

South Platte Basin Roundtable Meeting
Tuesday, March 10, 2020
Southwest Weld County Building
4209 Weld County Road 24 ½, Longmont, CO 80504
4:00-7:00 p.m.

South Platte Basin Roundtable Business Meeting Minutes

1. Welcome/Introductions (G. Varra – 5 min)

The meeting started at 4:05 p.m. In attendance: Garrett Varra*, Casey Davenhill, Hunter Hoshiko*, Sean Chambers*, Joe Frank*, Daylan Figgs*, Kelsea Holloway*, Mary Hodge*, Sean Cronin*, Ken Huson*, Larry Howard*, James Ford*, Frank Eckhardt*, Shane Miller*, Dick Elsner*, Allyn Wind*, Joel Schneekloth, Bruce Gerk*, Kent Swedlund*, Bill Szmyd*, Kevin Lusk*, Jim Hall*, Loretta Daniel*, Royal Koepsell, Stephen Larson*, Matt Lindburg, Corey DeAngelis, Britta Strother, Mary Presecan, Chip Paulson, Deb Daniel*, Lisa Leben*, Matt LeCerf, Maya MacHamer, Steven Smith, Alex Gebben, Natalie Miller, Donnie Dustin, Jessica Ouwerkerk, and multiple members of the public.

Sean Conway* and Jason Roudebush* were excused from the March meeting. 24 voting SPBRT members were present (* denotes a voting member).

2. Approval of January 2020 SPBRT Meeting Minutes (G. Varra – action required)

Shane Miller made a motion to approve the January 2020 and February 2020 meeting minutes and Larry Howard seconded. The motion to approve both sets of minutes passed without discussion or contest.

3. Approval of February 2020 Joint SPBRT & Metro RT Meeting Minutes (G. Varra – action required)

See above.

4. March 2020 Agenda Additions or Changes (G. Varra – action required)

There were no proposed additions or changes to the March 2020 meeting agenda. Bill Szmyd made a motion to accept the agenda and Allyn Wind seconded. The motion passed without discussion or contest.

5. Fourmile Watershed Coalition Water Plan Grant Support Request (Maya MacHamer – action required)

Maya MacHamer presented Fourmile Watershed Coalition's request for support for their Tolland Ranch Feasibility Study Water Plan Grant application. MacHamer started by giving an update on previously awarded projects. In response to SPBRT member feedback given when presenting a water quality sampling WSRF grant application in July 2019, Fourmile Watershed Coalition has leveraged more support from the City of Boulder and Boulder County.

The Tolland Ranch project is in the headwaters of South Boulder Creek in Gilpin County. The proposed feasibility study will evaluate opportunities and develop conceptual designs for wetland and riparian enhancements including habitat for the boreal toad, fisheries enhancements to support a self-sustaining population of greenback cutthroat trout, and designs to retrofit an existing diversion. The study will evaluate approximately 93-acres adjacent to the stream and currently a complex system of off-channel ponds and wetland complexes created when the channel was

straightened in the 1960s to facilitate transport of West Slope water to Gross Reservoir. Colorado Parks and Wildlife has already begun testing fish in the existing ponds.

Responding to a question from Sean Cronin, MacHamer clarified that Denver Water is contributing in-kind advisory work to the project. Responding to a question from Garrett Varra, MacHamer noted this is the first phase in a multi-phase project; there will most likely be future grant requests to fund design and construction. SPBRT members asked about typical amounts of water coming into the ponds and how the land owning family uses the ponds. After more discussion, Ken Huson made a motion to support Fourmile Watershed Coalition's Water Plan Grant application and Jim Hall seconded. The motion passed without discussion or contest.

6. USDA Water Management and Agricultural Outcomes (Steven Smith – 15 minutes)

Steven Smith and Alex Gebben presented their framework for a USDA-funded study on Innovative Governance of Scarce Surface Water and Groundwater (USDA-Agriculture and Food Research Initiative Grant #67023-29421). The three-year project covers the Arkansas, South Platte, and Rio Grande Basins. The goals of the study are to: 1) assess the agricultural, ecological, and socio-economic impacts of financial incentives for groundwater commons; 2) analyze dynamics and performance of self-governing irrigation systems; and 3) use experiments to test and promote institutional innovations for local water governance in order to support policy making. The project team includes scientists from the Colorado School of Mines and the University of Colorado. Smith and Gebben explained they are currently in the stage of refining their research questions and spreading the word about the project. After various SPBRT members discussed previous USDA studies in the Rio Grande Basin, Garrett Varra noted SPBRT members have a broad network of contacts. The project team can draw upon these contacts when they need participants for surveys, exercises, interviews, etc.

7. Evoque Communications (Natalie Miller – 15 min)

Natalie Miller and Jessica Ouwerkerk gave a presentation on simple strategies for engaging the public around water issues. Their company, Evoque Communications, specializes in communications for water-related organizations. Miller and Ouwerkerk have over 25 years of water industry experience. Recently, Evoque Communications helped with the Statewide Water Education Action Plan (SWEAP). Miller and Ouwerkerk covered communications plans, public engagement (including events and social media marketing), and analytics and measurement. SPBRT members did not have any questions about the presentation.

8. Committee Updates

a. South Platte Basin and Statewide Account Balances (C. Godbout/S. Stein – 10 min)

A CWCB staff member was not present at the meeting. Garrett Varra reported \$649,615 for the South Platte Basin balance and approximately \$5,300,000 for the statewide balance.

Varra then announced Craig Godbout, who has been the CWCB staff liaison to the SPBRT, is transitioning to a different role and will handle WSRF program management for basins across the state. CWCB recently hired Sam Stein to be the new SPBRT staff liaison; Stein will attend meetings approximately every other month. Craig Godbout will still be available to help with WSRF questions.

b. Public Education, Participation, and Outreach (PEPO) Workgroup (C. Davenport – 10 min)

Casey Davenhill provided a PEPO update. She recapped recent PEPO efforts over the past few months (e.g., attending the Colorado Farm Show and the Poudre River Forum, working on Regulation 85 outreach with the Colorado Ag Water Alliance and various conservation districts). PEPO Committee members bring relevant South Platte Basin documents to those meetings, such as the fold-out half sheets. The PEPO Committee is planning on updating the fact sheet and other basin documents soon and welcomes feedback. Davenhill discussed the plan to develop a video about the South Platte Basin. The video will be produced by videographer Christi Bode and should cost around \$12,000. Later this year, the PEPO Committee will propose the next year's education budget. SPBRT members asked about timelines for the PEPO budget, which has not historically been tied to WSRF grant cycles. Davenhill talked about SWEAP as well as updates to the South Platte Basin Roundtable [website](#). The PEPO Committee has been working to merge the Live Like You Love It Campaign with H₂O Joe messaging.

Joel Schneekloth reported on the first Colorado Master Irrigator program, which received WSRF funds from the SPBRT. The program had good participation and has received positive reviews from participants. As a follow-up, the program team will follow a few of the students throughout the summer to see how they implement new practices. This was the first of three years for the program.

Sean Cronin expressed that it would be helpful for the PEPO Committee to periodically share their latest materials, which SPBRT members can then share at upcoming events. Davenhill reminded SPBRT members PEPO Committee meetings are always open for those who are interested.

c. Water Supply Reserve Fund (WSRF) (J. Roudebush – 10 min)

Jason Roudebush was not present at the meeting. Garrett Varra noted the WSRF Needs Committee will present edited WSRF guidelines and criteria for feedback at the April SPBRT meeting. The next WSRF application deadline is May 1. The review and potential update of the Roundtable's WSRF criteria will take a few months; it won't affect the spring application cycle. Varra reminded SPBRT members they are welcome to join the WSRF Needs Committee if interested.

9. Final Results of SPROWG Feasibility Study (Matt Lindburg – 30 min)

The South Platte Regional Opportunities Water Group (SPROWG) project team presented the final SPROWG Feasibility Study Report. The consultant team includes Matt Lindburg, Britta Strother, Mary Presecan, and Chip Paulson. Joe Frank started the presentation by giving background on the SPROWG concept and thanking everyone involved, including the task force, the advisory committee, and the consultant team. The consultant team members then described key components of the feasibility study, including stakeholder engagement, organizational framework options, alternatives modeling, water treatment options, cost estimates, communications strategies, and potential paths forward. The report is available on the South Platte Basin Roundtable [website](#).

Throughout the presentation, SPBRT members asked questions. Questions touched upon the cost of raw vs. treated water, brine disposal methods, the project's starting assumptions related to buy and dry, integration of ATMs, reuse return flows, indoor water use assumptions, and specific environmental protection strategies. Members then discussed how to integrate these findings into the BIP update and keep momentum going.

Break for dinner 6:15 – 6:35 p.m.

10. BIP Update - Local Expert Evaluation Sub-Committee Needs and Discussion (30 mins)

Garrett Varra announced the RFP for a Local Expert to help with the BIP update is now closed. He went over key dates in the timeline to hire on a Local Expert and have them get started on a work plan by mid-summer. Thus far, the South Platte Basin/Metro Roundtable has received two SOQs in response to the RFP. The Roundtable Chairs (Garrett Varra and Barbara Biggs) need volunteers to review and rank the SOQs. Members discussed how to include SPROWG into the BIP update workplan as well as the funding structure for the BIP update. The South Platte Basin and Metro Roundtables are jointly updating the BIP; therefore, they will have a combined budget. Matt Lindburg clarified that the funding split and the exact project scope between the Local Expert and the main contractor (Brown and Caldwell) will be slightly different for each Roundtable.

SPBRT members then discussed the Rio Chato Committee. The Roundtables need volunteers who can dedicate time going through things in more detail and working more closely with the Local Expert. Varra asked for volunteers to help review the Local Expert SOQs. The following SPBRT members volunteered: Hunter Hoshiko, Sean Chambers, Joe Frank, Daylan Figgs, Kelsea Holloway, Mary Hodge, Sean Cronin, Shane Miller, and Dick Elsner.

11. IBCC Update (J. Yahn/S. Cronin – 5 min)

Jim Yahn was not present at the meeting. Sean Cronin provided an IBCC update. There was a joint IBCC and Demand Management Workgroup meeting on March 4th and 5th. There were multiple presentations at the meeting. Presentations included topics such as deficit irrigation and fallowing on the Colorado River as well as State Assumption. The two-day meeting focused on CWCB's demand management work; there were many breakout sessions. Cronin noted there was good discussion and people seemed to share creative ideas. Kevin Lusk also attended the meeting and agreed with Cronin's report. Lusk talked about the idea of equity in demand management and fear that there may be disparate impacts. Any conservation measures should be spread amongst the different sectors. It will be a challenge to bring ideas to fruition; there needs to be strong leadership at the state level not to impose decisions, but to guide discussion. Overall, Lusk concluded, the meeting was positive. Sean Cronin reminded SPBRT members they are free to bring statewide or Colorado River water policy concerns to either himself or Jim Yahn.

12. CWCB Update (J. Yahn – 5 min)

Jim Yahn was not present at the meeting to provide a CWCB Board update. The next CWCB Board [meeting](#) is March 11-12 at the Sheraton Denver West Hotel in Lakewood.

13. Public Comment (15 min)

Garrett Varra noted that typically the SPBRT's meetings occur in different locations throughout the year. Varra asked SPBRT members to suggest potential locations for June and early fall traveling meetings and to bring those ideas forward at the April meeting. The goal is to encourage diverse participation by moving the meeting location around. The meeting adjourned at 7:03 p.m.