

**Interbasin Compact Committee Basin Roundtable**  
**Rio Grande Interbasin Roundtable**  
**MINUTES**  
**June 14, 2016**

**Attending - Those who signed in are as follows:** *Travis Smith, Emma Regier, Dale Wiescamp, Robert Getz, Zeke Ward, Jeff Derry, Bethany Howell, Suzanne Beauchaine, Cary Aloia, Steve Massey, Jay Winner, Karla Shriver, Michelle Lanzoni, Jim Ehrlich, Ann Bunting, Matt Hildner, Pete Striffler, Brenda Felmlee, Kieth Holland, Mike Gibson, Guinevere Nelson Freer, Ruth Heide, Wayne Schwab, Gene Farish, May Engquist, James Henderson, Mac McFadden, Nathan Coombs, Heather Dutton, Rio de la Vista, Charlie Spielman, Judy Lopez, Cleave Simpson, Junita Martinez, Charlotte Bobicki, Andréa Bachman*

**Welcome and Introduction:** Chair Nathan Coombs called the meeting to order at 2:13 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:** Nathan requested to amend the agenda to move Jeff Derry's presentation after agenda item #6. Charlie Spielman moved to amend the agenda as suggested, Judy Lopez seconded, and the motion carried. The agenda was approved as amended.

**Approve April Minutes:** Keith Holland motioned to approve the May minutes. Dale Wiescamp seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**Public Comment:**

Travis Smith remarked that the Roundtable has been meeting for 10 years and a lot of great projects have come out of this process. Travis felt that Roundtable members should be aware that there has been a Colorado Open Records Act (CORA) Request to the CWCB by Steve Massey regarding several Rio Grande Basin Roundtable projects.

**Funding Request: SLV Wetland Wildlife Conservation Assessment: Cary Aloia, Wetland Dynamics:** Cary Aloia and Jenny Nehring were present to discuss their funding request for the SLV Wetland Wildlife Conservation Assessment. Jenny and Cary provided background on the Assessment. The project comes out of a series of meetings and discussions with Natural Resource agencies and local partners regarding the status of current and historic wetlands in the SLV. The fiscal sponsor and applicant for the project is the SLV Trout Unlimited Chapter and the contracting entity is Wetland Dynamics, LLC. Currently, there is little information that tracts wetland extent across the SLV from pre-settlement to the present. This project seeks to fill current information gaps on public lands regarding the water resources available to provide limiting habitat for priority species. The assessment will compile existing historic and current wildlife and wetland data, determine priority species and associated limiting resources, develop a framework

for future cooperative work, develop conservation goals, and identify future projects and needs on public lands.

Project partners are asking for \$39,000 from WSRA, which includes \$37,000 for consulting and \$2,000 for fiscal agent fee. This will be spent over 2 years. Matching funds include \$45,000 cash and \$144,000 in-kind for a total of \$189,000. The total project cost is \$228,000.

Cary and Jenny answered questions from the Roundtable regarding their funding request. The finished report will be available on CWCB's website as well as through the other partner organizations. Charlie Spielman asked how this project would address issues of unsustainable agricultural water use. Cary responded that the data would be available and could inform willing landowners on how to better use their water for wildlife. Kevin Terry made a motion to approve the funding request and Charlie seconded the motion. Other discussion followed. Jim Erlich asked the Roundtable if this project should be a priority and be paid for by the Roundtable. Kevin responded that it is a valid concern, but focusing on priority species on public lands will help all the private landowners by keeping species from being listed under the ESA. The federal and state agency representatives present also spoke to this concern. Travis Smith added that the assessment could be helpful for the agencies as they prepare for pending state well rules and regulations. The Roundtable voted on the motion to approve the funding and the motion carried unanimously.

**Final Funding Review: Upper Rio Grande Assessment - Emma Regier, Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project:** Craig Godbout explained that this project is being brought back to the Roundtable for final vote because at the last CWCB Board meeting the Board conditionally approved all grants due to the reduction in WSRA funding. The Roundtable needs to reaffirm the project, before it is formally approved. Judy Lopez moved that the Roundtable approval the funding request, Jim Ehrlich seconded the motion. Discussion followed. Charlie Spielman stated that he would still vote against the project due to the fact that he feels it doesn't address ground water sustainability. Mike Gibson stated that it is a worthwhile project and that the fact of the reduced WSRA funds is irrelevant. We need to fund worthwhile projects while funding is still available. Emma Regier briefly explained the project and its benefits to the basin. The Roundtable voted on final funding approval and the motion passed, with one all but roundtable member (Charlie Spielman) voting yes.

**Funding Preview: Colorado Snow and Avalanche Studies, Jeff Derry:** Jeff presented a follow up funding preview for the Colorado Snow and Avalanche Studies (CSAS). After discussion with Craig Godbout and others, Jeff has put together a plan to request \$2,500 from the Rio Grande Roundtable, while seeking additional funds from the other Basin Roundtables. Rio de la Vista moved to support the funding request of \$2,500 from Basin WSRA funds, Ann Bunting seconded. The motion passed.

**Roundtable Membership:**

The Roundtable needs to update the by-laws in order to increase membership to add 15 at large members, as discussed at previous meetings. A motion is needed to update the by-laws as suggested. Judy Lopez made the motion, James Henderson seconded, and the motion passed. Mike Gibson has requested to fill one of the remaining vacant at-large members seats. Mike spoke to the Roundtable and explained his past experience with the Roundtable as the Chair for the first 10 years and his interest in continuing his involvement as an at-large member. The Roundtable agreed that Mike would be a valuable addition to the membership. Keith Holland made the motion to add Mike as an at-large member. Judy Lopez seconded, and the motion passed.

**CWCB Update, Craig Godbout:** The Rio Grande Basin WSRA Account is at \$\_\_\_\_\_ and the State Account is at \$\_\_\_\_\_ (*confirm WSRA account balance with Craig*). Craig discussed the status of future WSRA funding. Nathan Coombs thanked Craig for all the work he does for the Rio Grande Basin.

**IBCC Update:** Cleave Simpson told the Roundtable that he was fortunate to step in last month as the new IBCC representative and is now on the Criteria and Guidelines Committee, which is currently discussing the future of WSRA and updating guidelines, criteria, and best management practices and future funding opportunities for WSRA. Travis Smith explained that currently funding is tight, but good projects will still get funded. In that regard, it is full speed ahead though there will be a tightening in criteria and guidelines. Travis introduced Jay Winner with the Lower Arkansas Basin who was present and also serves on the Criteria and Guidelines Committee.

**SubDistricts Update, RGWCD:** Cleave gave an update on the Subdistricts to the Roundtable. Across the valley, producers continue to work toward the formation of subdistricts through the petition process. SubDistrict No. 1 is in the 5th year of operation and Karla Shriver is the new board of manager for Subdistrict No. 2.

Nathan Coombs announced that the next Roundtable meeting will be in conjunction with the Interim Water Resources Review Committee. There won't be a regular Roundtable meeting, but everyone is encouraged to attend, welcome the WRRC, and show support for the Basin. The meeting will be at the RGWCD office.

**RWEACT Update: Zeke Ward:** Karla Shriver introduced Zeke Ward, the new Executive Director of RWEACT. The Roundtable looks forward to working with Zeke in that capacity. Zeke addressed the Roundtable and gave an update of RWEACT's current activities. There are a lot of challenges and opportunities ahead. The organization is expanding and it will be serving 7 counties and the new board of directors will have 9 seats. They are in the process of receiving their 501 (c) 3 status. They are planning a visioning session with the board and a facilitator, recognizing that this is an appropriate and important time to shape the vision and future of the organization. The Natural Resource committee met. The Water Quality study and mulch test plot monitoring continues. The Communications committee is focusing on public safety and meeting challenges by adding new communication systems and rehabilitating deteriorating systems. Zeke provided a one-page handout for more information.

Announcement from Erin Minks: The Rio Grande National Forest is still getting comments for the inventory and the Wilderness review process. This is the first phase of a many to inventory the Wilderness. The evaluation phase is coming up next and the meetings will take place later in the summer. Also, there will be a Public Lands happy hour at the Brew Pub at 5:00pm.

Mike Gibson moved to adjourn the meeting.

Next Meeting: August 9, 2016 @ 2:00pm  
Conference Room, San Luis Valley Water Conservancy District  
623 Fourth Street, Alamosa, CO