

**Interbasin Compact Committee Basin Roundtable**  
**Rio Grande Interbasin Roundtable**  
**MINUTES**  
**October 13, 2015**

**Attending - Those who signed in are as follows:** *Charlotte Bobicki, Jim Ehrlich, Craig Godbout, Ruth Heide, Juanita Martinez, Steve Vandiver, Kevin Terry, Mac McFadden, Heather Dutton, James Henderson, Cary Aloia, Nathan Coombs, Marvin Reynolds, Michelle Lanzoni, Craig Cotten, Peter Nichols, Mary Engquist, Sharon Vaughn, Gene Farish, Andréa Bachman, Emma Regier, Rio de la Vista, Dale Wiescamp, Ed Nielson, Dwight Martin, Larry Sveum, Pete Striffler, Dale Pizel, Eugene Jacquez, Don Thompson, Blake Osborn, Jonathan Dubinsky, Sheldon Rockey, Brenda Felmlee, Cindy Medina, Karla Shriver, Mike Armenta, Charles Spielman, Jenny Nehring, Ron Brink, Nicole Langley, Bea Ferrigno, Travis Smith, Wayne Schwab, Peter Nichols*

**Welcome and Introduction:** Chairman Mike Gibson called the meeting to order at 2:04 pm at the offices of the San Luis Valley Water Conservancy District, in Alamosa, CO. A quorum was established, those in attendance were introduced, and all were welcomed.

**Approval of Minutes of September 8, 2015:** Edits to the minutes were made as follows: Jim Ehrlich asked to have his name added to the attendance list as he was at the present, but didn't sign in. An error was noted on page 4, paragraph 2 and corrected to read "Organize a strategy to reduce negative impacts to watershed health without compromising community values and social needs." Ed Nielson moved that the amended minutes be approved, Judy Lopez seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

**Public Comment:** There were no public comments.

**Update on the Sub-Districts - Rio Grande Water Conservation District:**

Steve Vandiver provided the following updates on the RGWCD and the Sub-Districts: The new RGWCD building is under construction. The interior framing is complete and the project is ahead of schedule. The plan is to move into the new building on February 29, 2016.

The operation of Sub-District No. 1 went well this year. For most of the year, many of the ditches were in forbearance so the District didn't have to release much water from storage. The petition for Sub-District No. 2 is complete and there will be a hearing in the near future. Other Sub-Districts are making progress. They have draft petitions and by the end of the year, the petition process will begin for several of these Sub-Districts. Rob Philips has been working hard with a significant number of incentives for the CREP Program. There are 14 new contracts for a total of around 55,000 acres enrolled in CREP and a portion of these will be retired for life. Through these contracts, 69 wells will be permanently retired.

**Presentation:****Jonathan Dubinsky – SLV Sustainability Metrics Development:**

Jonathan, a student at University of Colorado Denver, presented to the Roundtable regarding his research on Sustainability Modeling for Regions using the San Luis Valley as a case study. Sustainability broadly can be understood as a balance between the economy, people, and the environment. Jonathan looked at two main metrics to model sustainability in his research: water footprinting and carbon footprinting. He focused on water and carbon specifically because these two issues are ones that impact the valley directly. Carbon footprinting is the measure of the greenhouse gas impact from a region including in boundary releases as well as transboundary releases. Carbon footprinting hasn't been done largely in agriculture. Jonathan broke down the carbon footprint of the SLV by sector with agriculture being the largest carbon producer. He further broke down the carbon footprint of all major agricultural activities (crops, livestock, transportation, fertilizers, etc).

Jonathan also looked at water footprinting, which is the measure of the water usage and needs of a region. This includes ground and surface water use. Jonathan broke down SLV's agricultural water footprint in terms of agricultural use. The data broke down the difference between blue water (any surface or groundwater used for irrigation) vs. green water (precipitation during growing season), surface vs. groundwater, and how the water was allocated for each type of livestock and crop. Jonathan explained that his research involved lots of community engagement with the help of an advisory council from the SLV. As a part of his research, Jonathan is looking at future scenarios to model the different metrics (water and carbon) that he is addressing.

**Colorado Water Conservation Board Update - Craig Godbout, CWCB:** Craig reported that the Rio Grande Basin's WSRA balance is currently at \$318,014 and the state fund's balance is at \$1.9 million. The CWCB Staff are continuing to go through the final edits of the State Water.

**Colorado Division of Water Resources: Well Rules and Regulations - Craig Cotten, Division Engineer:**

Craig Cotten gave an overview of the State's Well Rules and Regulations, which were submitted September 23rd. Objections to the Rules are being collected until November 23rd. There is at least one objection that has been filed to date. After the Objection period, the Division will work to address each objection in order to avoid going to court. Once all the objections are addressed, the Rules will be in place. At this point, members of Sub-Districts will have one year to come into compliance with the Rules. For those well users that are not in Sub-Districts, they will have two years to figure out an augmentation plan and come into compliance with the Rules. If neither of these things in the time frame provided, the well will be shut off.

Re the Rio Grande Compact, there is currently 0% curtailment in the Conejos and Rio Grande and Colorado's compact obligation is in good shape. The date for end of irrigation season has yet to be set. The DWR is meeting with water users to determine when the irrigation season will end.

Craig presented Mike Gibson with the Water Manager of the Year award in recognition of his efforts to protect and optimize the water resources of the Rio Grande Basin through his leadership on the Roundtable, the San Luis Valley Water Conservancy District, membership on the Rio Grande Natural Area Commission, Colorado Water Congress, and more. Mike thanked all of the Roundtable participant for the important role they played in him receiving this award.

**Report from IBCC Representatives:** Travis Smith presented a report from the Inter Basin Compact Committee. Travis acknowledged Craig Godbout, CWCB staff, for his work with CWCB and the Basin. The State Water Plan has many critics on both sides, so at the last minute CWCB decided to include measurable objectives for all categories including agriculture, storage, environmental and recreational needs, and watershed health.

**Judy Lopez - Basin Plan Education Update:** Judy passed out executive summaries of the Rio Grande Basin Plan to the Roundtable members and passed around the final Rio Grande Basin Plan. For those that want to read the Rio Grande Basin Plan, it is available in electronic form at [riograndewaterplan.com](http://riograndewaterplan.com).

Judy also discussed that Christi Bode has finished a video vignette of the Rio Grande Basin Plan and she is currently working on one about the Sub-Districts. These videos

will be made available to roundtable members to show at meetings and education/outreach events. There is more funding available to make more videos on different topics. Judy asked that the Roundtable think about other important topics that these video vignettes should cover.

Emma Regier announced that the Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project will be hosting a local showing of "The Great Divide" film. This feature length documentary on water in Colorado highlights the valley and its production was sponsored by several local groups including the RGWCD, SLVWCD, and the Sangre de Christo National Heritage Area. This showing will take place at Adams State University on October 23 at 6:30pm. The event is free to the public and a panel discussion will follow the film.

**Dan Dallas, US Forest Service:** Dan provided an update on the Rio Grande National Forest (RGNF) Forest Plan Revision process that is underway. The process will be in three phases: 1) Assessment Phase, 2) Plan Revision Phase 3) Monitoring Phase. The RGNF is currently in the Assessment Phase and is placing heavy emphasis on public input from the very beginning. The entire revision process will take 4 years to complete. Before the Plan Revision stage is completed, there is information needed. One major factor is the huge change in the spruce forest from beetle kill. The condition of the forest has changed dramatically and the Forest Plan must also change to reflect this. The RGNF also knows that the current infrastructure maintenance is falling behind and there isn't the budget to address this in the future. This also needs to be addressed in the plan. In the beginning of November, there will be 4 more public meetings to address new revisions to the plan.

Mike Gibson suggested that Dan come back to another Roundtable meeting to present more details of the results of the assessment process and the ongoing progress of the forest plan revision.

**Roundtable Administrative Issues:** Ron Brink presented an update from the Roundtable's Executive Committee. An Annual Meeting will take place in January at which time the the Roundtable will address new leadership for the coming year. The Executive Committee will nominate people and Roundtable Members can also submit nominations to fill the officer roles.

Cindy Medina, Alamosa Riverkeepers, announced that there will be an Alamosa River Celebration that will take place October 24th to show off the recent projects completed and celebrate the achievements of the Riverkeepers. All are welcome!

Sharon Vaughn, Project Leader for USFWS Refuge Complex announced that the Denver Regional Office recently appointed hydrologist Pete Stiffler who will now be working in the valley with the USFWS. In addition, there will be a Kids Crane Festival this Saturday at the Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge.

Travis Smith provided a brief update on the Rio Grande Watershed Emergency Action Coordination Team (RWEACT). He reported that Tom Spezze, Executive Director of RWEACT, has now taken a job with the Wild Turkey Foundation so the organization is in search of a new Director. This is a time of transition for RWEACT.

Eugene Jacquez with Costilla County and the Acequia del Cerro, announced that annual Congreso de las Acequias will be held on Saturday, October 17<sup>th</sup> starting at 9:00 at the Sangre de Cristo school in San Luis. It is free and open to the public.

**Presentation: Charlie Spielman: Rio Grande Basin Water Plan - Suggested Action**

**Plan:** Charlie Spielman presented the following to the Roundtable. Nicole Langely and Charlie served on the committees for the Rio Grande Basin Water Plan and had concerns about the Basin Plan and its ability to function as an actual plan. Because of this, they talked with others and decided to put together another plan that addresses these concerns. Charlie presented the resulting Action Plan Proposal to the Roundtable. He noted that everyone in this room has different perspectives

about the situation in the valley on water, but everyone can agree that the water situation is grave. In his view, the top priority must be groundwater sustainability. Charlie broke down his calculations of estimated acreage reduction that would be needed in order to stop aquifer drawdown in Sub-District #1. Per these calculations, it would stop the draw down but not recover the aquifer. Charlie also showed his calculations of estimated acreage reduction that would be needed to recover the aquifer back to historic levels. He emphasized that we must confront the unsustainable management of surface and groundwater and said that this is a huge problem and our implementation plan needs to address this. He said that we need to make this top priority and be proactive, not reactive.

Charlie also stated that we don't know how the reduction in agricultural acreage will impact the economy and more data needs to be collected to understand this. He presented a preliminary project list for his proposed Rio Grande Action Plan. Charlie requested the Roundtable support his proposed Action Plan, include the Action Plan in the Rio Grande Basin Implementation Plan, support and join the working group, and encourage requests for funding.

Mike suggested that it might be useful at future meetings for Charlie to explain future projects in future detail and then collectively the roundtable can discuss how to possibly implement these projects down the road.

Judy Lopez said that she has seen all of the hard work that the Roundtable and community have put into the plan and she thinks that this proposed Action Plan fits well into the Rio Grande Basin Implementation Plan. We should consider and figure out where these projects fit into the BIP.

Charlie answered the Roundtables questions and there was discussion regarding the proposal.

Adjourn

Next Meeting: Tuesday, November 10, 2015 2 pm at the  
Conference Room, San Luis Valley Water Conservancy District  
623 Fourth Street, Alamosa, CO