

Interbasin Compact Committee Basin Roundtables

Rio Grande Basin Roundtable

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, November 14, 2017 2:00-5:00 p.m.

San Luis Valley Water Conservancy District

623 Fourth Street,

Alamosa, CO 81101

Chairman Coombs called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

1) Introductions

Those who were signed in/present were:

Ron Brink, Zeke Ward, Dwight Martin, Tracy Kester, Mike Gibson, Keith Holland, Stan Moyer, Robert Getz, Wayne Schwab, Ralph Curtis, Larry Sveum, Chuck Finnegan, Don Thompson, Kevin Terry, Charles Spielman, Karla Shriver, Brenda Felmler, Judi Perez, Steve Navnaotil, Judy Lopez, Peter Wise, Ruth Heide, Jim Ehrlich, Ivan Geroy, Erin Minks, Cleave Simpson, Cary Aloia, Nancy Butler, Emma Reesor, Ryan Unterreiner, Travis Smith, Rio de la Vista, Ann Bunting, Peter Clark, Craig Cotten, Mac McFadden, Anne Steinhage, Cindy Medina, Sharon Vaughn, Gene Farish, Gwen Nelson Freer, Bethany Howell, Nicole Langley, Heather Dutton, Andrea Bachman, and Helen Smith.

2) Approve Agenda

Chairman Coombs proposed moving the CWCB update from item 8 to item 4.5 with Heather Dutton giving the update for Megan Holcomb. The change was accepted by acclimation.

3) Approve October 10, 2017 Minutes

Peter Clark made the motion to approve the minutes with a second from Judy Lopez. Charles Spielman requested that this name be added to the list of those who were present. Travis Smith made the motion to approve the minutes with the correction with a second from Cindy Medina. The motion carried.

4) Public Comment

Judy Lopez announced that the Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association will be holding their annual Congreso de Acequias on January 20th, 2018.

Chairman Coombs closed the public comment period.

4.5) CWCB Update Heather Dutton

The Rio Grande Basin Account balance is currently \$ 263,887. In January, each basin will receive a refreshing of funds for a projected amount of \$120,000 which will bring the balance to \$383,887. The application deadline for the next round of Colorado Water Plan grants will be February 1st, 2018. The following round will follow on August 1st, 2018.

5) Funding previews/requests

a) RiGHT-Nancy Butler

The Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust is looking to place a conservation easement on the Paulson Ranch. The ranch is located in Rio Grande County on Swede Lane just west of Monte Vista. The project addresses multiple needs and interests and meets multiple Rio Grande Basin Plan goals including consumptive needs and historic uses. The total WSRA request would be for \$157,000 with \$18,000 coming from Rio Grande Basin funds. The official request will come at the January meeting.

b) Trinchera Irrigation Company- Tracy Kester and Nicole Langley

Tracy Kester, President of the Trinchera Irrigation Company introduced Nicole Langley.

Trinchera Irrigation Company is seeking to begin the implementation phase for the improvement of Mountain Home Reservoir. The reservoir was built in the early 1900s as were most of the major reservoirs of the Valley. Age has caused the dam and outlet gates to exceed their useful life and cannot meet SEO requirements. The deterioration of the gates has also caused the waste of water. Funding would allow for the structural and functional work to be done. Engineering Analytics has agreed to serve as contractor. Trinchera Irrigation Company is also working to partner with Colorado Parks and Wildlife, the Town of Blanca, and the community of Fort Garland to obtain a grant from Great Outdoors Colorado to make improvements to the landscape as well. Resources are thin and this project will rely heavily on the community. There will be a cash match of \$135,075 and a match in kind of \$159,000. The total WSRA request would be for \$872,438. The official request will be made at the January meeting.

c) Ritchfield Project- Nathan Coombs

The Conejos Water Conservancy District is looking to make improvements to their Richfield diversion as well as improve function at the Conconco Gauge. The structures are currently insufficient and the core is in need of an upgrade. These improvements would aid in lessening sediment issues and improve the channel. The budget is currently in flux. The official request will be made at the January meeting.

d) Wilderness Reservoir Project- Kevin Terry

Spruce Lakes located in the Weminuche Wilderness is made up of two privately owned reservoirs seven miles west of the Continental Divide. The issue is that hundreds of dead trees are clogging these lakes which could lead to potential for structural issues. The goal is to target and fall trees by using explosives which is the preferred method of the USFS. Some of the basin goals met include protection of water rights and benefitting recreational purposes. The total request would be for \$84,000 with half of the funds going towards explosives. The project would be planned and executed during the first week of September 2018. The final ask will come in January.

e) Colorado Open Lands- Judy Lopez

Colorado Open Lands is seeking to place a conservation easement on the Lazy EA Ranch located west of Del Norte on Pinos Creek. The project total is currently estimated at \$202,951. The property a gateway to the Rio Grande National Forest and 40% is prime soil and wildlife corridor, and is home to the historic Rogran Cabin. The property also has a water right for 1.4 CFS. There would also be ag to ag transfer and forbearance agreements. The owners have an interest in keeping the property in agriculture. Having a conservation easement would allow this opportunity and provide flexibility.

f) RGWCEI- Bethany Howell

The purpose of this project is to continue the Public Education and Public Outreach efforts of the Rio Grande Roundtable. This is an important tool for community engagement as well. This would be a three year process. Year one would include a revision of the Rio Grande Roundtable website. A web designer would build the webpages necessary for an interactive map, contact information and links to partner websites. Years two and three would be the upkeep of the site. Additionally, funding would also go towards a newsletter, articles and a series of video vignettes. The total WSRF request was for \$64,000.

Travis Smith made the motion to approve the request with a second from Ron Brink and Mike Gibson. The request was approved. Rio de la Vista asked for an annual update to which Howell and the rest of the Education Committee agreed.

g) Mineral County Fairgrounds Association- Zeke Ward

The Mineral County Fairgrounds Association is seeking a permanent water source for their property. A design to build a pipeline from the headgate at the Willow Creek Reclamation sight is already in place through the NRCS. The pipeline would safely carry water through the reclamation area to the fairgrounds. This was the lowest maintenance and most cost-effective option. The project also meets basin goals in that it has agricultural, environmental and recreational components. The request was made for the amount of \$9,281.99.

Ron Brink made the motion to approve the request which is the lowest costing project ever funded by the Rio Grande Roundtable with a second from Rio de la Vista. The request was approved on the condition that the WSRF application is fully completed.

DWR Update- Craig Cotten

The Rio Grande was above average for 2017 and the Conejos was significantly above average.

As of November 14th, all diversions ceased.

In the Supreme Court case, the Special Master gave his first ruling and each party gave their exceptions. Oral arguments from the United States and the State of Colorado will be heard before the Supreme Court around January 8th, 2018.

The trial for the rules and regulations has been postponed and is now set to begin on January 29th, 2018. There are now only a handful of objectors and the trial is expected to be complete at the end of February 2018.

The Division of Water Resources has taken 10-15 water users to court due to non-compliance with cease and desist orders. Cotten encouraged those in attendance to not ignore a cease and desist order.

IBCC and Sub district update- Cleave Simpson

The Annual Basis has been posted to the CWCB website. The next meeting of the IBCC will be held on November 30th, 2017. The purpose is to determine the role and function of the IBCC moving forward. The CWCB is set to initiate basin plan updates in 2018 as well. The IBCC will also be drafting a letter of intent and purpose for the new governor. Simpson also encouraged the group to be vigilant in the area of fighting export schemes.

Sub District one is working towards aquifer recharge with the recent acquisition of the West Medano Ranch.

The meeting was adjourned.

Next Roundtable Meeting: January 9, 2018 at 2:00 p.m.

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