

Next Steps Committee
December 19, 2016

Mike Wageck	Kendall Bakich, CPW
Lane Wyatt	Eric Kuhn
Ken Neubecker	Hannah Holm
Jim Pokrandt	Carlyle Currier
Laurie Rink	Bruce Hutchins
Brent Gardner-Smith	Stan Cazier
Ken Ransford	Ed Moyer, Grand County
Jim Pokrandt	Paul Bruchez
Oni Butterfly	Mark Harris
David Graf	Scott Green, Buckhorn Valley
Jen Moore, John McConnell Math and Science Center	

1. **Next meeting: January 9, 2017, is the next CBRT meeting date.** Ken Ransford said this is timely to vote for grants prior to the CWCB January meeting.
2. **Current balance in the CBRT WSRF is \$374,000.** \$150,000 is reserved for a future legacy project, and \$20,000 is reserved for education; that leaves **\$204,000 available until we receive additional funds.**
 - a. There is no severance tax funding available, but the CWCB is trying to earmark additional \$10 million per year for all roundtables and the CWCB Water Supply Reserve Fund (new name!), another \$10 million for any purpose (with additional funds available in loans), and watershed planning is increased to \$5 million. **The statewide WSRF balance is \$533,381.**
3. **Education meeting update – Hannah Holm.** The committee is planning to **do pilot PSA Public Service Announcements with a local country music channel that airs from Aspen to Parachute**, spearheaded by Oni Butterfly, and to talk with a local media firm. The roundtable is considering **starting a website, but that means we need to keep it up to date.**
4. **Colorado River Risk Study – Eric Kuhn.** Front Range roundtables have not decided whether to help fund this. **The four West slope roundtables have agreed to each provide \$10,000 and fund Phase 2 without Front Range participation if that is the case**, and they are planning to make a WSRF grant request at the January 2017 CWCB meeting.

- a. James Eklund scheduled a conference call with the roundtable chairs for January 11 to begin a process to refine the Phase II draft scope of work in a way that may bring the roundtables into accord. Or not.
- b. **The Colorado River District** is the actual grant applicant and fiscal agent with the **Southwest Water Conservation District** as co-funder and advocate for the work. They have the ability to pre-load the work ahead of WSRF grant approval. **The two are each contributing equal funding to bring the total proposed contract to \$89,500**, enough to fund Phase 2. This will keep the plan from being delayed; if additional funds are needed, the river districts will commit to do that and see the study through, should the WSRF funding plan be denied.
 - i. Phase 1 demonstrated how large the water gap could be in the Colorado River basin through use of the BuRec's CRSS model, and Phase 2 will address how Colorado alone could meet it through use of Colorado's CDSS model. This work is aligned with Upper Colorado Basin states contingency planning.
- c. The goal is to avoid a Colorado River curtailment. **The Front Range says** that since the State Engineer would administer a compact Call, **the state should be doing the study**. The state has been doing this study for several years but does not want to release it because of the controversy it will cause. **It is not just a curtailment study; it is a strategy to avoid a Compact Call**. Developing a broad public policy to avoid something is completely different from a curtailment study.
- d. The January 11 meeting is to try to reach consensus of what the roundtables can move forward on. When you look at available water in the state, it looks like a curtailment study. The CRD wants to know all the options without endorsing them.
- e. "Good information is leadership, and you can't have leadership without good information," Jim Pokrandt said.
- f. **"The choice is to get out of the way of a train or get run over by a train,"** Eric Kuhn said.
- g. At a recent Las Vegas meeting, there was a lot of discussion about the Lower Basin's Drought Contingency Plan, or DCP. **The Lower Basin States must cut back annual use by more than 1 maf. It literally has ramifications all the way up to the Sacramento River delta** since Southern California gets water from northern California via the California Water State Project. Mexico is also participating on this.
- h. The Colorado River Risk Study addresses Colorado's share of the Upper Basin DCP. There are **3 approaches: additional augmentation** (cloud seeding and phreatophyte removal); **drought operations** in Upper Basin reservoirs (the Colorado River Storage Project (CRSP) reservoirs of Flaming Gorge, Navajo, and Aspinall Unit) which cuts the risk in half; and, if these don't work, **cutting back**

demand. Draining the CRSP reservoirs is a one-time shot until the Upper Basin reservoirs fill again. That is what the water bank work group is approaching.

- i. Administrative challenges: **Can the State Engineer shepherd water down stream and protect it? Once water is in the Colorado River below Grand Junction, demand is minimal.** But, on the North Fork of the Gunnison, other users could take water left in the stream. The state has to figure out how the water makes it through 25 headgates before it gets to Grand Junction.
- j. Mead is the top of the Lower Basin system, but Powell is the bottom of our system, and **it's not just a matter of saving water, it's a matter of getting it there.**
- k. There are only about 20 major users in the Lower River Basin; in the Upper Basin, we have tens of thousands, some big like the Uncompahgre Valley or the GVVUA in Grand Junction. **You cannot use water in the Lower Basin unless you have a contract with the Secretary of Interior. There is no such federal involvement in the Upper Basin.**
- l. Stan Cazier asked if **anything will happen before President Trump takes office,** and Eric said that is unlikely. By the time the Secretary of Interior is appointed, and new BuRec commissioners are appointed, this process will take several months. **Kuhn doesn't envision the Interior Secretary coming in and challenging a DCP.**
- m. David Graf – The CWCB should be responsible for avoiding a Compact Call, and Colorado's Water Plan says that. The risk study controversy relates to **"some people don't want to hear the answer" that there isn't much more Colorado River water available** for additional development.
- n. Gunnison Basin roundtable– it's asking difficult questions, but unless we have the answers, we can't have a dialogue about a compact curtailment. How much additional development can we permit before it is too expensive for everyone to meet a Compact Call?
- o. The **upstream CRSP reservoir drought contingency plan is already completed.** All upstream reservoirs have their own working group.
- p. **In Colorado, 150,000 af of existing water projects are now anticipated on the West slope.** There's not a lot more consumptive use likely on the West Slope. Two additional demands are **new transmountain diversions or oil shale, and neither seems likely at this time.**
- q. Ken Ransford asked if the **Front Range's next move will be to purchase agricultural consumptive water rights on the West slope, and Eric Kuhn said there is no practical way to get this water to the Front Range** without building additional infrastructure.

5. **Abrams Creek application for \$45,000 from the CBRT WSRA and \$405,000 from the CWCB WSRA.** The project would **modernize the JPO irrigation ditch** that irrigates 80 acres south of the Eagle airport along I-70; the resulting ditch efficiencies would **leave 300 acre feet additional water in Abrams Creek** which harbors one of the purest remaining strains of Colorado River cutthroat trout.
 - a. The **score was 13.25 out of 14.25 total.**
 - b. Ken Ransford **recommended funding the entire \$45,000 basin roundtable request**, and encouraging the CWCB statewide WSRA to fund as much of it can, recognizing the funding limitations. He said the project squarely meets 2 of the CBRT BIP plan recommendations, sustaining agriculture and improving stream health. It also could head off a potential endangered fish listing. He suggested **that the CWCB could fund some of the \$405,000 request at the January 2017 board meeting, and more if the legislature provides additional WSRA funds in July 2017.**
 - c. Paul Bruchez suggested having the CWCB staff weigh in on this including Chris Sturm, Stream Restoration Coordinator. Paul recommended requesting the full amount there, and recognizes that we understand the funding limitations.
 - d. David Graf said **the project would not likely begin until 2018**, so delaying the CWCB Statewide WSRA funding for a year would not prevent the project from going forward.
 - e. The Next Steps committee agreed to recommend that the CBRT roundtable fund \$45,000, and that Jim Pokrandt write a letter encouraging the CWCB Statewide WSRA fund to fund as much as possible pursuant to the Next Step committee comments reported above.
6. **Grand Valley Water Users Association grant request to the CBRT WSRA for \$50,000,** 30% of the entire project, presented by GVWUA executive director Mark Harris.
 - a. **Previously the CBRT has given** three separate grants totaling \$45,000, \$42,700, and \$15,000, for **\$102,700 total.**
 - b. Our **BIP calls out sustaining the Government Highline Canal** as a recommended project.
 - c. This will **fund 4 projects**, also detailed in the November, 2016, CBRT minutes:
 - i. Task 1—Upgrading the roller dam electrical and control systems.
 - ii. Task 2—Rehabilitate the canal headworks.
 - iii. Task 3—Rehabilitate the roller tracks and canal concrete
 - iv. Task 4—replace the radial gates at the Canal Station 22 spillway.
 - d. **It scores at 11.75.**

- e. Brent Gardner-Smith commented that **the Colorado River provides safe boater passage from Aspen through Lake Powell but for 3 diversion dams in Debeque Canyon** at the Cameo roller dam, Price-Stubb dam, and the GVIC diversion at Palisade.
 - f. Mark Harris said that **improving the roller dam at Cameo to provide safe boating passage is not being envisioned**. He said that the Bureau of Reclamation failed to provide a whitewater park and **boating passage at the Price-Stubb dam** because the community of **Palisade could not raise the money to fund it**.
 - g. The GVVUA board of directors considered **allowing the public to walk along the Highline Canal but declined to do so after its attorney said this could open them to liability risk** if someone fell into the canal. Ken Ransford noted the **recreational use statute was designed to prevent the GVVUA from being liable** in this situation, and that there is no case in Colorado or the entire country where an organization has been held liable in this situation. **Denver Water permits the public to walk and bike along the 71-mile Highline Canal in Metro Denver**. It is designated as a National Landmark Trail.¹
 - h. The Next Steps committee **voted to encourage the CBRT roundtable to fund the entire \$50,000 grant request**.
7. The **John McConnell Math and Science Center is asking for \$200,000, \$25,000** from each of the **West Slope roundtables**, and \$100,000 from the CWCB statewide WSRA fund, which request will be made in September, 2017.
- a. Jenn Moore, executive director, made the presentation. The water exhibit is a series of water tables designed to educate school children about water use in Colorado and on the West slope. They have 15,000 student-guests a year in field trips and summer camps, and they hope to triple this to 45,000 per year.
 - b. **Ute Water has contributed \$65,000, and may fundraise up to \$250,000 total** for the water center. The water center is now under construction.
 - c. The JMMSC is **maintaining its public charity status separate from the Colorado Mesa University Water Center**. The exhibit will include a hydrology exhibit, a farm exhibit,
 - d. They hold **7 summer camps** each summer, and **reach out to Avon and to Rangeley** and Craig in northwest Colorado, and accommodate field trips from as far away as **Nucla and Naturita**.
 - e. The **total score was 12, it was rated as an educational piece**.
 - f. The Next Steps committee **voted to encourage the CBRT roundtable to fund the entire \$25,000 grant request** and that Jim Pokrandt in his approval letter urge the

¹ Bielenberg, R., "To Be Treasured and Enjoyed - Denver's Highline Canal!," Dec. 11, 2008, <http://activerain.com/blogsvie/832433/to-be-treasured-and-enjoyed---denver-s-highline-canal->

CWCB Statewide WSRA to fund as much as possible as with the Abrams Ditch request.

8. Bylaw changes

- a. **Can the CBRT add new voting members?** Ken Ransford commented that Russ George had earlier indicated that the basin roundtables could add voting members at will. He followed up with Russ George, and Russ said that after further reviewing the statute, he **does not believe it is possible to add additional voting members** other than the ones provided in the statute. However, Russ emphasized that the meetings are intended to be open and **members of the public can attend and speak.**
- b. Officer slate
 - i. **Chair is Jim Pokrandt**
 - ii. **One vice chair is Karn Stieglemeier**
 - iii. The other vice chair position has not been filled.
 - iv. **The secretary is Ken Ransford**, for which is compensated \$200 per month.
- c. **Stan Cazier recommended that we keep the same slate, and Carlyle Currier seconded. The Next Steps committee recommended the same slate.**