



Arkansas Basin Roundtable

PLANNING OUR
WATER FUTURE

ROUNDTABLE MEETING NOTES

September 9, 2020

GoToMeeting Link: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/631824957>

More information and presentations may be found at: www.arkansasbasin.com

Roundtable Business

Mark Shea called the meeting to order at 12:30 pm. Members and visitors introduced themselves. Eighteen (18) members were present.

Approval of minutes of prior meeting

The meeting notes of the August 2020 meeting were approved by consensus.

Public Comment - none

REPORTS:

Executive Committee – Mark Shea

The executive committee met this morning. Had a good discussion regarding how the meeting agendas will be organized. Will be going back to alternating months with roundtable business meetings alternating with program presentations.

October's meeting will be our Annual Meeting. Chair, Vice-Chair for Consumptive and Non-Consumptive Needs, Recorder and Needs Assessment Committee Chair positions are all open each year, as well as the IBCC position held by Jeris Danielson this year. If interested, contact Mark Shea directly. Nominations are open through the October meeting.

BIP Update – Brett Gracely, Will Koger

Work Plan for Review and Approval:

The Work Plan was emailed to members for their review last week. No questions or discussions from members or others.

The BIP Update Work Plan was approved by consensus.

Upcoming Workshops:

Lower Basin: Wednesday, September 23rd, 10:00 – 12:00

Upper Basin: Tuesday, September 29th, 12:00 – 2:00

Now is the time to talk to folks in your community. Existing projects need to be updated, and even conceptual ideas can be added to the list. It is valuable to have them included in the update.

CWCB Report – Greg Felt, Sam Stein, Russell Sands - New website: cwcb.colorado.gov

Russ Sands: Russ thanked those who attended the Public Workshop that was held at the end of August, and the Demand Management workshop in early September.



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Link to the YouTube recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=--HhjnJcdQ&feature=youtu.be>. The IBCC portion of the YouTube recording begins at 3:59:45.

CWCB Board meeting: September 16 and 17. Finance Committee meeting on September 15th. These meetings are virtual.

Megan Holcomb has been working with the drought task force, especially with the Ag community. They have created a virtual drought tour. This can be found online at: www.engagecwcb.org. You can add your story, with pictures and a pin in a map, which will inform others and feed that info back up to the drought task force.

WSRF criteria changes are in process. They will address some long-needed changes:

1. Language changes that clarify. Updated terminology and grammatical edits.
2. As basins have tried to streamline meetings, they have pushed roundtable-level grant approvals to the same time of year before the September and March CWCB meetings. This has created a bottleneck at the staff level, making it more difficult to process all of the applications in a timely fashion. The CWCB would like to move the deadline up a month, so there are two months for staff review and approval.
3. Historically, basin funds have been released over the year, in a 40/30/30 distribution. CWCB would like to release 100% of funding earlier in the year, on September 1, which is when the funds become available.

Keep in mind that there is a forecast of no funding through severance tax in the next three years.

CWCB staff is working from home through January 1. We expect Safer At Home, which is expiring this month, to shift a bit. Four layers that apply different rules depending on what gradient you are in. DNR may lag behind state changes – because of budget shortfalls, meeting virtually is less expensive than meeting in person.

BIP updates are rolling along. All other RTs are in a similar position to the Arkansas Basin. Staff are working on how the water plan update feeds into the BIP updates. There is a lot of group interest in some areas. Building our own work plan around concepts that will get explored. Russ mentioned Abby Burke's work on rapid river health assessments. It may not be a one size fits all. CWCB isn't necessarily supporting her specific way to prioritize goals that are in the water plan but is interested.

Greg Felt: Greg is looking forward to the finance meeting next Tuesday afternoon, in order to get a better idea of what capacity is going to be. The Demand Management workshop on the 2nd was a great experience for Greg. There is a daunting array of issues to consider and address in any plan moving forward.

Forest Health is a topic that Greg expects to be very engaged in for the next few years. Our water infrastructure is designed to work within a healthy forest, and when the forest is compromised, so is that infrastructure. We are unique in that our view of forest health is watershed-wide.

IBCC Report – Jeris Danielson, Russell Sands

September 21st will be the next meeting.

Needs Assessment – Mike Weber

Current approved applications will be considered at the upcoming CWCB meeting.

Water Plan grant applications will go into a new, annual cycle for approval.



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Four Arkansas Basin WSRF grants will be heard at the CWCB meeting. \$89,900 from basin funds. \$617,900 from statewide funds. The Arkansas Basin has \$412,000 now, so after CWCB approval of these four grants, we'll have \$322,000 remaining. There is \$5.7 million in statewide funds, which will be spread out at \$1.9 million per year for the next three years.

Environment/Recreation Committee – Bob Hamel, Rena Griggs, Amber Shanklin

Elise will begin disseminating Enviro-Rec meeting notes as a thorough report out from the committee.

Rena gave a CPW update – they are shuttling some water accounts around. Released 170 acre-feet from Lake Pueblo to John Martin. Rena announced CPW's desire for others to help put more water into that permanent pool. It must be trans-mountain water. Regarding Two Buttes Reservoir in Baca County, CPW is starting work to replace two gates at the dam.

Forest service and BLM are also working on updates to the BIP. They'll be pulling out quite a few of the projects that they plan to work on in-house.

Rena notes that this summer the forest got trashed. Public use records were set for campgrounds and use of parks and forest service lands was greatly increased during the Covid19 shut-down. Remediation is needed due to heavy use of parks and open forest lands.

Arkansas River Watershed Collaborative – Carol Ekarius

Carol Ekarius will be stepping back into a management role of ARWC for the time being. Mark welcomed her back. We have some governance questions that we'll be discussing with the Board of Directors and with CWCB before deciding how to move forward.

Project Updates:

- Monarch Pass Steep Slope Mitigation Project – moving forward. Equipment is mobilizing as we speak. Working with Miller Timber and the Forest Service. Sam Ebersole will be doing some footage of the project. 2-year project. Forest service may add money. That would allow for more work on steep slopes.
- Hayden Pass Fire – wrapping up that project. Did a lot of work on the ground last year. Looking at longer-term recovery projects, like habitat restoration. Putting together a case study that can be used by others for post-fire recovery, possibly nationwide.
- Science Plan – need to develop a final report. Where does it lead us in the future? Wrapping that up in the next couple of months.

Alternative Transfer Methods in Colorado – Blake Osborn, Alex Funk & Nora Flynn

ATM Program Status Assessment: Status Update, Framework for Continued Support, and Recommendations for CWCB Action

Report is available at: <https://cwcb.colorado.gov/focus-areas/supply/alternative-transfer-methods>

Project Purpose:

1. Assess the progress made to date on ATMs and
2. Develop a framework for CWCB and broader state consideration of ATMs moving forward

Data Collection:

- Basin Roundtable meetings and Basin Roundtable survey
- Build an inventory of ATMs
- Phone interviews with municipal water providers (43) and past ATM participants (14)
- ATM Advisory Committee



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- Review of 54 studies and report related to ATMs compiled in a literature review.

Key Findings:

- 30,000 acre-feet towards 50,000 acre-feet goal
- Municipal barriers are large, but interest remains in maintaining community buffers, conservation of open lands, supporting ag neighbors and promoting food awareness among citizens.

Conceptual Elements of Defining ATMs

- Looking at the intersection of these:
 - Water transfer purpose
 - Avoid & limit dry up
 - CO water plan objectives

Issues of Greatest Concern

1. Definition of ATM's – created criteria to define ATM transactions (required and preferred criteria)
2. Tracking metrics
3. Role of ATM's in ag dry-up

Proposed Metrics to Track Progress on ATMs

Recommendations

Funding:

- Maintain ATM grant program
- Incentivize ATM projects under existing CWCB funding programs
 - Projects could add ATM feasibility components (does a proposed project facilitate future ATMs?)
- Fund and support applications that address agricultural dry-up

Policy:

- Define ATM's
- Reduce Regulatory Uncertainty
 - Allow/encourage flexible dry-up agreements for lands with alternative water sources.
- Agency Coordination
 - State – CWCB and DNR
 - Federal – Work with USDA to expand crop insurance allowances for limited irrigation.

Education:

- ATM website. Landing source for all things ATM's.
- Provide support/training for local facilitators.
- Expand resources for municipal water providers.
- Basin Roundtable – consider forming ATM task forces.

We welcome follow up questions and comments on this report via email as well. blake.osborn@colostate.edu, nora.flynn@colostate.edu, alexander.funk@state.co.us

Open Water Foundation Mapping Work – Steve Malers

Website for Open Water Foundation presentation, Poudre Basin: <http://poudre.openwaterfoundation.org/latest/>
StateMod/CDSS model viewer for Colorado: <http://opencdss.openwaterfoundation.org/datasets/colorado/2015/>

In the Poudre River Basin, a collaborative is working on health of the river. Software development, pulling together data and information.

Poudre Basin Information:

- Mapping tool with an abundance of different types of data and information



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- Getting the Lay of the Land - Entities – overlays datasets
- Historical Data
- Current Conditions
- Seasonal Outlook
- Future Planning
- Resources

Is this a tool that would be helpful for the Arkansas Basin? Steve is interested in expanding this tool to other basins. Discussion around source of data, where is such a database stored, how is it maintained? This is a possible issue for the roundtable's website. A letter of support would need to go through the Needs Assessment process.

Contact Steve at: steve.malers@openwaterfoundation.org.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 pm.

Admin Email: ARKBASINRT@GMAIL.COM

MEETINGS/LINKS: (all meetings in 2020 will be virtual)

- Arkansas Basin Roundtable Annual Meeting: October 14, 12:30 pm www.arkansasbasin.com
- CWCB Meeting: September 16 & 17. Finance meeting on the 15th.
- IBCC Meeting: October 21
- PEPO: www.pepoarkbasin.com
- Arkansas River Basin Water Forum: <http://www.arbwf.org/>
- CWCB: <http://cwcb.state.co.us/Pages/CWCBHome.aspx>
- Colorado Water Plan: <http://coloradowaterplan.com/>
- Colorado Flood Threat Bulletin: www.coloradofloodthreat.com
- Stream Management Plan Resource Library: <https://coloradosmp.org/>
- In-Stream Flow Rule Revisions: <https://cwcb.colorado.gov/instream-flow-rules-revisions-hb-20-1157>
- DARCA - <https://www.darca.org/>