

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

**MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday July 9, 2019 at 2:00pm  
San Luis Valley Water Conservancy District  
623 Fourth Street,  
Alamosa, CO 81101

Chairman Nathan Coombs started the meeting at 2:02pm.

Those present/signed in: Rio de la Vista, Nathan Coombs, Cindy Medina, Robert Sakata, Peter Clark, Christi Bode, Daniel Boyes, Ed Nielsen, Taylor Applewhite, Virginia Christensen, Wayne Schwab, Peggy Godfrey, JoAnn Slivka, Ronda Lobato, Mario Curto, Daryl Kohut, Chuck Finnegan, Charles Spielman, Karla Shriver, Bethany Howell, Elliot Salazar, Kelly DiNatale, Cleave Simpson, Ashley Rust, Emma Reesor, Keith Holland, Gene Farish, Erin Minks, Cathy Morin, Benton Line, Ann Bunting, Kirk Russell, Jenny Nehring, Allen Law, Emily Chavez, Cary Aloia, Nicole Langley, Sophia Sigstedt, Craig Cotten, Jennifer Faler, Dagmar Llewellyn, Brenda Anderson, Kate Ryan, Brenda Felmlee, Megan Holcomb, Elliott Salazar, Jr., Heather Dutton, and Leah Weaver.

Judy Lopez, Jim Ehrlich, Greg Higel, and James Henderson had excused absences.

**Approve Agenda**

Karla Shriver motioned to approve the agenda as written, and Ed Nielsen seconded. The agenda was approved unanimously.

**Approve June 11, 2019 Minutes**

Keith Holland motioned to approve the June 11, 2019 meeting minutes as written, and Wayne Schwab seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Chairman Coombs reminded the group that the C-9 Summit for the Roundtables will be held September 25 and 26 in Winter Park. Since there is funding available to help cover travel costs, he asked everyone to please register by August 30, so funds can be distributed to those who will be attending.

Chairman Coombs opened a discussion about moving the next Roundtable meeting to Saguache. The purpose would be to update folks within the Saguache community about Renewable Water Resources water export proposal and the facts and fiction within their outreach efforts. It was decided the August Roundtable meeting will be held at the Road and Bridge building in Saguache, CO. The meeting will be held on August 13 from 5-7:30pm. Ed Nielsen volunteered to take care of the reservation and it was decided that no executive committee meeting would be held in August.

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

Katie Dokson, Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area, opened public comment by inviting the group to a documentary showing in celebration of the Heritage Area's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The documentary focuses on early settlement of the Manassa area, including early water use, culture, and religion. The showing will be on Friday, July 19 at the Manassa Opera House.

Rio de la Vista reminded everyone about the talk with State Engineer, Kevin Rein, that will be held on Monday, July 15 in McDaniel Hall, Room 101 on ASU's campus. The event is free and open to the public.

Heather Greenwolf announced a series of water-related talks in the Creede community. The talks will focus on engaging summer residents and cultivating an appreciation for their water resources. The talks will be every Tuesday in July at the Antlers Riverside Restaurant. Speakers include: Craig Cotten, Pat McDermott, and Cleave Simpson.

#### **Update from Water Export Subcommittee Meeting – *Nathan Coombs***

On behalf of the Water Export Communication Subcommittee, Chairman Coombs, reported that the group would like to develop a one-page fact sheet about water resources in the Valley to combat some of the misinformation that has been conveyed regarding the water export proposal. This would potentially be followed by a series of one-page information sheets on topics such as history of water exportation in the Valley, the challenges that these schemes pose to the water community, conservation as an alternative to export, and the Colorado Water Plan. These resources could then be shared across organizations to keep messaging consistent. Lastly, Cleave Simpson has reached out to the Metro Roundtable, and plans to visit them in August or September to talk about the Renewable Water Resources water export plan.

#### **Water SMART Program Presentation - *Jennifer Faler and Dagmar Llewellyn, Bureau of Reclamation***

Jennifer Faler introduced Dagmar Llewellyn, who spoke about the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Programs. These programs offer opportunities for water managers to partner with the federal government, who can provide funds and expertise to empower work that is already being done on a local level. There are six WaterSMART Programs: Basin Study Program, Title XVI Program, WaterSMART Grants, Water Conservation Field Services Program, Drought Response Program, and Cooperative Watershed Management Program. Each program provides a combination of funding, planning facilitation, and technical assistance for projects within the focus area.

Additionally, Dagmar informed the group of efforts in New Mexico to complete a Basin Study Program project on the Rio Grande, which could be expanded to include the Colorado portion of the basin.

The goal of the Study is to plan for future gaps in water supply and demand, in four key areas: projections of future water supply and demand; analysis of existing water and power operations and infrastructure; development of adaptation and mitigation strategies; and trade-off analysis of these strategies. If Colorado decided to participate, there would be flexibility in the timeline based on how long it takes to receive funding, as well as in how independent or coordinated the New Mexico and Colorado studies would be. Please contact Dagmar at [dllewellyn@usbr.gov](mailto:dllewellyn@usbr.gov) with more questions.

#### **Cenicero Project Funding Request - *Elliott Salazar***

Elliott Salazar presented his funding request for improvements to the Cenicero Ditch on the San Antonio River. The project would replace the ditch's diversion dam and headgate and stabilize banks in the vicinity of the diversion. This would help mitigate issues with overflow, which causes flooding and erosion in the area and makes water administration more challenging, as well as reducing the need for maintenance with heavy equipment. The Ditch Company is partnering with NRCS on the project and plans to hold a meeting between the NRCS biologist and the contractor to make sure the environmental needs of the area are met. The original ask of the project is \$373,800, but they would like to request an additional \$50,000 to hire Wetland Dynamics as a consultant on how to preserve the existing habitat during construction. Heather Dutton suggested also consulting with Colorado Parks and Wildlife to make sure the diversion is tailored to the needs of the local fishery.

Rio de la Vista motioned to approve the project for \$373,800, with up to \$50,000 in additional funding for stabilization and restoration split proportionally between the statewide and basin funds, provided the Ditch Company makes the suggested changes and the Executive Committee approves the updated application. Cindy Medina seconded the motion, which passed unanimously

**Letter of Support Request for Water Engineering Education for the Next Generation NSF RET Program - Ashley Rust, Colorado School of Mines**

Ashley Rust, a member of the Hydrology Department at the Colorado School of Mines, requested a letter of support from the Roundtable for her Colorado Water Plan grant. Currently, Ashley helps run the Water Engineering Education for the Next Generation summer program, funded through the National Science Foundation. The program seeks to improve the quality of STEM education by exposing school teachers to new research and hands-on applications. The CWCB grant would fund a field trip to the San Luis Valley for participating teachers for three years, as well as a videographer for each trip to create a video for them to take back to their classrooms.

Charlie Spielman motioned to write a letter of support for the grant, and Cleave Simpson seconded. Jenny Nehring encouraged Ashley to include education on the water export threat and the importance of water to the valley in the curriculum. The group passed the motion unanimously.

**Terrace Reservoir Project Update - Virginia Christensen**

Virginia Christensen, representing the Terrace Irrigation Company, updated the group on the Terrace Reservoir Outlet Works Inspection project. The contractor reported in June that there is no imminent concern for the reservoir; engineers walked the pipeline and analyzed ultrasonic tests. They recommended further monitoring through ultrasonic tests for two years, followed by testing every five years if no changes occur. They estimated that the pipeline would be in decent condition for 9 years, or 20 years if lined. The Company will also continue to monitor the reservoir's gates and investigate costs for rebuilding the road if the pipeline does need to be replaced in the future. Such a project would cost several million dollars and be a large undertaking. The Company also plans to apply for a Colorado Water Plan grant to replace a headgate on the Alamosa River and install automation and requested a letter of support from the Roundtable. The Roundtable agreed by acclamation to provide a letter.

**IBCC Update - Cleave Simpson**

The next IBCC meeting will be in conjunction with the CWCB meeting July 17-18.

**Sub-district Update - Cleave Simpson, RGWCD**

Cleave invited the group to the Rio Grande Water Conservation District quarterly meeting, which will be Tuesday, July 16. The meeting will start at 8am at the Rio Grande Water Conservation District conference room. The meeting will focus on subdistricts rather than the usual organization updates, with all six boards of managers will be attending, as well as the State Engineer, Kevin Rien.

Additionally, Cleave showed the group the yearly confined aquifer pumping report, put out every July by the state. The report showed metered well use in subdistricts 3, 4, 5, and 6; in 2018, the four areas combined pumped 210,000 AF, which is down from previous years. The report can be accessed from [www.water.state.co.us](http://www.water.state.co.us), DWR's homepage, by going to Groundwater > Ground Water Administration > Use and Measurement Rules > Division 3: Rio Grande River Basin Rules (SLV) > Five Year Average Groundwater Withdrawals in Confined Aquifer Response Areas per Rule 8.1.5

**Division of Water Resources Update - Craig Cotten**

Craig Cotten reported that snowpack peaked this year at 22 inches basin-wide, 146% of average. The SNOTELs reached roughly zero snow-water equivalent on July 2, though some clearly remains at higher elevations. Precipitation is forecasted to be above average for the next three months, as well as for the Sept-Nov and Nov-Jan outlooks.

The annual flow forecast for the Rio Grande has risen to 950,000 AF (148% of average), resulting in a 380,000 AF (40%) delivery obligation. Curtailment is currently at 40%, higher than normal due to the high obligation. This is the highest water year since 1997.

On the Conejos, the annual flow forecast is 450,000 AF (148% of average), with a 232,000 AF (52%) delivery obligation and 50% current curtailment. This is the highest water year since the mid-1980s on the Conejos system.

Both systems were actually below average for flow until May, then things warmed up and have since been significantly above average. The Rio Grande peaked at roughly 8,000 cfs, resulting in some damage to property. The Rio Grande Reservoir is three-quarters full at 39,000 AF and will be releasing that water as quickly as possible, (currently at 1500 cfs) so work can begin on the dam. Elephant Butte Reservoir is at approximately 560,000 AF and continuing to rise.

**CWCB Update – Megan Holcomb**

Megan Holcomb announced that a pdf would be sent around with information on the upcoming summit, as well as the usual grant numbers. The Rio Grande Basin Account is currently at \$132,000, and the Statewide Account is at \$1.9 million. Additional funds will come in January 1 and April 1.

Chairman Coombs adjourned the meeting at 4:16 pm.

The next  
Executive Committee meeting will be September 10 at 1:00pm

Next Roundtable Meeting: August 13, 2019 at 5:00pm  
Road and Bridge Building  
305 3<sup>rd</sup> St  
Saguache, CO 81149