

**Inter Basin Compact Committee Basin Roundtables
Rio Grande Basin Roundtable**

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, September 11, 2018 at 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 2:04 pm.

Those present/signed in:

Judy Lopez, Charles Spielman, Rio de la Vista, Ed Nielsen, Dwight Martin, Kelley Baily, Nicole Langley, Robert Getz, Patrick O'Neill, Kate Zeigler, Virginia Christensen, Nikita Christensen, Keith Holland, Nathan Coombs, Bob Kirkham, Heather Greenway, Cindy Medina, Peter Donovan, Travis Smith, Heather Dutton, Bethany Howell, Ruth Heide, Eugene Jacquez, Cleave Simpson, Brenda Felmlee, Hannah Thill, Erin Minks, Brian Caruso, Gene Farish, Dave Walsh, Mac McFadden, Anne Steinshage, Bob Rice, Wayne Schwab, Emma Reesor, Ronda Lobato, Megan Holcomb, Chris Shaffer, Sharon Vaughn, Ryan Unterreiner, Daniel Boyes, and Leah Weaver.

Dave Marquez, Brenda Anderson, Peter Clark, Jim Ehrlich, and Ann Hunting were excused. Chuck Finnegan voted by proxy.

Chairman Coombs began the meeting by reminding everyone to sign in and mentioned that this helps track absences and excused absences according to the rules in the bylaws.

Approve Agenda

Chairman Coombs proposed a subdistrict update from Cleave Simpson be added after agenda item 7. Nicole Langley asked that the M & I subcommittee give an update after agenda item 5. Dwight Martin moved to approve the agenda with the amendments and Charles Spielman seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Approve July 10, 2018 Minutes and August 28, 2018 Special Meeting Minutes

Chairman Coombs recognized a correction, as pointed out by Ruth Heide over email, that the August 28th meeting was mislabeled in the meeting minutes as an "executive session" when it should have been a "special meeting." Cindy Medina moved to approve both the July 10, 2018 and August 28, 2018 meeting minutes with this correction, and was seconded by Ed Nielsen. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Charles Spielman revisited a proposal he had written in July to change the direction of the Summitville project from a Superfund site to a profitable mineral extraction site. Since publishing his proposal, he has received a letter of support from Rio Grande County and met with the Colorado Department of

Public Health and the Environment, where he received no push-back. Charles is happy to provide copies of his proposal to anyone interested.

Emma Reesor encouraged Roundtable members to attend the Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project's film festival and fundraiser, Rio Reels. The event will be held on November 9, 2018 at ASU from 6-9pm. There will be several short films and speakers, awesome auction items, as well as food and drinks.

Chairman Coombs closed public comment.

Roundtable Tour Update: *Judy Lopez, PEPO Liaison*

Judy Lopez, PEPO liaison, thanked the Roundtable for attending tours both in and out of the Valley and stressed the importance of comparing the Rio Grande basin to others in the state. The next tour will be of the Denver municipal water system, focusing on water reuse and other projects, on September 27, 2018. The tour will leave from Alamosa at 5:30 am. Lunch will be provided and a \$20 stipend will be provided for dinner. Judy is looking for willing drivers who can seat four people and will pay mileage for those folks. The October tour will focus on how municipalities within the Valley manage water. Judy is trying to get a head count for both events, so reach out to her if you are interested.

M&I Study: *Nicole Langley*

Nicole Langley brought everyone's attention to the M&I Study, completed in May of 2014. She expressed concern around the alarms the study raised about what could happen in the future, and encouraged the Roundtable to pay attention to the study and focus on the points it raises. Chairman Coombs encouraged the Roundtable to review the Basin Implementation Plan, in which the M&I Study was included.

Funding Request: *Recharge Zone Mapping Project, Patrick O'Neill and Kelly Bailey, Mosca-Hooper Conservation District*

Before the presentation was given, Chairman Coombs raised the issue that the Roundtable requires that presentations have a preview and that all the data be digitally available to circulate to the mailing list a week before the meeting. Because the Roundtable had a tour instead of a regular meeting in August, the special meeting was held August 28 to preview the funding request, give suggestions, and help revise the application; however, only some members were able to attend. The Mosca-Hooper Conservation District did not make a digital copy of the application available to the Roundtable in time for all members to sufficiently review it. Chairman Coombs presented several options of how the Roundtable could proceed: vote today at the September meeting, vote over email after members had time to review the application, or wait and vote at the October meeting.

With input from Megan Holcomb, it was made clear that the Mosca-Hooper Conservation District would have to submit all materials by October 1st in order for the application to be reviewed by the CWCB at their November board meeting. Thus, voting at the October meeting would push review by the CWCB back to their meeting in the third week of January. Since, for Basin funds-only applications,

the CWCB estimates funds are available 45 days after approval, this would mean funds wouldn't be available until the end of February or the beginning of March.

Patrick O'Neill, spokesman for the Mosca-Hooper Conservation District, clarified that this would postpone the project by about a month but would not adversely affect the District's ability to look for contractors.

Discussion ensued which resulted in Rio de la Vista moving to postpone the vote on when to vote until after the presentation, specifying that this vote would be on voting by email versus voting in October. Judy Lopez seconded. Keith Holland, Charles Spielman, and Travis Smith agreed that the vote on approving funding should be postponed to another time. Chairman Coombs clarified that voting "yes" to this motion meant that you want to suspend the vote, which would be on whether to vote by email or in October, to after the presentation. "No" meant that the Roundtable could still potentially vote to vote on the funding request today, at the September meeting. After discussion, Rio and Judy rescinded their motion and the discussion was postponed until after the presentation.

Patrick O'Neil began the presentation by thanking the Roundtable for their feedback last year at their first approach, at the meeting on August 28, and today. The goal of the project is to determine how we can become more efficient in getting water down to the water table – why recharge works in some places but not others. This is important not just the San Luis Valley but in the whole western US, and the hope is that solutions from this pilot study could be applied in other locations. The study will use a common geophysical imaging technique, electrical resistivity imaging (ERI), to map differences in rock type 5-40 ft below the surface along a linear array. Not a lot of information exists about the geology at this depth in the Valley, so the study seeks to fill that gap. The pilot study will take place in Alamosa County on a township scale, starting at a location that is informed by input from the community and local landowners. They will drill test wells to ground truth the resistivity data, using existing wells as much as possible.

Chairman Coombs facilitated a vote, by show of hands, on when the Roundtable would vote on the funding request. Two wanted to vote today, at the September meeting; two wanted to vote by email; and the majority wanted to vote in October. It was thus determined that whether or not to fund the Mosca-Hooper Conservation District's request will be decided at the October Roundtable meeting.

Statewide Water Supply Initiative (SWSI) Update: *Kara Sobieski, Wilson Water Group and Russ Sands and Megan Holcomb, CWCB Staff*

Kara Sobieski presented on the agricultural diversion demand aspect of SWSI, and what agricultural diversion demand will look like in 2050. SWSI is designed to change and adapt as more data and models become available, with the goal of keeping planning for the future an active and well-tested process. Currently, the CWCB is at Stage 2 in the SWSI process – technical evaluations for different groups are underway, and hopefully reporting and results will be available later this year. This data will then be given to the Roundtables to review and use to help update Basin Implementation Plans.

Five different planning scenarios have been developed that allow for changes in demand in five different areas: population, conservation, climate change, agricultural needs, and water supply. These scenarios encompass a range of possible outcomes, from minimal change to an extremely stressed water supply and hot climate. Each scenario is intended to be an equally plausible situation in 2050 and each has different demands on the statewide water supply. In terms of the agricultural diversion demand, climate data, acreage, and crop type are considered to determine the irrigation water requirement, which is then combined with system efficiencies to come up with a final number of acre feet needed to divert or pump to be able to irrigate according to the crop demand. The current agricultural diversion demand for the Rio Grande Basin is estimated to be 1.8 million AF. The agricultural diversion demand will then be recalculated for each planning scenario based on the predicted factors characteristic of each scenario. Cleave Simpson pointed out that this does not factor in the water required for recharge to sustain the aquifer.

More information on the scenarios and their five components can be found in fact sheets on the CWCB website.

Subdistrict Update: *Cleave Simpson*

Cleave Simpson began by promoting a discussion put on by the Rio Grande Water Conservancy District, Tale of Two Rivers, which will compare the Rio Grande Basin with the South Platte Basin. This event will be held September 17, 2018 at 7pm on the ASU campus, in Porter Hall Room 130.

Challenges around drought were brought up at Water Congress. The Rio Grande is about to have its first decade period where the river hasn't reached 7,000 cfs and the first twenty year period where it hasn't reached 800,000 AF. In terms of the aquifer, 160,000 AF has been lost since January 2018, not including the September reading, which is expected to be even higher. Approximately 350,000 AF had been recovered since the beginning of Subdistrict 1, but now 800,000 AF more must be recovered in the next 12 years in order to meet the sustainability goal.

Subdistrict 6 was approved, which is the last subdistrict in the Rio Grande Water Conservancy District. The state engineer approved the water management plans for Subdistricts 2 and 3. A public hearing will be held September 18 to formally hear opposition to those plans before they are adopted. This means Subdistricts 1, 2, and 3 will be making replacements to the Rio Grande and Conejos next year based on their predicted impact.

To move forward, we must clarify what an agricultural economy means in the Valley and determine what value we put on a healthy aquifer.

Interbasin Compact Committee Update: *Cleave Simpson*

The funding task group met two weeks ago with the Keystone Group, a Walt and Gates Family Foundation group, to discuss funding to close the gap in state funding. Everyone should've received an email September 7 about this meeting. Surveys were also sent out on the IBCC process going forward.

Division of Water Resources Update: *James Heath*

The Rio Grande was forecasted by the DWR to have 214,300 AF in September, and the current models average about 200,000 AF. This is projected to increase to 285,000 AF for the annual index supply. This would put the obligation at 72,000 AF and leave us with a credit of 13,500 AF, despite a 0% curtailment the entire season. The credit will help reduce curtailment next year.

The Conejos was forecasted by the DWR to have 139,500 AF in September, and the current models average about 140,000 AF. This puts the annual supply at 160,000 AF, about 50% of average, leaving an obligation of 25,000 AF with 3,500 AF of credit.

The temperature is forecasted to be warmer than normal in both the 3-month and 13-month outlooks. The precipitation is forecasted to be above average for the 3-month outlook and a better than equal chance of being higher through April in the 13-month outlook. The DWR is still awaiting the judge's ruling on the new rules and regulations.

Colorado Water Conservation Board update: *Megan Holcomb, CWCB Staff*

Megan began by introducing Alex Funk, a new CWCB staff member who will be working in water resources as well as managing the agriculture bucket for the Colorado Water Plan grant program.

CWCB is redoing their website over next year or two to make resources more accessible. Please take their survey by October 1 at bit.ly/CWCBwebsite.

The CWCB is also trying to evaluate their communications plan and determine the best way to deliver information to different groups. There will be a small working group formed to take care of this over a six month period. Please take the survey to recommend group members and topics for them to tackle by September 20, at bit.ly/cwcbssurvey.

The Colorado Water Plan grants now have a streamlined review process, where grants are posted online first and then reviewed at the CWCB board meeting. The total ask at the next meeting is \$2.1 million out of a total \$7 million for the year. No applications were submitted for the Rio Grande Basin to the Water Supply Reserve Fund grant program at the September meeting, but there were 14 applications overall and 9 of those were for statewide funding.

The next CWCB meeting is September 18-20 in Steamboat Springs, and can be followed along online through the CWCB youtube live link. The next IBCC meeting is October 18 in the Southwest basin, location TBD. The TAP-IN initiative is an effort to get entrepreneurs and business leaders together with those struggling with water problems to foster networking and encourage creative solutions. The next meeting will coincide with the CWCB board meeting November 13-15 in Denver. The CWCB is looking for people to present water problems whose solutions could be applied elsewhere. A South Slope joint Basin Roundtable meeting will be held in November, date TBD, in Alamosa. A date will be selected soon based on the poll sent out by Emma Reesor. Lastly, there will potentially be a statewide summit next year, hopefully after the completion of SWSI as Basin Implementation Plan revision is beginning.

Chairman Coombs concluded the meeting by clarifying that there won't be another meeting or opportunity to discuss the Mosca-Hooper Conservation District funding request.

Chairman Coombs adjourned the meeting at 4:31 pm.

Next Executive Committee Meeting
Tuesday, October 9, 2018 from 1:00 – 2:00 pm

Next Roundtable Meeting
Tuesday, October 9, 2018 from 2:00 – 5:00 pm

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