

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

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MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday June 11, 2019 at 2:00pm
San Luis Valley Water Conservancy District
623 Fourth Street,
Alamosa, CO 81101

Chairman Nathan Coombs started the meeting at 2:03 pm.

Those present/signed in:

Judy Lopez, Cleave Simpson, Nathan Coombs, Cindy Medina, Rio de la Vista, Stan Moyer, Cary Aloia, Charles Spielman, Chuck Finnegan, Dwight Martin, Ron Brink, Brenda Anderson, Wayne Schwab, Nicole Langley, Daryl Kohut, Keith Holland, Elliott Salazar, David Marquez, Kevin Terry, Virginia Christensen, Ronda Lobato, Robert Getz, Brenda Felmler, Gene Farish, Peter Clark, Travis Smith, Allen Law, Heather Dutton, Matthew Gallegos, Michael Stansberry, Sheldon Rockey, Brenda Anderson, Emma Reesor, Emily Chavez, Jim Ehrlich, and Leah Weaver.

Bethany Howell had an excused absence.

Approve Agenda

Several changes were made to the agenda. They are as follows:

- Item #5 -the BOR WaterSmart Program, Rio de la Vista and Emma Reesor would speak; Jennifer Faler plans to present in more detail at the July meeting.
- Item #6, "Tom" is a typo that should instead read "Tim."
- Next meeting will be by July 9th, not July 10th.

Ron Brink motioned to approve the agenda, and David Marquez seconded. The amended Agenda was approved unanimously.

Approve May 14, 2019 Minutes

The minutes were amended to change Tim Gardner to Tim Carden. Dwight Martin motioned to approve the May minutes, and Ron Brink seconded the motion. The amended minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Comment: *Please limit your comments to 3 minutes.*

Chairman Coombs opened public comment by reminding the Roundtable that the Statewide Summit in Winter Park will take place September 25-26. He encouraged members to register soon, reminding them that the registration is free to RGBRT members. He also advised the group that there is some compensation available for travel and lodging and that those funds will be divided between the RGBRT members that register.

Darrel Kohut gave the group an update on the Rio Grande National Forest. The Park Creek, Rio Grande, Ivy Creek, Comstock, Cross Creek, Upper Rio Grande, and Rock Creek campgrounds are closed due to flooding. He further advised that Park Creek Rd (FR 380), Forest Service Road 250 above Jasper, East Willow Rd, and Beaver Creek Rd are closed due to flooding.

Rio de la Vista announced that Kevin Rein, State Engineer, is coming to do a talk at 7pm on July 15, at Adams State. The talk will be free and open to the public. She also thanked everyone who helped on her Colorado Water Plan grant, which was successful.

Bob Getz updated the group on the chainsaw use order for the wilderness. The order was rescinded, after the order was challenged in court. Relevant parties are working to increase their cross cut saw capabilities to reduce the need for mechanized equipment.

Emma Reesor announced to the group that community meetings for the stream management plans will be taking place over the next two weeks. The first will be the night of the Roundtable, June 11, in Saguache, followed by a meeting about the Conejos in Manassa on June 12. Two meetings for the Rio Grande will be held, with the first on June 17 at the Rio Grande Water Conservation District and the second on June 18 at the South Fork Community Center.

Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART Program – Emma Reesor and Rio de la Vista

Emma and Rio gave a brief overview of the WaterSMART program, encouraging the group to research the program and save their questions for Jennifer Faler's presentation at the July meeting. The Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project has successfully gotten a WaterSMART grant to help fund the stream management plan process, and Emma and Rio think this is an underused resource for valley projects. The WaterSMART Program is a good opportunity to get match for CWCB grants. The Program consists of two pots of money, one for watershed planning and data collection and the other for implementation.

Colorado Water Plan – Tim Wohlgenant

A statewide effort is currently underway to raise money to fully implement the Colorado Water Plan, led by a coalition of various interests. When the Plan was first written, it was estimated that \$20 billion dollars will be needed to fully implement. \$17 billion has been earmarked from existing sources of funding, leaving a \$3 billion shortfall. The coalition has identified six categories of priority funding needs: healthy rivers, watershed health and water quality, conservation and efficiency, productive agriculture, infrastructure, and Colorado compact obligations. Money raised through any ballot initiative would be distributed by CWCB to fund projects in these categories. Currently, the goal is to put a ballot initiative on the 2020 ballot that would levy some, yet to be determined, tax or fee and raise \$100 million. Prop DD, another ballot initiative regarding taxes on sports betting, is a separate ballot initiative that will be on the 2019 ballot and would raise about \$29 million in Colorado Water Plan funding.

In order to prepare for the 2020 ballot initiative, public awareness campaigning is starting now with the "For the Love of Colorado" campaign. The goal is to focus on water being critical to the things Colorado loves most, making people feel like they can be part of a solution, rather than afraid of the

impending problems. After Tim spoke, Cleave implored him to tie aquifers into the healthy rivers category, as the two are linked and critical to statewide sustainability. Others in the group expressed concern about the targeting of the ad campaign on the Front Range, to which Tim responded that outreach more generally will extend across the state. If you are interested in learning more or being a part of the coalition, please contact Tim at timwohlgenant@gmail.com.

Cenicero Project Preview – Elliott Salazar

The Cenicero Ditch was incorporated in 1904 and currently has 42 water users. The Ditch carries 18.3 cfs off Cenicero Creek, but currently has trouble in administration, as the headgate overflows and the diversion requires heavy maintenance. The ditch company is seeking support to replace their infrastructure, which will include an Obermeyer gate, headgate replacement, and streambank and channel shaping to improve erosion and reduce flooding. The Cenicero is priority #11, so these improvements would also help general water administration and compact obligations. NRCS has estimated that the total project cost will be \$1.1 million, with a WSRF request of \$373,800. Nathan confirmed that funds would be available to support this request when it is made formally in July. Elliott affirmed that he will include more details in the formal proposal and address environmental needs through bank stabilization efforts.

Radar Update and Plans – Heather Dutton, Cleave Simpson, and Nathan Coombs

Currently, radar data seen on weather sites are based on models. In a couple of weeks, that data will be real time, collected by the new radar, and visible on slvweather.com. Heather, Nathan, and Cleave completed a radar training to familiarize them radar operations. Michael from the Rio Grande Water Conservation District is putting together the website to compile the data and hopes that the end result will be a map that updates roughly every 8 minutes with real-time data. The hope is that the map will have interactive features that will provide viewers a 24-hour time span of information. Nathan added that the radar can also detect large bird and bat migrations, so making it available to educators is an added win. The radar project received funding from CWCB, RWEACT, and CDOT. Alamosa County is the official owner of the tower, and the project team is working to figure out how to advise the county and maintain the structure for the future. Alamosa County, the Rio Grande Water Conservation District, and NOAA all have servers storing the data.

Water Export Discussion – Nathan Coombs

Nathan encouraged committee members to check their email for a doodle poll so a meeting can be scheduled to kick off the process and hopefully provide a report at the next Roundtable meeting. Please let Emma know if you'd like to be on that committee.

IBCC Update – Cleave Simpson

There is no IBCC meeting until July, when it will be held jointly with the CWCB meeting in the Arkansas Basin.

Sub-district Update – Cleave Simpson

Operations of Subdistricts No. 1-3 started up again on May 1. Subdistrict 1 is in its 8th year; Subdistrict 2 is in its first month of replacing their depletions to the Rio Grande. Subdistrict 3 is in its first month,

replacing to the Rio Grande, Alamosa and Conejos Rivers. This means more than half of the irrigated acres in the valley are now operating under an Annual Replacement Plan.

Division of Water Resources Update – *Pat McDermott*

The Rio Grande Basin is currently at 639% of normal snowpack, a result of several monitoring sites still having snowpack on them even in mid-June. The snowpack, however, created a new 30-year maximum with the third snowstorm in May. The release capacity out of Rio Grande Reservoir is increasing from 1,200 to 1,500 cfs, though they have been storing about 800 cfs per day. As of the meeting, Pat estimated that the Rio Grande may not have reached its peak runoff yet. Beaver Reservoir was expected to spill the night of the meeting or the morning after, and Santa Maria Reservoir Company was intending to spill Continental Reservoir. Saguache Creek was starting to get some localized flooding and probably also hadn't peaked yet, which could result in flooding issues due to blocked culverts. On the Conejos, Platoro Reservoir was storing 900 cfs per day. On the Alamosa, the current flow was almost three times the average, covering all water rights on the river, though Pat predicted the flow had probably peaked. The three-month outlook predicted above average precipitation with average temperatures, followed by more above average precipitation for the August – October outlook.

Chairman Coombs adjourned the meeting at 4:01pm.

The next
Executive Committee meeting will be July 9, 2019 at 1:00pm

Next Roundtable Meeting: July 9, 2019 at 2:00pm
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