

Minutes of NPBRT Meeting: 1-21-20
USFS Conf. Room (3-5 PM) 100 Main Street, Walden, CO

Members/Liaisons Present

*Mike Allnutt
*Jim Baller
*Kent Crowder
*Mark Hackleman
Debbi Heeney (NRCS)
Curran Trick (Liaison to & member of CWCB)
*Pat VanValkenberg
*Barbara Vasquez
Kincaid Waldron (Water Commissioner)
*Ty Wattenberg
*Rick Wyatt
Jim Yarbrough (USFS)

Members/Liaisons Absent

*Wade Allnutt
Paula Belcher (BLM)

Lauren Berrien (Water Commissioner)
*Coby Corkle
*Blaine Evans
David Graf (CPW)
*Randy Miller
*Carl Trick II
Tara Wertz

Others Present

Adam Behny (CPW)
Craig Godbout (CWCB)
Greg Johnson (CWCB)
Erin Light (CDWR-Div 6)
Casey Setash (CSU)
Kara Sobieski (Wilson Water Group)
Kari VanValkenburg

I. Introductions/Agenda Review

Agenda was reviewed, amended to include a brief update from Casey Setash on the Irrigated Meadows project and approved.

II. Approval of Minutes for NPBRT 9-17-19 meeting

The draft minutes of the 9-17-19 meeting were not available but will be distributed with the minutes of this meeting.

III. Discussion of membership, IBCC representation & C-9 Summit- Ty Wattenberg

Ty reported that membership had not changed except for the representation for the CSU Extension. The new Extension Agent has been identified but not yet started in the job. We currently have 13 voting members and are looking for up to 2 more. We are still also seeking two volunteers to serve as IBCC representatives from the basin.

IV. North Platte Basin Airborn Cloud Seeding Project Update- Ty Wattenberg

Ty gave a brief update on the project. Two flights were conducted so far this winter, one on Jan 1 (1.3hrs) and a second on Jan. 3 (3.6hrs), both along the Never Summer Track 2, and deployed a total of 256 ejectables.

V. Presentation of CCC 2020 Renewal, WSRA grant application -Zach Schwalbe, CoAgMET Manager, Colorado Climate Center, Colorado State University

Craig Godbout helped frame the plan for continuation of the project to determine the crop coefficient for high mountain hay in the North Platte Basin. The existing project will be split into two parts because Wendy Ryan has left CSU and is now with Colorado River Engineering. Zach Schwalbe, CoAgMET manager, will take over the weather data collection part of the project, which requires a new grant application discussed below.

Lysimeter: Only 2 years of solid data have been collected for direct measurement using the lysimeter in irrigated hay meadow in Cowdrey and this is due to equipment problems that took about 2 years to resolve. The NPBRT has heard multiple project updates on this aspect of the work. When the project was initiated, Wendy Ryan was with CSU and

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conducted both the lysimeter data collection as well as the parallel weather data collection, which is needed to independently calculate the crop coefficient for comparison to the direct measurement. Wendy has moved on to Colorado River Engineering, but is interested in completing the project. There are sufficient funds remaining in the grant (approx. \$58,000) to support the collection of 3 more years of lysimeter data. A vote of the Roundtable requested to change the fiscal agent for those funds before action is taken to do so by CWCB. A motion was made by Rick and seconded by Kent to have the Chair write a letter of support to CWCB for this change in fiscal agent. The motion was carried unanimously. **Weather:** Zach explained the weather collection WSRA grant application for approximately \$17,800 with match from CSU. It will support the collection of weather data for 3 years. He explained his plan for preventative maintenance of the apparatus as well as collection of data. And he assured the RT that if the equipment goes down he will be the one to make the trip to North Park to repair it and bring it back online. Craig and Zach responded with a 'yes' when Barbara asked if Wendy was prepared to integrate both types of data, do the crop coefficient calculations and produce the final report. The discussion by RT members indicated strong support for this two-pronged approach. Barbara moved to support the separate WSRA grant application for the weather data collection. After a second by Jimmer, the motion was passed unanimously.

VI. Brief update on Irrigated Meadows Phase II- Casey Setash, CSU

Casey is the graduate student who is responsible for the monitoring of waterfowl for this joint project between DU, CSU and CPW. She gave a verbal update on a pre-project assessment of duck nests on 4 ranches and the Refuge last season, totaling over 700 acres. The habitats assessed included irrigated hay meadows, ditch edges and stream riparian corridors. It was a late spring and for that reason many of the early nests failed. In her monitoring, they only found 26 nests, considerably fewer than anticipated. Data is still be analyzed so there are no conclusions yet to share. However, in response to questions by RT members, she indicated that the majority of nests found were mallards and they seemed to nest in all three types of habitat. Gadwalls, however, were more common in the ditch edge and riparian corridor habitat. In response to a question on predation, she said they see it but haven't included quantification of predation in their scope of work.

VII. NP-BIP and Colorado Water Plan update- Greg Johnson, Section Chief, Water Supply Planning Section, CWCB & Kara Sobieski, Wilson Water Group

Ty handed out hard copies of the North Platte BIP (2015) to RT members. A digital copy can be found at https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/Final%20NPBIP_4-17-15.pdf

Greg and Kara presented the results of the Technical Updates developed in 2019 to support the Basins in preparing the updates to their Basin Implementation Plans. The powerpoint presentation is being distributed with these minutes so this summary will remain high level. One of the first slides lists the Core Duties of the Basins, which include

- Basin Scoping
- Improve Project Data
- Refine Technical Update Findings
- Draft BIP
 - Vol.1- High level, short, goals, project list
 - Vol. 2- Detailed supporting material, history, even the 2015 BIP in full
- Process Efficiency

A number of slides show the results of the Technical Update which was done in a manner

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to fit all basins, but basin-specific data can be extracted and was shown. The results for each key variable were shown as outputs for the 5 different future (2050) scenarios which included impacts of climate change, population growth and adaptive behaviors. Environmental/Recreational water demands were assessed using the Flow Tool developed primarily in the Yampa-White and Colorado River Basins. It includes three nodes in North Park: Michigan River, Illinois River and North Gate on the North Platte. One of the goals for this round of planning is to use a quantitative model to put Ag, M&I and E&R on the 'same footing'. During Kara's section of the presentation, which focused on Ag demand and scenario planning, there were a number of questions about how the ranchers in North Park could develop innovations and adaptive approaches to make irrigated agriculture for high mountain hay more efficient without sacrificing yield and/or acreage irrigated. Ty led a brief discussion during which Jimmer, Debbi and others commented that the economics of agriculture in North Park wouldn't support changes to irrigation practices. Kara explained that these scenarios were developed for a statewide approach and that there was clear understanding that North Park, with its climate and crop, was fairly unique in the State. The time line for the work ahead is aggressive but there will be assistance for each basin. It includes CWCB hiring a general contractor for both the BIP and CO Water Plan updates. That contract was awarded to Brown and Caldwell. One or more local experts can be identified and recommended by the RT. To support each BIP update, \$290k has been made available out of CWCB construction funds for the following:

Local Expert(s)	\$120k
Subject matter expert(s)	\$ 20K
General Contractor (BIP work)	\$140k
Workshops	\$ 10k

The timeline is pretty aggressive. A Request for Quote for the NPBRT update work was sent to Ty last week but he was required to hold it confidential until this meeting.. It will be sent to RT members, along with Greg and Kara's presentation, with these minutes by 1-22-20. The urgency is driven by the requirement to publish the RFQ by Jan. 28, the RT will have ranked the responding candidates for the local expert(s) by Mar.27, the general contractor will have them hired by Apr 10 and will hold kick-off workshops before the end of April. Deadline for completion of the BIP update is the end of 2021. The Colorado Water Plan update is to be completed by end of 2022. Greg commented that part of the statewide work was to create a new database to warehouse the information for all the basins as well as the Colorado Water Plan.

VIII. CWCB/IBCC – Curran Trick,

CWCB: Curran reported that the next CWCB meeting will be next M/T in Westminster in connection with the Colorado Water Congress which is the following 3 days. A draft Jan 2020 WSRA balance sheet is available which shows the NPBRT balance at \$867,610. A copy is distributed with these minutes. Curran encouraged the RT to continue to develop and propose unique and innovative projects, using the airborne cloud seeding project and the Walden floating solar array as an examples.

Barbara commented that the Colorado Energy Office took notice of the floating array, 1st in CO and 5th in the country at the time, and hired a consultant to survey all the water bodies of size in CO as potential sites for floating arrays. The final report should be available in the next month or two and she will distribute it to RT participants.

Curran went on to encourage members to consider volunteering as IBCC rep. Next meeting will be held March 4 & 5. Currently only 3 meetings are in consideration this year, although

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the frequency of meetings could change. The unique perspective of the North Platte is valuable in the discussions that occur at the IBCC. She also showed a notebook with In Stream Flows proposed for the CWCB to consider at their meeting next week and she welcomed interested RT members to review it after the meeting. There is only one ISF in Div 6, in Rio Blanco County.

IX. Old Business/New Business

Deb Heeney said she would give an update at the next meeting on projects already funded. The 2017 & 2018 projects are all 'on the ground'. Some of the 2019 projects are completed, but the largest one: Grizzly Creek is about 80% done. The Van Valkenburg and Rattler projects will be installed in 2020. She commented on her intention to bring one more large application with multiple shovel-ready structural projects forward in the next month or two.

X. Date for the next meeting

Meeting was set for Tuesday Feb.18 from 6:30-8:30pm in the conference room of the USFS building.