

Minutes of NPBRT Meeting: 5-21-19
USFS Conf. Room (6-8 PM) 100 Main Street, Walden, CO

Members/Liaisons Present

* Wade Allnutt
* Jim Baller
Paula Belcher (BLM)
* Kent Crowder
* Mark Hackleman
Debbi Heeney (NRCS)
* Randy Miller
* Carl Trick II
Curran Trick (CWCB Rep)
Curtis Utley (CSU Ext.)
* Pat VanValkenberg
* Barbara Vasquez
* Ty Wattenberg
Tara Wertz
* Rick Wyatt
Jeremiah Zamora (USFS)

Members/Liaisons Absent

* Blaine Evans
* Scott Fischer
David Graf (CPW)
* Mike Honholz
* John Rich

Others Present

Lauren Berrien (Water
Commissioner)
Scott Hoffner, Crosby Creek Ranch
Greg Johnson (CWCB)
Coy Meyring
Matt Sinclair (State Forest State
Park)
Russ Sands (CWCB)
Casey Setash (CSU)
Kincaid Waldron (Water
Commissioner)
Rick Wamsley

I. Introductions/Agenda Review

Agenda was accepted as proposed.

II. Approval of Minutes for NPBRT 10-23-18 meetings

The minutes of the 10-23-18 meeting was approved as written with minor corrections.

III. Discussion and Vote on WSRF Grant Application for \$16,750 in Basin Account Funds for the Ross Reservoir Dam & Outlet Repair Submitted by Crosby Creek Ranch, LLC - Voting members of Roundtable will vote on Roundtable approval of this WSRF Grant Application - Scott Hoffner, Managing Partner, Crosby Creek Ranch LLC

The application for dam and outlet repair is not asking for a large sum, but the project itself has a complicated history and current dilemma. Scott spent time to review the details of his challenges with this project application. The original storage right for 32 AF dates back to 1911. An 8ft dam was construct for 81AF in 1919. Then a larger dam (23ft, without a spillway) was built for 165AF in 1958. It failed. Scott bought the property in '96 and rebuilt the original dam. He was told the old storage right had been abandoned, but it was actually in limbo. He received a letter in 2010 from the State Engineer regarding the abandonment. He went to court and was able to preserve (notification in 2012) the original 32AF right using the dam sight 40-50' upstream from the failed 165AF dam. He subsequently submitted an application to the State Engineer to do repairs two years ago. To do the repairs he needed a USFS special use permit that, up to now, has been denied. The State Engineer's stipulation is that the repairs (to preserve the 32AF right) must be completed by EOY 2019. USFS requires a NEPA to issue the permit. Scott has offered to pay Kelly Coffey to do the NEPA for the FS. The plan for the repair is to use Rick Wamsley's company to do the construction. The dam would have an 18" pipe and a robust spillway. The location of the blown out dam was filled in by beavers, but the beavers are gone. The FS has also required Scott to pay rent at \$1500/year. Scott protested and asked for a

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waiver. He researched the Forest Service files. There were 7 SUPs in the system in the area, and all were given waivers. Scott highlighted that the restored Ross reservoir that would be created by the dam would be shared use: his agricultural use and public use for recreation.

He also found in the FS files a 4-5 page letter describing a plan to enhance the Ross Reservoir from '94-'95 that would include a trail to Hidden Lakes and an access for handicapped individuals.

Scott's bottom line is that he won't pay rent to exercise his right to store 32AF for irrigation and public recreation and hopes the FS will grant the waiver. He has also offered to maintain the FS road into the reservoir. There are two, the upper road which the FS has closed and the lower road which has a 3.5% grade. He also offered to create camping sites. Both offers have been turned down by the FS.

Scott asked the RT how he might proceed with the WSRF grant application. Scott underscored how beautiful the Ross Reservoir is in this basin with its blue-green water and emphasized that he wants to do whatever he can to save it. It was suggested he could petition the State Engineer's office (Erin Light) to grant an extension, given the current bottleneck with the FS which may be resolved given enough time.

Kent put the grant application to a vote. It was passed unanimously by the voting members present at the meeting. Kent will write the letter to CWCB.

IV. *Discussion and Vote on WSRF Grant Application for \$242,769 in Basin Account Funds for the Jackson County Water Structure Improvement Project (2) Submitted by Owl Mountain Partnership - Voting members of Roundtable will vote on Roundtable approval of this WSRF Grant Application* - Debbi Heeney, District Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service

Debbi provided the application and the individual project details in advance of the meeting. The application requests \$242,769 (58%) in Basin Funds for a combination of projects budgeted to total \$419,476. The Basin funds would include an 8% overhead to Jackson County Water Conservation District for administration. Matching, in-kind and cash, are provided by the NRCS and private property owners for whom the project is to be constructed. She walked through the 9 different structures that would be built or improved plus the lining of one ditch. The minutes won't capture all the details of her descriptions because they are provided in the application plus its attachments. The large gap in magnitude of funding requests between the 10 projects was highlighted when she described the Big Grizzly project to be built for the Ray Ranch. It includes a head gate and separate diversion structure. The total cost projected for the project is \$225,568 and the requested Basin funds are \$138,419 or 57% of the basin funds requested by the combined projects. There were questions and discussion about the efficiency of the spending...comments made included 'that's a lot of money for a head gate and a ditch'. It was also commented that it might have been better to submit the big project by itself, grouping the remaining much smaller projects together. During the discussion Kent mentioned that the Basin anticipates an additional \$400k allocation in July.

In the end, Kent called for the vote. Jim Baller and Pat VanValkenberg abstained due to conflict of interest. The votes were 6 yes, 3 abstain, 2 no: Wade-no, Ty-yes, Carl-yes, Mark-yes, Rick-yes, Randy-yes, Mike (questioned cost of Big Grizzly project, but abstained), Kent-yes, Barbara-no. The application was approved to be forwarded to the CWCB for funding decision. Kent will write the letter to the CWCB with input from Wade for the minority position.

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- V. *Report on Education Outreach*** – Curtis Utley, Education Liaison
Curtis reminded us about the info-graphics project that some other basins have done. He investigated cost. It would cost approximately \$1 to produce. But the bigger cost and effort might be in developing the content and doing the layout. Ideas included highlighting the ‘wild flood’, controlled flow, hydrology and linkage between irrigated hay meadows and non-consumptive attributes. Someone suggested the format might be a flat layout that could be used in local restaurants as place mats. It will be taken up by the Education Committee, which will meet in a time slot immediately before the regular June NPBRT meeting.
- VI. *Report on SWSI and Basin Implementation Plan Updates*** – Barbara Vasquez and Ty Wattenberg
Barbara and Ty walked through a brief powerpoint presentation to provide a starting point for discussion of what to update in the North Platte Basin Roundtable BIP published in 2014. It is included with the distribution of these minutes. This topic will be the major work of the next Roundtable meeting. One of the areas of ‘missing data’ for many of the BIPs including ours is cost data for projects that included in the plan. Greg Johnson explained that the CWCB recognizes there is a funding gap, rumored to be approximately \$100M, to complete the work outlined in the State Water Plan. But they don’t have good enough data to back up the estimate in order to ask the legislature for that level of funding. He also reassured the RT members that CWCB does not plan to change the WSRF grant application/ approval process at this time.
He also talked about the work of the Technical Groups which are created updates to what has been previously called SWSI. The output will be published in September in time for the C-9 all-basin meeting scheduled for 9/25-26. There has been \$900 allocated to the North Platte Basin Roundtable to support travel to the meeting. Russ George, the new IBCC director, has revitalized the program. First meeting was in February with 5 new Governor appointees. (Kent commented that John Rich has been living out of the basin most of the time and for that reason he will ask John for his letter of resignation.) Greg said they expect there will be a joint CWCB/IBCC meeting immediately following the all-basin meeting in Sept.
- VII. *Election of Officers for 2019*** – Elect Chair, Vice Chair and Recorder
Kent announced that he was stepping down as Chair. There were many comments of gratitude for his long and capable leadership of the Roundtable. Ty was nominated as Chair, Rick Wyatt nominated as ViceChair, Barbara Vasquez was nominated as Recorder. There were no additional nominations. All three agreed to accept the nominations. Kent called for the vote. All three were unanimously voted into the respective offices.
- VIII. *CWCB/IBCC*** – Curran Trick, John Rich and Mike Allnutt
CWCB: Director Trick reiterated the opportunity to attend the C-9. She informed the members that there was a Western Slope RT meeting on 6/20 that might be of interest to some here to attend. The next IBCC meeting will be July 18. Drought Contingency Planning is underway with working groups forming. There will be an Upper Colorado Commission/working meeting on 6/27-28.
No IBCC report. Mike reported he was unable to attend.

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IX. Old Business/New Business

Old: Carl mentioned that Wendy Ryan had been up to restart the lysimeter for the season. There are sufficient funds in the original project to get through the 2019 season. Because of equipment problems, and in order to collect enough data to be useful, one more season of work will be required. For that, additional funds will be required to carry it through 2020. Greg confirmed it would required a new WSRF application. The question remains to be answered: who will apply. Wendy is now with Colorado River Engineering. Carl will talk to her about this.

Debbi Heeney said she would report on the completed project at the next meeting, or when there is time on an agenda at a subsequent meeting.

New: None

X. Date for the next meeting

Meeting was set for Tuesday June 19 at 7pm. The Education Committee will meet at 6:30 prior to the Roundtable meeting.