



# Arkansas Basin Roundtable

PLANNING OUR  
WATER FUTURE

## ROUNDTABLE MEETING NOTES

April 23, 2019 – Pueblo Convention Center, Pueblo, CO

[www.arkansasbasin.com](http://www.arkansasbasin.com)

### **Roundtable Business**

Mark Shea called the meeting to order at 12:30 pm. Members and visitors introduced themselves. Twenty-two (22) members were present.

### **Approval of minutes of prior meeting**

*The meeting notes of the February meeting were approved by consensus. The March meeting was cancelled.*

### **Public Comment – none**

### **REPORTS:**

#### **Executive Committee – Mark Shea**

- We had a lively discussion regarding operational contract exchanges and how they might affect other arrangements. We will reach out to Bill Tyner for a presentation and will stay involved as the conversation develops.

#### **Colorado River Drought Contingency Plan (DCP) – Abby Ortega**

- CWCB is forming committees to look at the DCP with interested stakeholders. April 19<sup>th</sup> was the deadline if you wanted to be on a committee.
- Quarterly workshops will be held where the entire basin can come and be involved.

#### **IBCC Report –Jeris Danielson**

- We had an excellent IBCC meeting. Russ George is now the director of Interstate Compact Negotiations and Jeris is looking forward to where the IBCC might go under his leadership.
- There was a report from Rio Grande representatives on the San Luis Valley project. A new project has been proposed where they would pump 22,000 ac-ft out of confined wells on the north end of the basin, delivering it to the South Platte Basin. Project developers offered a \$50 million community fund and \$60 million to the Rio Grande Water Conservation District to retire water rights in the valley. Would be paying farmers \$2,500/ac-ft for the water they take. The project would cost \$750 million.
- The Projects Bill includes \$5.5 million for CWCB and water funding. The bill has not yet passed. BIP updates should be complete by November 2020 and the CWP updated by November 2022.
- The seven Colorado River Compact states have come to an agreement on Drought Contingency Plans for both Lower and Upper Basin States.
- The Walton Family Foundation has completed their look at financing water. Six areas have been identified, which would be funded equally over time.

#### **SWSI Implementation Working Group – Amber Shanklin, Abby Ortega**

- Draft BIP guidelines have gone out to the committee.
- The most current version of the guidelines will be emailed to the entire roundtable.
- They've been getting a lot of feedback that the basins are not ready. CWCB will likely increase efforts to bring information back to the roundtables for feedback.



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- The effort from CWCB is to promote a certain amount of consistency within the basins. However, “needless consistency is the hobgoblin of small minds” ~ Winston Churchill

## CWCB Report – Jack Goble, Ben Wade

### **Jack Goble**

- CWCB met last month in Ft Collins. They welcomed new board members for the Yampa, Colorado, and Denver basins.
- Russ George moved a couple of seats down and has replaced John Stulp.
- The CWCB Board approved 21 WSRF grants. Three grants were approved from our basin.
- The 2019 Work Plan for the Drought Contingency Plan was approved. DCP legislation has been signed into law.
- Next step is for the seven states to sign the DCP themselves – this should happen mid to late May.
- Lower basin states will likely take less water starting in 2020. The upper basin DCP allows us to study the feasibility of demand management.
- Demand management work groups are forming. Keep in mind that these work groups are technical working groups rather than stakeholder groups. The work product and solutions will be made available for public review and comment. As part of the work plan, there will be regional workshops held in order to keep folks informed. Mid-late summer first workshop is expected.
- HB 19-1327: This bill has been introduced as a method to raise money for water plan funding. It would allow for sports gambling; and a 10% tax would be levied on net proceeds. Funds would go to the following: Repayment of general fund, Admin costs associated with gaming, Gambling addiction prevention, State historical fund and Community college fund. Remaining funds would go to the Water Plan Implementation Fund. This bill passed out of the finance committee on 9-1 vote and has a lot of support from both parties. Estimates on how much this would raise = \$3 million in the first year. \$8-10 million annual potential.
- SB19-221: Projects Bill isn't expected to have problems.
- There is increased flooding risk this spring due to the high snowpack levels. Remember that there is a flood risk website in Colorado: [www.coloradofloodthreat.com](http://www.coloradofloodthreat.com) The website is active from May – September. It can also be found on Twitter: @COupdates
- Water availability and flood task force meets next week. Anyone may attend or call in.

### **Ben Wade**

- Webinars are available on the Colorado Water Plan website.
- Dept of Natural Resources new head is Tim Locke, who was formerly a Clear Creek County Commissioner.
- Colorado Water Loss Initiative meets in Pueblo West on April 25<sup>th</sup>, at 9 am. This is the first of four meetings to go through this training.
- Stream Management resource guide: [coloradosmp.org](http://coloradosmp.org). examples of best practices, methods, scopes of work examples. How to connect with others.

## Environment/Recreation Committee – Bob Hamel, Rena Brand

- The committee met in March. Attendance has been strong.
- The committee has been working closely with Chelsey and ARWC. Many Enviro/Rec priority areas are sitting dormant. To push them forward will require stakeholders that can run with projects. So many projects on the BIP list. CPW has over 100 on their list alone.
- CPW: still wants to get rid of the low-head dam upstream of the Steam Plant in Salida.



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- CPW: working on the Great Plains Reservoirs, trying to keep water levels up. These reservoirs belong to the Amity Canal folks.

## PEPO/ARBWF – Amber Weber, Bob Hamel

- The Forum begins tonight with the VIP dinner. The forum has grown, with a little over 200 registrants.
- This will be the 25<sup>th</sup> year of the forum. We're look at the state of water then and now. Snowpack was 116% this time of year in 1995, but then it just kept snowing.
- SWEAP meeting last week – they are making a strategic plan that will lead to an education plan.
- Working on webisodes with Sam Ebersole.

## Needs Assessment – Mike Weber

- A couple of water plan grants will be coming next month for letters of support.
- Please see the basin website for the process: [www.arkansasbasin.com](http://www.arkansasbasin.com).
- With Chelsey moving into the ARWC Executive Position, she will step down as Chair of the Needs Assessment committee, although she will stay very involved.
- Mark recognized Chelsey's work as head of the Needs Assessment Committee. Ben has complimented the Basin on the quality of our grant applications. Thanked her.
- Sandy suggested that the RT Chair make the next appointment. Mark is aware of one person interested in holding that position: Abby Ortega. Mark invited other members to express their interest in the position, but there was none.
- A motion was made, seconded and passed to accept Abby Ortega as Needs Assessment Committee Chair.

## Arkansas River Watershed Collaborative – Chelsey Nutter

- ARWC already had a lot of projects going on. Chelsey has been working on:
- Huerfano County – Spring Fire recovery work. Started with AmeriCorps crews. Clearing and snagging.
- Hayden Pass Fire recovery project. Flood plain mapping. More on this tomorrow afternoon at the forum.
- Lower Ark Valley working group meeting. Good conversation, pollutant trading, EPA memo.
- Grape Creek Project – looking at potential to increase storage at DeWeese Reservoir, for various benefits. Stream management planning. WSRF grant app to come.
- RFP for Science Plan.
- Monarch Project – US Forest Service contract. New technology to reduce fuel loading on steep slopes on Monarch Mountain.
- Chelsey would like to come to your communities, meet with you regarding how ARWC can help you with potential projects.
- Oil Creek – diversions in Canon City. Wanting to work with ditch companies and recreation. The whole stretch through Canon City could use restoration. We will use our next meeting to bring in stakeholders for that project.
- Chelsey and Mark attended the After the Flames Conference in Denver, which was a crash course regarding fire and flood. It was the first post-fire conference in the west, and was organized by COCO and Carol Ekarius, who has worked on these issues since the Hayman Fire. It emphasized having organized local groups, and communication plans in order to connect agencies with the local community. We have developed a lot of expertise in this basin. Waldo Canyon, Black Forest, Hayden Creek, Junkins, Spring Creek.

## BREAK



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**PROGRAM** - Please check out full presentations at [www.arkansasbasin.com](http://www.arkansasbasin.com).

## **Reclamation – Managing Water in the West:**

### **Fryingpan-Arkansas Project RiverWare Model Development and Application – Terry Dawson, Terry Stroh, Claudia Leon – USBR**

- Overview
  - Model Overview
  - Environmental Assessment (EA) Analysis
  - Future Model Development and Application. Forecasting
- Reclamation contracted Precision Water Resources Engineering to develop a RiverWare model of the Fry-Ark System. This presentation covered the development of the model, its components and major assumptions.
- It also went over the NEPA analysis for the Pueblo Reservoir Temporary Excess Capacity Storage Contracting Program and Site Specific Environmental Assessment for Donala Water and Sanitation District 40-Year Excess Capacity Storage and Conveyance Contract and Bureau of Land Management 40-Year Excess Capacity Storage Contract.
- It wrapped up by looking at future uses for the model and it's capacity for forecasting.

Arkansas River Basin Modeling Workshop: Thursday, April 25, at 2:00 pm. At Pueblo Water, 319 West 4<sup>th</sup> Street. Organized by Tyler Benton of CSU.

### **Lower Arkansas River 9-Element Watershed Plan: JMR to Stateline Watershed Plan – Blake Osborn**

1. Review context and need for watershed plan
2. What's in the plan?
3. Now what?

Motivation for the Watershed Plan: Plans alone cannot “do work”. Plans make efficient roadmaps for the best use of time, money, and effort.

#### Watershed Planning:

Colorado Water Plan

Arkansas River Basin Implementation Plan

Lower Arkansas River Watershed Plan – focuses on water quality

#### TIMELINE:

Cretaceous-old seabed

1800's: crop cultivation

Mid-1900's: Scientific Investigations

1999: CSU investigations

2016: Water quality Workgroup formed

2017: Watershed Plan & Pilot Projects start

Covered: Arkansas River below John Martin Reservoir to state line with Kansas. Nearly all stretches of rivers and tributaries have some kind of impairment.

#### 3 Critical Points:

1. Focused on non-point sources



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2. Not regulatory
3. Voluntary

## Summary:

1. The Lower Arkansas River Watershed Plan is a non-regulatory roadmap for improving water quality below John Martin Reservoir.
2. The plan has specific implementation goals for helping to reduce pollutant loads.
3. The plan is a “living document” and takes an “adaptive management” approach to implementing water quality improvements.

## **LAWMA Colorado Water Plan Grant/Loan Application – Richard Mehern and Don Higbee**

Lower Arkansas Water Management Association (LAWMA) has prepared a Colorado Water Plan application to purchase the West Farm Gravel Pit.

This presentation included a summary of LAWMA’s operations, the use of LAWMA’s shares, the proposal to purchase the West Farm Gravel Pit, the benefits of the project to LAWMA, project partners and the associated Water Sharing Agreement, the Colorado Water Plan grant application and associated CWCB loan, and ways that the project aligns with the Colorado Water Plan and the Arkansas Basin Implementation Plan.

Because this project was not brought through the Needs Assessment Committee process, it was not eligible for a letter of support from the roundtable, so the presentation was informational only.

Discussion: Roundtable members and members of the public asked questions and expressed concerns regarding the project.

## **Other matters from the membership - Mark**

## **NEXT STEPS/LINKS**

- Next Meeting – May 8, Pueblo Community College
- Arkansas Basin Roundtable: [www.arkansasbasin.com](http://www.arkansasbasin.com)
- PEPO: [www.pepoarkbasin.com](http://www.pepoarkbasin.com)
- Arkansas River Basin Water Forum: <http://www.arbwf.org/>
- CWCB: <http://cwcb.state.co.us/Pages/CWCBHome.aspx>
- Colorado Water Plan: <http://coloradowaterplan.com/>
- Colorado Flood Threat Bulletin: [www.coloradofloodthreat.com](http://www.coloradofloodthreat.com)
- Stream Management Plan Resource Library: <https://coloradosmp.org/>