

Interbasin Compact Committee Basin Roundtable
Rio Grande Interbasin Roundtable
MINUTES
May 10, 2016

Attending - Those who signed in are as follows: *Mario Curto, Spenser Williams, Eugene Jacquez, Charles Spielman, Don Thompson, Judy Lopez, Jerney Wells, Lindsey George, Ruth Heide, Erin Minks, Guinevere Freer, Judi Perez, Suzan Wolfrey, Craig Godbout, Mike Gibson, Matt Gallegos, Travis Smith, Sharon Vaughn, Rick Basagoitia, Heather Dutton, Andrew Valdez, Dale Wiescamp, Ron Brink, Rio de la Vista, Nathan Coombs, Emma Regier, Greg Peterson, Dwight Martin, Steve Massey, Peter Clark, Christi Bode, Jeff Derry, Dave Stiller, Wayne Schwab, Keith Holland, Larry Suevm, Matt Hildner, Robert Getz, Cary Aloia, Brenda Felmlee, Mac McFadden, Anne Steinhage, Gene Farish, Ann Bunting, Andréa Bachman.*

Welcome and Introduction: Chair Nathan Coombs 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.

Approve Agenda: Rio de la Vista moved to amend the agenda, moving item #6: *Funding Request from Wetland Dynamics* to the July or August Roundtable meeting. Ron Brink seconded the motion and the motion carried. The agenda was approved as amended.

Approve April Minutes: Dwight Martin motioned to approve the April minutes. Keith Holland seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Public Comment:

- Suzan Wolfrey told the Roundtable about Water Boxes, a way to plant trees without irrigation. She brought a flyer to share with those interested in learning more.
- Emma Regier with the Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project announced two upcoming events. The Del Norte Trails Showcase will take place next week from May 23-24th and is a way to highlight the efforts being done to improve trails and recreation in Del Norte. And the RGHRP and Willow Creek Reclamation Committee's annual fundraiser, the Runoff Runoff, will take place on June 11 in Creede. This event includes a marathon, half-marathon, and 6K races as well as a fun after party and music festival. Both events support the work of the RGHRP.
- Judy Lopez announced that Beaver Creek Conservation Camp will be on June 21, 22, 23. There are some scholarships available for kids. The Teacher Workshops will be on June 6-10. Visit rgwcei.org for more info about the camp and workshops.
- Rio de la Vista announced that the Colorado Water Workshop in will be in Gunnison on June 22-24 and this year's theme is "Where the Water Meets the Land".
- Travis announced to the Roundtable that the Colorado Foundation for Water Education is holding their annual President's Award Reception on May 20. Our very own Heather Dutton is being presented with the Emerging Leaders Award and will be recognized along a Governor Hickenlooper.

- Erin Minks told the Roundtable about the upcoming Rio Grande National Forest Plan Meeting on Wednesday May 25th at the Del Norte Annex. This meeting will focus on Wilderness area inventory. Please come and provide input.

Roundtable Membership: We are trying to tidy up the Roundtable membership and update the bylaws. The Executive Committee is proposing that we increase the at-large members from 10 to 15 and update the bylaws to show that change. Judy move to adopt these changes, Keith seconded, and the motion carried. The Executive Committee's goal is to have the membership discussion wrapped up by next month and the bylaws updated.

Steve Vandiver and Travis Smith have been the Rio Grande Basin's IBCC representatives. Since Steve has retired and Cleave Simpson is the new Manager of the RGWCD, Cleave said that it would be an honor and a privilege to represent the Rio Grande Basin as one of the Basin's IBCC representatives. This role will allow him to be fully immersed in the water world. Keith Holland made a motion to nominate Cleave as the Rio Grande Basin's new IBCC representative and Rio de la Vista seconded the motion.

Dwight Martin motioned to close nominations, Rio seconded, and the motion carried. Cleave Simpson received the nomination from the Roundtable to be the Basin's IBCC representative.

Funding Preview: Colorado Snow and Avalanche Studies, Jeff Derry: Jeff presented a funding preview for the Colorado Snow and Avalanche Studies (CSAS). He provided background about CSAS and their programs. The focus of the presentation was on the Colorado Dust-on-Snow Program. The Rio Grande Basin Forecasting Project has pointed to a need for better monitoring of snow pack and CSAS can help address this. There are eleven Dust-on-Snow monitoring sites in Colorado and two of these are in the Rio Grande Basin (one on Spring Creek Pass and one on Wolf Creek Pass). Jeff explained the significance of Dust-on-Snow and implications for snowpack, including increased melt rates, which lead to erratic spikes in the hydrograph. Dust-on-Snow events are extensive, but not always apparent. The only way to measure is to dig snow pits, which is what they do at monitoring sites. Dust-on-snow is source of major error in forecasting and if you don't know about the dust events, you can't plan for the erratic spikes in the hydrograph. There is no substitute for on-the-ground, surface based observations, which is the best way to collect data to use to model streamflows forecasts. Jeff showed CSAS budget and explained their goal to provide timely and actionable information. This requires sustained effort and funding. Currently CSAS is asking each Basin Roundtable to support their ongoing research.

Jeff answered questions from the Roundtable and community about CSAS and their funding request: Where is the main dust source? The main dust source is from the Southern Colorado Plateau and the main cause of the increase in Dust-on-snow is drought, changing land management practices, lack of vegetation and others. There is variability from winter to winter. Usually there is in average of 8 Dust-on-Snow events a winter, but some seasons there are more or less. Nathan explained that Jeff is here to get by in from the Roundtable on the project and request funding at the amount that the Roundtable feels comfortable. Right now they are looking to the Basin Roundtables for funding support. Nathan explained that this is a very useful decision making tool for streamflow forecasting. Mike Gibson stated that this project is worthy of the Roundtable's support.

Funding Preview: Colorado Ag Water Alliance, Greg Peterson: Greg was present with Colorado Ag Water Alliance (CAWA) to present a funding request to the Roundtable. CAWA's

goal is to empower Colorado Agricultural producers to make the most informed decisions regarding water. CAWA does this through preserving Colorado Agriculture, hosting educational meetings and events, and disseminating information relating to agriculture and water. CAWA is requesting funding from the Rio Grande Basin Roundtable for the CAWA Agricultural Water Workshop in the San Luis Valley. These funds will support event planning, a venue, and food. The funds will also insure that the event is free for all to attend. The focus of the workshop will be catered to the initiatives of the basin, as well as other important content such as irrigation efficiency and funding for infrastructure improvements. The CAWA Workshop also fits into the Rio Grande BRT's goals of establishing long-term education and outreach for the Basin and allowing farmers to meet their agricultural needs in light of physical and legal shortages.

Greg answered questions from the Roundtable and discussed the possibility of the CAWA Rio Grande Workshop. The Roundtable discussed the potential for the Workshop to build on past education and outreach efforts such as the CSU Ag Conference.

Update on Trinchera Irrigation Company Projects, Wayne Schwab: Wayne presented an update on the Trinchera Irrigation Company's Projects. The Trinchera Irrigation Company received funding from CWCB to complete a study on their Mountain Home Reservoir. They serve about 100 circles and they are a part of the Colorado Parks and Wildlife's Mountain Home State Wildlife Area. The reservoir is fed by Trinchera Creek and the capacity is 7500 AF. Wayne showed old designs from when the reservoir was built. The reservoir has three gates, but for the past 30 years they have only used one of the gates. After the study, the engineers suggested with three upgrades: 1) Fabricate a new intake structure with three hydraulic sluice gates controlled from gate house; 2) Line interior of the three outlet conduits with plastic or slip line pipe; 3) Remove the old gate valves and install a new hydraulic controlled gate valve. As of now, the estimated cost for these recommended upgrades is \$2 million dollars. The Trinchera Irrigation Company is going to meet with the State Inspector to see what is required for them to remain in compliance.

WaterSage Presentation, Spencer Williams: Spencer with Ponderosa Advisors presented an overview of the WaterSage Program. Ponderosa Advisors is a company with the goal of "bringing transparency to opaque markets". WaterSage is a database-level analysis tool that allows people to use data, not just view it, which can produce invaluable information and knowledge. There are barriers to utilizing data including technical barriers to access and analysis, time and resource demands, cross platform compatibility, and multiple data sets housed in a different database and in different statistical formats. WaterSage was built to address these issues. The benefits of WaterSage include comprehensive and reliable research and analysis, increased efficiency and organization-wide data utilization, and streamlined education and public outreach and engagement. WaterSage has a wide range of users including water providers, engineers, attorneys, land trusts, and federal, state, and local agencies. Spencer showed the Roundtable how to use WaterSage Program on a web browser, and the functions and information that the software provides. Spencer answered questions from the Roundtable about Water Sage and he will provide a more in-depth presentation on Water Sage on May 11 at 9:00am at the SLVWCD Conference room for anyone that is interested in learning more about the program.

CWCB Update, Craig Godbout: WSRA was fully funded on the April installment and they received the full installment of \$2 million. The Rio Grande Basin Account is at \$412,000 and the State Account will be \$2.1 million. There continues to be concerns about the future of the severance tax. Currently there is a State Supreme Court decision regarding the severance tax and could impact future funding. The next IBCC meeting will be Tuesday May 24th in Salida.

Division of Water Resources Update, James Heath: Criag Cotten is preparing for a deposition so James was present to provide the update for the DWR. The Rio Grande Basin is currently at 104% of normal snowpack, exceeding last years peak. There are currently concerns of flooding on some creeks right now. There are three water supply forecasts that provide a wide range of forecasts for the year. On the Rio Grande these forecasts range from 659,000 AF (NWS) to 445,000 AF (NRCS). The curtailment on the Rio Grande will remain at 13% on the Rio Grande and the curtailment on the Conejos was increased to 26%.

IBCC Update: Travis Smith reported that there will be a IBCC meeting on May 24th in Salida and that funding is a big part of the agenda for the meeting. With the recent Supreme Court Decision that Craig mentioned, this will be the focus of much discussion. Currently there is a lot of uncertainty surrounding Roundtable Funding. The CWCB will meet in Del Norte at the Windsor Hotel on May 18-19.

SubDistricts Update, RGWCD: Cleave gave an update on the Subdistricts to the Roundtable. Subdistrict No. 1 completed it's fourth year of operation and got approval of it's ARP for 2016. They have been highly successful in reducing pumping since formed. The Board of Management for Subdistrict No. 2 has been appointed and is in place. They will start working on plan of water management for the Subdistrict. The deadline for Subdistrict No. 3 petitions was at the end of April. Other Subdistricts are progressing right behind with the petition process.

Erin Minks announced a Public Lands Happy Hour that will meet after the Roundtable meeting at the SLV Brewing Company. All are welcome.

Gwen Nelson Freer moved to adjourn the meeting Keith Holland seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned.

Next Meeting: June 14, 2016 @ 2:00pm
Conference Room, San Luis Valley Water Conservancy District
623 Fourth Street, Alamosa, CO