

**Minutes of NPBRT Meeting: 2-23-16**  
**USFS Conf. Room (3-5 PM) 100 Main Street, Walden, CO**

**Members/Liaisons Present**

\*Mike Allnutt  
Deb Alpe  
Mike Alpe  
Paula Belcher  
\*Kent Crowder  
Mike Dixon  
\*Blaine Evans  
\*John Rich  
\*Barbara Vasquez  
\*Doug Waldron  
\*Ty Wattenberg

**Members/Liaisons Absent**

\*Jimmer Baller  
Pete Conovitz  
Debbi Heeney  
\*Mike Honholz  
Russ Gross  
\*Randy Miller  
\*Carl Trick II  
\*Rick Wyatt  
Jeremiah Zamora

**Others Present**

Dan Henrichs  
Caid Waldron  
Christi Bode

**I. Agenda Review**

Agenda was accepted as proposed.

**II. Approval of Roundtable Minutes: 1-19-15**

The minutes of the 1-19-16 meeting were accepted as published after corrections in the attendance (Blaine E and Mike D absent).

**III. Discuss and Provide Input On the North Platte Basin Video – Christi Bode, Moxiecran Media**

Deb Alpe invited Christi Bode to meet the NPBRT to discuss the North Platte video project. Most RT members have seen the Rio Grande Basin video she created previously. The goal is a 6-7min video. Although she and her company Moxiecran Media, will do the filming and editing, she needs input from the RT members to flesh out the details of the script and to identify locations for filming. She circulated an outline to stimulate discussion and input for the video. Pasted in below is Christi's outline after she updated it with information and feedback gained at this meeting. Highlights of the discussion follow the outline.

**North Platte Basin Plan video TRT: 5-7 min**

**Producer: Christi Bode, Moxiecran**

**Media Client: North Platte Basin Roundtable**

**Point of Contact: Debbie Alpe, Education/Outreach Committee**

**A. Introduction(:30sec)**

1. North Platte Basin overview - "Small basin, big diversity"
  - geographical location
  - water infrastructure: watersheds, rivers and streams
  - wildlife & vegetation
  - agricultural & recreation economy
2. Why the NP basin plan was established
  - Developed in response to HB 1177, Water for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act. NP Basin is one of nine basin roundtables in the State
  - Plans will inform and help drive Colorado's Water Plan
  - Plan identifies the critical water issues facing all who live, work and recreate in the North Platte Basin & proposes ways in which those issues can be addressed

**Minutes of NPBRT Meeting: 2-23-16**  
**USFS Conf. Room (3-5 PM) 100 Main Street, Walden, CO**

3. Challenges ahead

- dry-up of agriculture - ranching market that depends on other parts of the state (loss of feed lots - indirect impact)
- sustained drought/climate change
- wildfires/spruce beetle kill
- endangered species

**B. BasinWaterFlowOverview(1:30min)**

1. North Platte landscape and climate

- river and stream flows, downstream neighbors
- snowpack/mountain ranges: Medicine Bow, Never Summer, Rabbit Ears & Park Range
- wetlands, diversity of plants & animals

2. North Platte River/Laramie River Decrees (use quote from Supreme Court)

- dividing up North Platte River water in 1945 between CO, WY, and NE; "One Bucket" baseline
- Laramie River: agreement between CO & WY
- 3. Transmountain Diversion
- Laramie/Poudre tunnel, drainage into South Platte River (Ft. Collins/Greeley)

**C. BasinWaterNeeds(2min)**

1. Agricultural \* \*\*

- ag/ranching economy, largest employer - short growing season (one cutting)
- flood irrigation vs. irrigation (important to distinguish - public misconception)
- consumptive and nonconsumptive use go hand in hand

2. Municipal & Industrial needs - met gap

- not significant compared to the Basin's overall demands
- populations currently at 1,400; not expected to increase like the rest of CO
- oil & gas industrial use: Basin Augmentation Plan

3. Environmental & Recreational needs

- diverse wetland & riparian habitats; more than 20% of plant species that exist in all habitat types in the state
- Platte River Recovery Implementation Program: tri-state (CO, WY, NE) agreement that seeks to recover endangered bird and fish species

- recreation is critical to diversify economy, hunting & fishing about 12% of local economy (direct/indirect)

- angling, hunting, wildlife and bird watching, winter sports (snowmobiling, xc skiing, ice fishing) camping, rafting, paddling, and boating activities

4. Water Administration needs

- water management and administration for surface resources is critical to the long-term viability of the Basin's water resources

**D. Constraints & Challenges (1:30 min)**

- loss of population, loss of timber & coal mines, demand to diversify economy and maintain what the valley has
- lack of storage & funding
- historical water rights subject to abandonment - out of state owners operating remotely, not aware of water/land issues specific to North Park region (need for proper land management)

**E . Solutions/Water management projects (1 min)**

- improvements to existing water infrastructure, maintain & maximize consumptive use (ex. - McFarlane Reservoir, collaborative process, Dept. of Interior/CWCB funded)
- Evapotranspiration project
- Basinwide Augmentation Plan
- water & forest health education, strengthen connection to environment
- expansion of recreation opportunities, need for repair to public fishing access, stream restoration

**F. Closing (15 sec)**

- Importance of being good stewards to the land and valley
- Importance of this Basin's role in local, state, national and international importance
- Goal is to create a sustainable water future that will support generations to come

In the Rio Grande video, there were two narrators, a man representing the older generation and a woman who works as a restoration coordinator representing the younger generation. But the NP video doesn't have to follow that example. There was a lot of input and discussion. Ty commented several times he wanted to make sure the video functioned to educate the public, not tell the RT and those who often attend these meetings what they already likely know. Mike Alpe pointed out the most of the snowpack that feeds the rivers and streams in the basin is on public lands, primarily Forest Service. There was considerable discussion about the legal structure governing NPB water rights, including the Supreme Court Decree and the 3-State Agreement driven by the ESA Recovery project on the Platte River in Nebraska. Kent offered to provide information to Christi to summarize the legal issues. But one important point to highlight is that both define the Colorado North

**Minutes of NPBRT Meeting: 2-23-16**  
**USFS Conf. Room (3-5 PM) 100 Main Street, Walden, CO**

Platte rights based on acres of irrigated land, not volumes of water. And the current irrigated acreage is considerably less than the maximum allowed by the Supreme Court decree (145,000 acres) or the 3-State Agreement (134,467 acres). This is the reason the Jackson County Water Conservancy District is working to increase the irrigated acreage by matching available water rights with land that is not currently irrigated. Barbara commented that North Park is a year-round playground for the burgeoning Front Range population, so attention to outdoor recreation is important. During the Non-Consumptive attribute rating and ranking conducted by the RT several years ago, fishing (stream and lake) ranked #1 and #2. Much of the stream fishing access is private. Several of the public access SWA reaches have been identified by CPW as needing restoration of the stream bed and banks. Mike Dixon commented that CPW just entered into an agreement with Yarmony Ranch for another SWA for public access stream fishing. He explained a lane has been defined for pedestrian access by foot at LaRand. Kent commented that one of the major socio-economic challenges for the basin is loss of jobs and loss of population. Christi turned to the possible schedule for filming. The RT was interested in capturing at least spring, summer and fall footage. So in addition to this trip, Christi plans to come back in June (high water), August (hay harvest) and later in the fall for low water/snow footage.

**IV. CWCB/IBCC - Ty Wattenberg, John Rich and Mike Allnutt**

Mike and John had no report, as the IBCC is meeting on the same day as this meeting. Ty commented that we can expect cuts in the WSRA funding with a projected drop of 11% in 2016 and another 40% in 2017. Colorado severance tax, a major source of funds for CWCB, Severance tax is composed of 90% for oil/gas and 10% 'other'.

**V. Old Business/New Business**

**Old:** Deb explained that her contact in CWCB for Education & Outreach, Kate McIntire, has moved to a new job. CWCB is working to hire someone to take the position, but in the meantime Deb is coordinating with Viola. She agreed to obligate FY 2016 EAP funds to cover the cost of the video production and then proceed to complete the project during the course of the next fiscal year to allow for capturing all seasons of the water year. Deb will work with Christi to get an invoice for this trip to Jackson County to submit to Viola. She also showed a Colorado Reader for kids that features the Colorado Water Plan.

**New:** Kent passed out an email from the Colorado Ag Water Alliance (CAWA) which asked whether the NP Basin would be interested in hearing a series of workshops they plan to implement throughout the state next winter on behalf of agricultural producers. "The workshops will focus on the support, options and information available to producers on managing water issues. The program would involve information on the Colorado Water Plan, the Basin implementation Plans and a component on "use it or lose it" which was included a panel at the recent Colorado Water Congress Annual Convention." Kent asked RT members whether they would be interested and their appeared to be a general positive opinion. Kent mentioned they might ask CAWA whether they could include a section highlighting mutual benefits between consumptive and nonconsumptive water uses.

**VI. Date for the next meeting**

The next meeting was set for Tuesday, Mar. 22 to be held from 3-5 p.m. in the USFS Conference Room at 100 Main Street, Walden. Ty offered a speaker, Jeni Cederle, a Project Manager focused on weather modification for the Wyoming Water Development Office. He also said he would also invite Joe Busto back if his schedule would allow.