reddy, DU) as well.

New: Mike Dixon wanted to make sure the RT was aware of leadership changes, with both Jason Brey (FS) and Ann Timberman (USFWS, Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge) moving on to new positions.

VII. Date for the next meeting

The next meeting was set for Tue, June 23, to be held from 7-9p.m in the FS Conference Room at 100 Main Street, Walden.

VIII. Meeting Adjourned