

South Platte Basin Roundtable Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, November 15, 2016
4209 Weld County Road 24 1/2
Longmont, Colorado 80501
4:00PM-7:30PM

South Platte Basin Roundtable Business Meeting

Meeting commenced at 4:15PM.

1. Welcome/Introductions (10 min)

Joe Frank, Burt Knight, Garret Varra, Bert Weaver, Larry Howard, Bruce Gerk, Joel Schneekloth, Allyn Wind, Mike Shimmin, James Ford, Jim Hall, Frank Eckhardt, Ken Huson, Sean Cronin, John Stokes, Jason Roudebush, Jeffrey Boring, Matt Betz, Sean Conway, Deb Daniel, Dan Brown, Eric Anglund

2. Approval of Meeting Summary (action required)

Burt Knight made a motion to accept the meeting minutes, Garret Varra seconded. Motion passed without discussion or contest.

3. Agenda – additions or changes

No changes or additions were made to the agenda.

4. Committee Updates

a. WSRF Needs Committee (Boring – 15 min)

i. WSRF Criterion Guideline Revisions

Jeffrey Boring took the floor to report on the WSRF Criterion Guidelines and the work being done to align the Basin Guidelines with those of the State. Boring pointed out a waiver concept for the matching requirements of 25% [match] at the Basin level and 50% at the State level. Boring felt that match was consistent with the Basin requirements and that the State had aligned with those. However, it was clarified that the State has allowed a waiver upon demonstration of financial hardship. Boring wanted to open the topic to the Roundtable to determine if the Basin Guidelines should also adopt the waiver option. It was clarified that a secondary grant contributed to the project would need to appear with a letter of pending commitment. Craig Godbout clarified that the 25% match could come from any outside source of funding, either in cash or in kind. James Ford and Sean Conway argued a waiver at the Basin-level would open the door to undue burden to define new rules and add unneeded complexity into the process. Jason Roudebush clarified that the match could come from the State. Godbout added

additional clarification that a waiver at the State level would need to be recommended by the Basin.

Sean Cronin added that it was deliberate on behalf of the CWCB that the waiver decisions go-back to the Roundtable. Cronin added that his contribution to the high-level discussion was that the South Platte Basin Roundtable did not have a history of seeing those kinds of funding requests that would need a waiver. Boring felt that was the only major discussion item.

Sean Conway made a motion to approve the WSRF Criterion Funding Guidelines and Larry Howard seconded. The motion passed without discussion or contest.

ii. WSRF Nov.1 Application Deadline Update

Jeffrey Boring laid out the WSRF requests, and the Roundtable focused on one application from the Colorado School of Mines to model storage systems on the South Platte River main-stem.

It was clarified that the applications weren't up for a vote at the present meeting, but would need approval at the January Roundtable meeting.

Craig Godbout pointed out that there was ongoing discussion at the CWCB about funding alternative transfer method ("ATM") projects and the relationship to WSRF funds. Joe Frank added that the South Platte Basin Roundtable's WSRF Criterion Guidelines had a provision regarding funding of ATM projects. Craig Godbout clarified the South Platte Basin fund had \$423,806.

Lastly, Joe Frank discussed the CWCB's WSRF Guidelines' position on conflict of interest. The details of the policy were discussed, specifically the details of attempts to influence, abstinence from voting, and disclosure of conflicts. Sean Cronin added that it was discussed at a high-level that other Roundtables had been dealing with issues that required a conflict-of-interest policy. Ultimately, the policy was meant to be an amendment to the South Platte Basin WSRF Criterion Guidelines. Mike Shimmin asked what the impact of the policy was, specifically if the Roundtable would be able to approve WSRF applications if there was not unanimous acknowledgement and acceptance of the policy. The impact and significance of the policy was discussed, including the potential and assumed definition of "influence" in the document. Sean Conway argued the guidance on conflict-of-interest with the WSRF was written for judicial guidance, but was not directly applicable to the actions of the Roundtable. Ultimately the discussion came down to the difference between "interest" and "financial interest".

Joe Frank recommended tabling the discussion of the State's conflict-of-interest guidance until the CWCB had clarified details. Jeffrey Boring recommended he and Jason Roudebush develop an interim solution so the Roundtable could move forward with the January WSRF application determinations. Mike Shimmin argued a policy be adopted in January to disclose a conflict-of-interest and abstain from voting.

b. Groundwater Subcommittee

i. Technical Committee (Hall – 10 min)

Jim Hall took the floor to report on the October 20th meeting of the Groundwater Technical Committee. He reported on a JVA study of long-term solutions for the Gilcrest area, stating the solutions focused on pipelines and all solutions were fairly expensive (north of \$7M). In the interim, the Gilcrest area was looking at temporary solutions, namely how they could utilize existing infrastructure to continue their dewatering efforts. Unfortunately, as Hall reported, the call-situation on the river prohibited Gilcrest from returning water to the River, and upon commencement of the pumping there was an immediate impact on the aquifer. Hall clarified the solution costs included pumping stations, new wells, infrastructure, and would introduce whole new systems to the area. Joe Frank clarified the JVA proposal targeted water table elevation reduction by approximately 25 feet. Frank reported the size of the pipeline for the system was governed by the 100-year storm flow, not the dewatering rate.

c. Environmental-Recreational Needs (Stokes – 5 min)

John Stokes reported the Poudre River Forum would be held on February 3rd at Island Grove in Greeley.

d. Education and Outreach (10 min)

Joel Schneekloth reported Lisa McVicker would be stepping down as Education and Outreach Coordinator and the position would soon be vacant. Additionally, an Ogallala Aquifer Summit would be held around November of 2017. Schneekloth added that Sean Cronin had prepped a job description for an Education and Outreach Coordinator, which was currently under review by the CWCB. It was also reported that \$13,000 was spent on transition of the South Platte Basin website from HDR to a new consultant. Joe Frank reported funds were set aside for the Education and Outreach Coordinator and for potential use on a BIP Coordinator. There was a chance the position would be in the sole service of the South Platte Basin instead of the joint South Platte Basin and Metro roundtables.

5. Legislative Update (5 min)
a. Interim Water Resources Review Committee

Joe Frank reported no new changes had occurred. Colorado had a new House Ag. Chair and Sen. Sonnenberg was still the Senate Ag. Chair. It was also reported there would be a new House Ag Chair. A member of the public pointed out that known water policy issues had been presented in the last session, and the outcomes were as expected.

6. South Platte Basin Storage Study Update (10 min)

Joe Frank reported three consultants had proposed on the study and that Leonard Rice and NWH had won the contract. The final report of that study would be due December of 2017. Once the contract was executed there would be stakeholder discussions to set expectations and other details of the project. Joe Frank reported the president of his board had appeared as a subcontractor on two of the bidding firms and as a result he recused himself from voting.

7. CWCB Update (10 min)

Craig Godbout reported the next meeting would be November 29, in conjunction with CAWA at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds. Registration deadline for that event was Nov 17. Godbout also reported that CWCB staff had been given the power to withhold payment to WSRF applicants who fail to submit a 6-month progress report. That report would be distributed to the Roundtables who had contributed funding. Additionally, Godbout reported the CWCB would be publishing a six-issue newsletter following each CWCB meeting and there was an open call for articles and publications. Godbout provided a SWSI update, stating things were moving along, albeit slowly, and the completion date was projected to be Sept. 2017. Lastly, severance tax revenues were reported to be 6% without potential for increase. Godbout also reported the State fund was currently, at time of meeting, to be around \$533,000, without any possibility of refill until July 2017.

8. Colorado River Risk Study (20 min)

Joe Frank reported the Metro Roundtable had recently met (Nov 10) and written a letter to James Eklund asking the CWCB oppose the Basin-driven study of the Colorado River Risk and Curtailment study, arguing the study should be State driven given the potential impact of the findings. Jim Hall reported he had attended the last Front Range Water Council, stating the two big issues discussed were that the study should be headed by the state and that the Phase II study reviews ways to provide curtailment and reduction and once again, the issue was proposed to be handled by the State. Craig Godbout reported the Colorado River District had withdrawn their Phase II SOW proposal before the Front Range Water Council had published a letter opposing the proposed scope. Joe Frank asked the Roundtable their opinion on sending a letter.

Mike Shimmin proposed the South Platte Basin Roundtable send its IBCC could report back with guidance to support State leadership on the study. Jim Hall reported a revised application to the State was expected. Discussion ensued on

the topic of the source of funds requested by the West Slope and the leadership of the study. Joe Frank clarified his proposal was to submit a letter to the CWCB that didn't state an opposition to anything, but instead urged the CWCB to take a leadership role. A member of the public reported that other states were viewing the study as a state topic rather than as a split east-west slope topic. Additional discussion focused on the roles and responsibilities of the various states reliant upon and impacting the Colorado River, as well as what the goals and projected outcomes of the study actually were. John Stokes argued in favor of a letter to the CWCB.

9. Public Comment (10 min)

No comment was offered.

Dinner (45 min)

10. Phreatophyte Study Update (30 min)

Raegan Waskom took the floor to discuss “flood effects on phreatophytes in the South Platte Basin River system”. Waskom introduced his team and provided their background, presenting a team well versed in their respective fields and all highly qualified. The presentation started off by referencing the bill which they were working under, SB14-195. Additionally, Waskom reported the Tamarisk Coalition was tasked with determining cost estimates for implementation of the work tied to the study being presented. Waskom's team stated their client, the CWCB, had tasked them with evaluating impacts of the 2013 flood on phreatophytes and noxious weeds. Their key findings discovered the riparian forest has been under constant change since major river work started on the South Platte. Additionally, these riparian forests required periodic flooding and disturbance patterns to allow cottonwoods to re-establish themselves.

Essentially a hydrologic regime would be necessary for cottonwood and willow forests in riparian areas to remain healthy. Without this periodic flooding, forest succession could be replaced by secondary tree species as the primary trees die out. Alternatively, narrow channel grasslands could occur without the periodic widening and narrowing of the river channel. The researchers learned that native phreatophytes accounted for more than 90% of tree biomass within the study area. At the time of presentation, that system was dominated by native tree species. In addition the 90% native phreatophyte species, slightly more than 4.5% were non-native species, either for Colorado or the contiguous US. Another key finding was that removal of phreatophytes had the potential to exacerbate weed problems at removal sites due to physical disturbance.

The researchers also reported on the effects of flooding as phreatophytes, stating that a conservative estimate as approximately 8.5% of the riparian forest either died or was removed by the flood. It was also reported that the sediment deposition may have provided sites with suitable conditions for additional cottonwood and willow germination. The research methodology utilized LiDAR to measure top and bottom level of objects, and measure greenness in the study areas. The study also showed that the effect of the flood on shallow ground water

levels was short in duration and returned to normal levels 3-5 weeks after the flood, based on data from daily well data from the study area.

The researchers recommended that additional research would be needed to assess long term trends in riparian forests spatial extent, dynamics of cottonwood regeneration, and successful trajectories. Additionally, phreatophyte removal efforts, if pursued, should concentrate on the non-native phreatophytes in the system. These efforts would also need to include appropriate re-vegetation to eliminate noxious weeds from these systems. Bruce Gerk added there had been additional impacts on the riparian areas such as grazing in the river that had previously provided big impacts on phreatophytes. Per a question from Jeffrey Boring, the researchers clarified that both mature and seedling Russian Olives were not as common as expected. Mike Shimmin asked confirmation of an assessment that the flood did not increase groundwater in a way that would spur on increased phreatophyte growth and the researchers provided that confirmation. Additionally, the researchers spent some time reviewing the water that was lost to phreatophyte ET versus that which was salvaged through flood-induced phreatophyte losses. Additional discussion about the contents of the literature review, specifically the history of the river and its riparian areas, ensued between researchers and the members of the Roundtable. The researchers addressed water savings and active versus passive revegetation and discussion ensued as to potential recommendations and projects to come out of the research. Discussion ensued as to the value of a longitudinal study on phreatophytes and riparian forests in the South Platte Basin.

11. Joint Roundtable Meeting Update (Frank – 20 min)

Joe Frank provided an update on the Joint Roundtable meeting that took place in October at the Embassy Suites in Loveland. A big takeaway from the meeting was that several IPPs were moving forward with high success rates. Frank also reported that Sections 4.6 and 4.8 of the South Platte BIP could be actively developed by work on behalf of both the South Platte Basin and Metro Roundtables. Frank also drew focus to Education and Outreach, addressing a coordinator and use of the website. It was also reported the Metro would be updating their WSRF guidelines, likely based on those of the South Platte Basin Roundtable. Frank also reported he would be stepping down from his role as the Chair of the Roundtable for the following year. New officers would be elected in January of 2017.

The meeting adjourned at 8PM.

12. Meeting Schedule

- a. December Roundtable CANCELED
- b. CWCB Meeting – November 16 & 17, 2016 – Denver Chamber of Commerce
- c. MRT Meeting - Thursday, November 10th, 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm, Denver Water, 1600 West 12th Ave., Denver, CO.
- d. Agricultural Viability Conference – November 29, 2016 – Jefferson County Fairgrounds