

**Interbasin Compact Committee Basin Roundtable**  
**Rio Grande Interbasin Roundtable**  
**ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES**  
**February 14, 2017**

**Attending - Those who signed in are as follows:** *Dale Wiescamp, Dwight Martin, Laura Archuleta, Stan Moyer, Mario Curto, Zeke Ward, Larry Sveum, Megan Holcomb, Junita Martinez, James Henderson, Heather Dutton, Nathan Coombs, Kirk Thompson, Rio de la Vista, Charles Spielman, Keith Holland, Eugene Jacquez, Mac McFadden, Anne Steinhage, Ann Bunting, Nicole Langley, Wayne Schwab, Cindy Medina, Ruth Heide, Travis Smith, Helen Smith, Judy Lopez, Christi Bode, Amber Pacheco, Karla Shriver, Allen Law, Kevin Terry, Jason Remshardt, Robert Getz, Matt Gallegos, Gene Farish, Sharon Vaughn, Craig Cotten, Bethany Howell, Brenda Felmlee, Emma Reesor, Andréa Bachman.*

**Welcome and Introduction:** Chair Nathan Coombs called the meeting to order at 2:06 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 January 10, 2017 Minutes:** Dwight Martin motioned to approve the January minutes. Heather Dutton seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**Approve Agenda:** One item - Kirk Thompson's request for a support letter from the Roundtable - was added to agenda item #9. Judy Lopez moved to approve the amended agenda, Keith Holland seconded, and the motion carried. The agenda was approved.

**Public Comment:**

- Heather Dutton shared that Travis Smith won the Wayne N. Aspinall "Water Leader of the Year" Award at Colorado Water Congress's annual convention. Travis is very deserving of this prestigious award. Heather read the article from Colorado Water Congress about the award and Travis's achievements. The Roundtable recognized and applauded Travis's efforts as a life-long advocate of the San Luis Valley and Colorado water issues. Travis thanked the Roundtable for the recognition and remarked that we've accomplished a lot together!
- Judy Lopez reminded the Roundtable about the Colorado Ag Water Alliance workshop on February 28 and passed around an RSVP form. In addition, each Roundtable member needs to send a bio to Judy for the Roundtable website.
- Emma Reesor announced that the Rio Grande Water Leaders Course, a partnership between the RGHRP, SLVWCD, RGWCD, and RGWCEI, will take place March 27-March 31. Applications are currently available for those interested and are due March 3<sup>rd</sup>.

### **Natural Resources Damage Program, Jennifer Robbins, CO Attorney**

**General's Office:** Jennifer was present representing the State of Colorado on Summitville mine recovery efforts. She announced that the State has \$1.6 million remaining in the fund and are planning to put together a solicitation process for projects. They are working within a quick timeframe, but want input to make sure the timeline works for those putting together projects for this process. Guidelines will be spelled out in the solicitation packet and projects need to be in the Alamosa River Watershed. Contact Jennifer with input or questions at (720) 508-6257.

### **Mountain Home Dam Rehab Engineering Project Funding Preview: Wayne Schwab, Trinchera Irrigation Company:**

Wayne presented a funding preview for the Mountain Home Reservoir Dam Rehab project. The Trinchera Irrigation Company oversees Mountain Home Reservoir and serves 47 stockholders, managing water for ~12,000 acres in the northern half of Costilla County. In addition, they are part of Colorado Parks and Wildlife's Mountain Home State Wildlife Area. The Colorado State Engineer's office is urging the Trinchera Irrigation Company to upgrade their dam. For the past 30 years, they have been using only one of the gates at Mountain Home Reservoir, but the State requires all gates to be working for a safe drawdown of the dam. They are now in the process of improving the outlet works on the dam, which is being completed in three phases. Phase 1 included a study of the reservoir and possible upgrades. This was completed last year thanks to the Rio Grande Roundtable, CPW, and TU. Phase 2 will be the engineering phase, which will include coming up with preliminary designs, alternatives, and construction cost estimates. They will meet and review with the State Engineer's office to come up with the final design, and construction and bid schedules. At that point, Trinchera Irrigation Company will be ready to complete Phase 3, construction.

This project has multiple benefits, including irrigation, fishing, recreation, boating, camping, and wildlife. The objective of the upgrade is to improve dam safety and management of water resources. The Total cost of Phase 2 will be \$100,000. Trinchera Irrigation Company is asking the Roundtable for \$70,000 from the basin account with \$30,000 of matching funds.

### **Rio Grande State Wildlife Area Design Project Funding Preview: Emma Reesor, RGHRP:**

Emma Reesor with the Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project (RGHRP) presented a funding preview on the Rio Grande State Wildlife Area (RGSWA) Design Project. The RGHRP was formed to implement the recommendations of the 2001 Study, which identified several priority issues facing the Rio Grande, including channel instability, loss of riparian vegetation, and aging diversion infrastructure. The RGSWA design project seeks to address these priorities. The Rio Grande flowing through the RGSWA is increasingly unstable, threatening water delivery to the San Luis Valley Canal, the Centennial Ditch, and the RGSWA wetlands. The Project addresses these concerns and protects critical wetland and riparian habitat through streambank stabilization, riparian restoration, and the replacement of the aging SLV Canal headgate and Centennial Ditch diversion dam. The project is a collaboration between Colorado Parks and Wildlife, the San Luis Valley Canal Company, the Centennial Ditch Company,

Riverbend Engineering, and the RGHRP to improve the Rio Grande for multiple uses – agriculture, environment, and recreation. The RGHRP is asking the Rio Grande Basin Roundtable for \$90,000 to fund the survey, design, and permitting for the improvement of the SLV Canal headgate, the Centennial Ditch diversion, and one smaller diversion project. These funds will be matched by \$123,990 raised by project partners. The project will result in 3 shovel-ready irrigation improvement projects, complemented by surrounding streambank stabilization and habitat restoration.

Emma answered questions from the Roundtable about the project. Charlie Spielman asked if there could be a site visit to the project before the next Roundtable Meeting. Emma said that she would try to set up a site visit before funding request at the next meeting. Another Roundtable member noted that drone footage would allow the entire Roundtable membership to see the area.

### **Radar Project Update: Joe Busto and Ken Howard:**

Joe Busto gave a quick overview of the Radar Project Report, which is a summation of the findings of the forecasting work completed in the Rio Grande Basin. The challenge of water in the west is 80% of water comes from snow, the system is over allocated, there are limited prospects of new development, and there is high water supply forecasting errors. These errors lead to the loss of money, because water is valuable! We are working on refining water supply forecasting using a modern, 21<sup>st</sup> century, technical approach that uses multiple approaches or “points of innovation”. Currently the Rio Grande Basin is a radar gap in the map, with no radar coverage. We’ve been working through RWEACT and the Roundtable to get temporary radars to fill this need for short periods of time, but the Rio Grande Basin needs a permanent radar. Lots of support and funds have been secured to help purchase the radar, but the Rio Grande Basin must take the lead. New forecast modeling is much better with radar data. Travis reminded the Roundtable that efforts to improve stream forecasting have been going on for many years and when the fire happened, RWEACT used a portable radar to improve public safety. Over time, Joe has put the partners and pieces together to make it possible for the Rio Grande to get a permanent radar. Nathan has been a local champion, investing a lot of time and energy in this project. Nathan thanked CWCB and Joe for working hard to keep the project moving and securing significant projects and funding. We are at a point where we can solve a lot of our forecasting issues with 21<sup>st</sup> century technology. A permanent radar is a perfect solution to our forecasting problems. The Roundtable and water community need to pool our ideas and resources and find an organization to provide the radar upkeep. Joe gave an overview of the process of seeking radar vendors and ball park costs.

Joe and Nathan answered questions about the project from the Roundtable. Kevin remarked that the project will not just benefit agriculture, but will benefit the environmental and recreation communities by creating better forecasting and more constant curtailment. Larry Sveum added that the radar will have a huge public safety component. Craig Cotten emphasized the multiple benefits of the project for forecasting, and beyond. Nathan gave an overview of the next steps for this project, including building partners to figure out how to make it possible financially and logistically.

The Roundtable thanked Joe for his presentation and work on this project.

**Request for Roundtable Support for CWCB Board Position, Heather Dutton and Kirk Thompson:** The Roundtable decided that anyone applying for the CWCB Board position could come to the Roundtable to request support. Heather Dutton and Kirk Thompson have both applied for the CWCB position and were present to request support from the Roundtable. Both Heather and Kirk presented to the Roundtable, discussing their background, roles, and interest in applying.

James Henderson made a motion to send a letter of support from the Roundtable for Heather Dutton. Kevin Terry seconded the motion. Karla Shriver motioned to amend James' motion and have the Roundtable fulfill both requests and send letters of support for both Heather and Kirk. Cindy Medina seconded the motion to amend the motion on the floor. The Roundtable discussed the request from each candidate.

The Roundtable voted on the amended motion and the motion failed. The Roundtable then voted on the original motion to send a letter of support for Heather Dutton. The motion passed with 12 votes (5 Roundtable members abstained).

**CWCB Update, Megan Holcomb:** Megan just stated working with CWCB and will be taking over for Craig Godbout as the Rio Grande Basin Roundtable representative. Megan thanked everyone for the warm welcome and emphasized that she is here to support the Roundtable in whatever way she can. Megan reminded the Roundtable that there are new criteria and guidelines for the WSRF Grants. The applications for funding from the Statewide WSRF account have exceeded the available funding. Pending legislative approval, additional funding will be added to the WSRF account in July. The Rio Grande Basin account is currently at \$303,000. The SWSI update is fully underway; there have been a few stakeholder meetings to develop project methodologies. The joint IBCC/Colorado Ag Water Alliance meeting in November focused on Alternative Transfer Methods. A summary report from this meeting will be made available. The Roundtable welcomed Megan!

**Division of Water Resources Update, Craig Cotten:** Craig reported that the preliminary forecast for the Rio Grande annual flow at Del Norte in 2017 is 795,000 AF (124% of average). Colorado will owe 254,000 AF to New Mexico and will need to curtail 22% of flow in the irrigation season. Early season forecasts for the Conejos' annual flow is 420,000 AF (137% of average) with an obligation of 206,000 AF to New Mexico. Currently the Rio Grande Basin snowpack is at 148% of average. Craig briefly explained how his office calculates streamflow forecasts and the data they use to make their predictions. It's looking like it's going to be a good water year.

Dick Wolfe, the State Engineer will be retiring this spring. The Rules and Regulations negotiations are moving along. The DWR continues to meet with objectors trying to reach agreements. The 8-week trial is scheduled for January 2018. The Rio Grande Compact meeting will be in Santa Fe on April 5<sup>th</sup>.

**IBCC Update, Travis Smith:** Travis reported that the next IBCC meeting will be in April. The IBCC continues to discuss the need to fund projects to implement the Colorado Water Plan.

**Subdistrict Update, Amber Pacheco:** Amber was present from the RGWCD to provide an update on the Subdistricts. For years, we have been working to form Subdistricts and we are making encouraging progress, she said. The judge approved Subdistrict 3 in January and now they are forming their Board of Managers. Subdistrict 4 (San Luis Creek) will go before the courts this spring. Subdistrict 6 is currently working on petitions. Each Subdistrict continues to make good progress.

Next meeting will be 3:00pm with a celebration for Travis Smith to follow.

The meeting adjourned.

Next Executive Committee Meeting: March 14, 2017 at 2:00pm  
San Luis Valley Water Conservancy District  
623 Fourth Street, Alamosa, CO

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Party at Calvillos in Alamosa to honor and thank Travis Smith  
for his service on the CWCB: March 14, 2017 at 5:30pm