

ARKANSAS BASIN ROUNDTABLE

Meeting Notes

Wednesday, May 11, 2016

CSU-Pueblo, Occhiato Center 12:30 pm – 3:30 pm

Note

Most presentations can be found in their entirety on our website, at: www.arkansasbasin.com. Some, but not all content is presented in these notes.

Roundtable Business

Sandy White called the meeting to order at 12:30 pm. Members and visitors introduced themselves. Twenty four (24) members were present.

Approval of Minutes of March

A motion to approve the minutes of March 9, 2016 was made, seconded, and passed unanimously.

Public Comment - none

Executive Committee Report – Sandy White

Liaison Committee Members – A committee has been formed, with Al Tucker as chair. Let Al know if you would like to be on the committee, or if you would like to be considered a non-voting liaison member.

BIP Master Project List – Widefield Aquifer Recharge Association will be added to the list.

IBCC Report – Jay Winner

The IBCC met in February and will meet again in May, in Salida.

CWCB Report – Alan Hamel, Brent Newman

Alan thanked everyone that was involved in hosting the CWCB tour, dinner, and meeting on March 15, 16 & 17 in La Junta. The tour covered several grant projects in the vicinity.

Five Severance Tax grants and six WSRA grants in the Arkansas Basin were approved. The next meeting will be held May 18-19.

Brent – SWSI is the Statewide Water Supply Initiative, designed to be the technical platform for CWCB studies and projects. This update will capture the progress that has been made in the past 5 or 6 years, as well as filling in quantitative gaps in the current SWSI report. Consultants are now under contract for SWSI 2016, and include Brown and Caldwell, CDM Smith and CH2MHill.

Needs Assessment Committee/Non-Consumptive – Jay Winner

A sub-committee is being formed to work on the Arkansas Valley Conduit Supply/Demand Project. A working group was formed last year, and that group discovered that some of the participants will likely still not be in compliance with CDPHE water standards even after blending conduit water with other sources of supply. The committee will work toward a supply/demand answer that can be included in the SWSI update. Let Jay know if you are interested in participating in this committee.

John Martin Reservoir has room for new storage. The State of Colorado may use some, and a project should start moving within the next month. If you think you might want to store water in JMR let Jay know.

Jay also updated the group on the North La Junta and San Isabel projects. He introduced the following grant application:

GRANT APPLICATION: Pueblo Channel Debris Removal and Habitat Restoration Project – Gary Barber

Background

- ❖ Upper Watershed Fires
- ❖ 2013 & 2015 Flood events
- ❖ Resulting in:
 - Deposition of flood-borne materials
 - Degradation of habitat areas

Hwy 47 Bridge Vicinity to approximately 8th Street

Project Partners

- ❖ Pueblo County: \$100,000
- ❖ Fountain Creek Watershed, Flood Control and Greenway District: \$50,000
- ❖ Lower Arkansas Valley Water Conservancy District: \$100,000
 - Fiscal Agent: Lower Arkansas Water Activity Enterprise
- ❖ Arkansas Basin Roundtable: \$5,000

Scope of Work

- ❖ TASK 1 – Coordination with Permitting & Interested Agencies
- ❖ TASK 2 – Removal/Disposition of Debris in the Channel and Stream Banks
- ❖ TASK 3 – Project Management

TASK 2 – Removal/Disposition of Debris in the Channel & Banks

- ❖ Subtask A: Remove Debris from Channel and Stream Banks
- ❖ Subtask B: Evaluation, Transportation & Disposition of Materials
- ❖ Subtask C: Related Expenses for Disposition
- ❖ Subtask D: Sediment Control & Land Restoration as Appropriate

This grant application was approved by consensus.

BIP Coordinator – Gary Barber (presentation on website)

PRESENTATION - Arkansas Basin Implementation Plan-for new members

Perspective: Needs Based

“When you first start out, understanding water is like trying to understand Greek. After a while it starts getting to where it kinda registers; then if you stick with it, it becomes fascinating. Water is the most valuable thing there is on the earth.”

Frank Milenski, Catlin Canal Company

Need, Solution, Plan of Action Approach

Outreach and Data Collection

- ❖ Public Meetings
- ❖ Water Providers
- ❖ Water Conservancy

Districts

- ❖ Counties
- ❖ Agencies (CPW, USFS, BLM)
- ❖ Watershed Health Working Group

Data Organization

Master Needs List

- ❖ Sorted by County
- ❖ Multi-County Needs or Projects repeated

Section 6 Measurable Outcomes: Cyclical Planning

- ❖ Assumes a six (6) year cycle
- ❖ Starts with quality input
- ❖ Moves projects from Concept to Planned to Implementation On-Going to Completed

Challenge: Funding

- ❖ How do we meet all the Basin's Needs with limited funding?
- ❖ As a cadre of volunteers, how do we set priorities?
- ❖ Public outreach and education are critical

ACTIVITY REPORT (abbreviated)

Projects

Town of Aguilar meeting with DOLA

Two Buttes Reservoir

Division 2 dam safety personnel

Meeting with CO Parks and Wildlife

North La Junta Flood Mitigation

Permitting with Otero County

Outreach

Lake County Commissioners meeting

Granite (Homestake) Diversion

Complex ownership -boat chute, portage. Muni-ag-recreation-env/multi-purpose projects

Fremont County recreation discussion

Hydraulic and Oil Creek - can we make it more efficient for the ag water user and can we make it multi-purpose?

PPRWA showing of the Great Divide movie

CWCB Meeting - tour

Ark Forum

Non-Consumptive Needs Sub-Committee – SeEtta Moss

The committee met on February 26th.

Arkansas River Watershed Collaborative (ARWC) – Mark Shea and Carol Ekarius

Mark introduced Candace Walker, the new coordinator.

Carol reported on the March 29th ARWC meeting. The group came up with a mission and vision statement, as follows:

Mission – Provide assistance to Arkansas Basin communities to address locally identified watershed issues for economic, ecological, and social benefits.

Vision – Health watersheds and economic prosperity

PEPO/ARBWF – Al Tucker, Jean Van Pelt, Blake Osborn

Al introduced Blake Osborn, new to the PEPO committee. Blake gave the PEPO activity report.

- The documentary is progressing. A trailer will be prepared for the ARBWF.
- Summer reading program-activity books have been designed, to be distributed mid-May. 6000 copies will go to 35 libraries.
- Salida Water Festival will be held August 13th.
- Three Education to Action events are being planned, in Fremont, Custer and Chaffee counties.
- PEPO participated in planning and hosting last month's CWCB Tour.
- Will be attending and possibly doing a presentation at the next IBCC meeting.
- The 2016-2019 Education Action Plan is being prepared. Additional funding is available from CWCB for EAP activities. Per CWCB, PEPO should be an outlet for the IBCC – some funds will be used for that. Funds will also be used for a Water 101 Presentation to be used at Education to Action meetings, and for developing media content, a website and logo.

The Arkansas River Basin Water Forum will be held April 27 & 28. Elise will forward the invite to you. Fun activities have been added, such as river rafting, fly fishing, and a tour of the Hutchinson Homestead. Please attend!

State of the Arkansas River – Steve Witte, Division 2 Engineer (see website for presentations with graphics)

Water Supply

- Drought Returns to SE Colorado (looked good in January)
- Miracle May 2015 – record rainfall of 5.5 inches
- Pueblo spill risk averted for now
- John Martin Reservoir
 - Available capacity ~ 104,004 af
 - We remain the only basin that has regulated the efficiency of irrigation operations.
- Trinidad Reservoir
- Rule 14 Well Pumping
- Surface Water Improvement Rules

Regulatory Activities

- Well pumping cheating
- Riss Reservoirs – in Fremont County, near Cripple Creek.
- Cucharas #5
 - Partially failed in 1987
 - Classified as High Hazard
 - Dam breach order issued in February, with a June 2015 deadline
 - Complaint to enforce order filed
 - Trial set for August 2016
 - In mediation

Water Court Involvement

- Role of the State and Division Engineers in Water Court Process
 - Legislature charged State and Division Engineers with duty of advising the Court on every water court application
 - Requires DE to consult with Referee and file a summary report
 - Provides that the State Engineer may file Statements of Opposition, may file in Protest of Support of Referee and shall file report and appear if case is re-referred.
- In 2015
 - 97 cases files
 - 112 consultation reports

- 1 statement of opposition filed
- 50 starting case load
- 21 cases resolved by stipulation
- 12/31/15 case load – 30
- Current case load - 25
- Some things are changing
 - Division 2
 - Joint effort to reduce case backlog
 - Increased effort to solicit input on each application from field staff and SEO staff
 - Draft consultation reports sent to referee in advance of consult
 - Renewed effort to comprehensively raise concerns in consultation reports
 - Avoid SO in most cases
 - Monitor referee rulings & intervene as necessary
 - Statewide
 - Introspection and public outreach on the proper role of DWR in court process
 - Attempting to define criteria or guidance for Divisions regarding when to file S.O.
 - Why?
 - Pushback from litigation success?
 - Philosophic stance on proper role of government?
 - Take-aways
 - Consultation reports may now warrant greater attention
 - Don't rely on the SEO to defend your interests in court
 - Long established legal principles are increasingly at risk in the current political environment

Administration & Innovation

- Efforts to do what we do...better
 - Staged deliveries of reservoir releases
 - Advanced water control devices
- Infrastructure improvements
- Continued development of regulatory programs for the marijuana/hemp industry in Division 2
- Alternative transfer methods
 - Catlin pilot lease-fallowing project
 - Co-applicants: LAVWCD & Lower Arkansas Valley Super Ditch Company
 - 5 Catlin Canal farms totaling 902 acres and 1,047 shares
 - Municipalities: Fowler, Fountain, Security
- Under development:
 - Huerfano County Water Storage Collaborative program
 - Huerfano Infrastructure Improvement project
 - Purgatoire Infrastructure Improvement project
 - Exchange/Release Transparency Initiative
 - Upper Arkansas Multi-use Project
 - ARCA SEC to Consider other Permanent Pool Sources & Multi-use Account in John Martin Res.
 - Fountain Creek Flood Control Eval (compact issue)
 - ARKDSS is coming!

COLORADO GEOLOGICAL SURVEY – Water-Related Projects – Peter Barkman

Colorado School of Mines College of Earth Resource Sciences & Engineering (CERSE)

- Geologic Hazards
- Geologic Mapping
- Land Use Review
- Mineral Resources
- Groundwater Resources
- Environmental Program

CGS Activities in Arkansas River Basin

- STATEMAP Geologic Mapping, Land Use Reviews, Geologic Hazards Mapping
- County Geology and Groundwater Resources Series
- Abandoned Mined Lands Inventory
- Lower Arkansas Uranium Study

County Geology and Groundwater Resources Series

- Proven basic references about geology and groundwater resources
- New County Publications - Douglas and Park Counties
- Target counties with active STATEMAP geologic mapping and increasing reliance on groundwater
- Chaffee County underway

Abandoned Mined Lands Inventory (2-year program)

- Over 20,000 abandoned mines
- Many inventories
- Create a single statewide inventory
- CDPHE, DRMS, USFS, USEPA, USBLM

Hardrock and Coal Mining Legacy in the Basin

- Hardrock base and precious metals
- Coal resources

Lower Arkansas River Basin Uranium Study

- Identify natural sources of uranium
- Identify potential pathways to surface water
- Identify best management practices of land use to minimize mobility of uranium
- CDPHE
- CSU Dept. of Civil and Environmental Engineering (Tim Gates)
- 2-year study
- Still in scoping phase. Western reach of study is Pueblo Reservoir outflow to state line

What's Next

- Stakeholder meetings for input and direction
- Progress reports
- Detailed presentations

<http://coloradogeologicalsurvey.org>

WATER INFORMATION DASHBOARD – Kelly Close

- Demonstration website: COWATERINFO.ORG

Water Information Dashboards support:

- water operations - accounting - reporting - information management
- They are secure and private, built on open source technology, and integrate with existing systems to meet unique requirements.

- The Dashboard development project was funded by the **Colorado Water Conservation Board** and other partners.

System Overview – Real time data capture and optimization

Project Deliverables

- Individual dashboards for each project partner
- Documentation and open source code in a public repository
- Secure and private web-based system to support water administration and operations

The Dashboard toolset will ultimately be hosted on the Colorado Open Decision Support (CODES) Cooperative: CODES-coop.com

NEXT STEPS/LINKS

- Next Meeting – April 11th, 12:30 pm, CSU-Pueblo
- Arkansas Basin Roundtable: www.arkansasbasin.com
- Arkansas River Basin Water Forum: <http://arbwf.org/>
- Arkansas River Watershed Collaborative: <http://arkcollaborative.org/>
- CWCB: <http://cwcb.state.co.us/Pages/CWCBHome.aspx>
- Colorado Water Plan: <http://coloradowaterplan.com/>
- Lease Fallow Tool: <http://water.state.co.us/DataMaps/ModelingCDSS/Pages/LeaseFallowTool.aspx>