

South Platte Basin Roundtable (SPBRT) Meeting  
Tuesday, January 12, 2021  
4:00-7:00 p.m. (MST)

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### **South Platte Basin Roundtable Annual Meeting Minutes**

*Note: A majority of the active members of the Roundtable shall constitute a quorum at the annual meeting. As of December 2020, there are 36 active voting members (with 12 inactive voting members) accounting for a total of 48 filled voting seats. There are 15 vacant voting seats.*

#### **1. GoToMeeting Orientation, Questions, and Comments (G. Varra – 10 min)**

The meeting started at 4:05 p.m. Garrett Varra thanked everyone for attending the SPBRT's ninth virtual meeting. He reminded attendees of virtual meeting etiquette (e.g., mute yourself when not speaking, enter questions or comments into the chat box, be concise and follow agenda).

#### **2. Welcome/Introductions (G. Varra – 10 min)**

In attendance: Gene Manuello\*, Jim Yahn\*, Garrett Varra\*, Kirk Vincent\*, Audrey Butler\*, Frank Eckhardt\*, Lisa Leben\*, Kevin Lusk\*, Kelsea Holloway\*, Jim Ford\*, Daylan Figgs\*, John Kolanz\*, Shane Miller\*, Joe Frank\*, Jim Hall\*, Dick Elsner\*, Larry Rogstad\*, Deb Daniel\*, Jason Roudebush\*, Lynda James\*, Lori Sane\*, Sean Cronin, Sam Stein, Russ Sands, Kat Weismiller, Casey Davenhill, Christy Wiseman, Bill Szafranski, Carmen Farmer, Chip Paulson, Corey DeAngelis, David Bonga, Donnie Dustin, Emily Hunt, Eric Potyondy, Erik Jorgensen, Grady O'Brien, Brice Hammersland, Hattie Johnson, John Sanderson, Jonathan Salerno, Jordana Barrack, Josh Kuhn, Kayla Ranney, Kaylea White, Linda Bassi, Mary Presecan, Matt Cook, Matt Lindburg, Matt Stearns, Melissa Mosier, Peter Barkmann, Phyllis Thomas, Ray Douglas, Robert Sakata, Royal Koepsell, Sam Lewis, Joel Schneekloth, Scott Griebing, Steve Malers, Thomas Parker, Yoichiro Kanno, and multiple members of the public. Rich Belt\* was excused from the January meeting. 21 voting SPBRT members were present (\* denotes a voting member).

#### **3. Approval of November 2020 SPBRT Meeting Minutes (G. Varra – 5 min action required)**

Dick Elsner made a motion to approve the November 2020 meeting minutes and Jim Yahn seconded. The motion passed unanimously without discussion or contest.

**4. January 2021 Agenda Additions or Changes (G. Varra – 5 min action required)**

There were no proposed additions or changes to the January 2021 meeting agenda. Joe Frank made a motion to accept the January 2021 meeting agenda and Dick Elsner seconded. The motion passed unanimously without discussion or contest.

**5. Membership Updates and Annual Elections (G. Varra – 10 min action required)**

Annual elections started with the Chair and two Vice Chair positions. The current first Vice Chair, Rich Belt, was not at the meeting. Garrett Varra noted that Rich Belt has a new role at his job and won't have as much time to dedicate to the Roundtable, and is therefore open to passing on his Vice Chair role. Varra is happy to serve as Chair again but won't be able to in 2022; it's good to have a succession plan in place. Ideally, people in the Vice Chair roles would be open to serving as Chair in the future.

After a question, Varra clarified that the SPBRT needs to elect the Chair position and both Vice Chair positions tonight. Lynda James announced that she is willing to continue serving as second Vice Chair; she would step up to first Vice Chair if no one else is interested but remaining the second Vice Chair is her preference. Dick Elsner commented that he would be interested in a Vice Chair role but that would over-represent Park County. Jim Hall noted that he is interested in filling a Vice Chair seat, even though he does not necessarily aspire to become Chair one day. Varra made a few comments on the nature of the Chair's responsibilities; it's mostly just a matter of time commitment. There was a motion to elect Garrett Varra to Chair and Jim Hall and Lynda James to the two Vice Chair positions. Jim Yahn seconded the motion.

After the motion, Sean Cronin asked if there was a prohibition on having more than two Vice Chairs. The By-Laws specify two dedicated Vice Chair positions but that could be amended. Sean Chambers added that it would be good to have SPBRT members shadow the Vice Chairs in order to develop future leadership. The Roundtable could also put together a transition committee in the fall. Casey Davenhill reminded SPBRT members about the Membership Handbook on the South Platte Basin website. The PEPO Committee has created resources to make it easier to onboard Roundtable members. Members voted on the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

**a. Adams County Representative – Mary Hodge's Retirement**

Garrett Varra announced that Mary Hodge is retiring and will no longer represent Adams County on the SPBRT. Her replacement has not yet been named.

**b. Larimer County Municipal Representative – Larry Howard's Retirement**

Garrett Varra announced that Larry Howard is retiring and will no longer represent Larimer County Municipalities on the SPBRT. Replacing municipal seats is more complex because the county's municipalities have to work together to fill the open seat. Hopefully there will be a replacement soon.

**c. IBCC Representative Elections**

Garrett Varra announced that IBCC representatives are elected every two years per the SPBRT By-Laws. The current IBCC representatives, Jim Yahn and Sean Cronin are willing to continue their service for 2021. Varra commented on the importance of transition plans for these seats. Varra made a motion to re-elect Sean Cronin and Jim Yahn to be the SPBRT's IBCC representatives and Lynda James seconded. The motion passed unanimously without discussion or contest.

**d. By-laws Discussion**

Garrett Varra noted that the SPBRT's By-Laws are included in the meeting materials. The current By-Laws are from 2013 and could use an update. The specifications around elections (e.g., electing at-large seats every five years) are not consistent with SPBRT practice. Joe Frank noted that the SPBRT has re-elected at-large members in the past and that he is comfortable with the current at-large members. Varra read off the current at-large members from the membership list. Joe Frank made a motion to re-elect all the current at-large members and Jason Roudebush seconded. The motion passed unanimously without discussion or contest. All at-large members are re-elected, except for the local domestic water provider seat (which is currently vacant).

After the vote, Sean Cronin suggested having alternate designees for the IBCC representatives. Sean Chambers has expressed interest in being an alternate IBCC representative for the SPBRT if Sean Cronin or Jim Yahn is unable to attend an IBCC function. Dick Elsner made a motion to appoint Sean Chambers as an alternate IBCC representative and Lynda James seconded. The motion passed unanimously without discussion or contest. Sam Stein noted that he will add Sean Chambers to the IBCC email list. Garrett Varra asked to be added to the IBCC email list as well.

**6. Reagan Waskom Retirement**

Garrett Varra shared news that Reagan Waskom retired after over 30 years of service to Colorado State University (CSU) and the broader Colorado water world. Multiple SPBRT members commented on the impact of Waskom's career. Members then discussed presenting a retirement gift on behalf of the Roundtable, similar to the plaque that was presented to Mike Shimmin in November 2019. Varra said that he will work on putting a gift together.

**7. Open Water Foundation: Request for Letter of Support for Water Plan Grant (Steve Malers – 10 min action required)**

Steve Malers presented the Open Water Foundation's request for support of their Water Plan grant application. The SPBRT approved a related WSRF grant in November 2020. Steve Malers is also applying for a Water Plan grant to fund the Poudre Basin Information website.

Steve Malers and Garrett Varra discussed the protocol for when a WSRF grant applicant also intends to apply for a Water Plan grant for the same project. Varra noted that due to changes in CWCB's grant submittal schedule, these situations will be streamlined going forward.

Steve Malers demonstrated the Poudre Basin Information website. Jason Roudebush noted that Malers' WSRF grant was well received and was approved by a unanimous vote in November. Roudebush made a motion to provide the Open Water Foundation with the requested letter of support and Jim Hall seconded. After the motion, Jim Yahn asked a clarifying question about the project budget and to what extent listed funding members were financially committed. Members voted on the motion; the motion passed unanimously. Garrett Varra noted that he will follow up with Steve Malers. Malers thanked the Roundtable.

#### **8. Sustaining Plains Aquatic Ecosystems Study WSRF Grant Follow Up (Yoichiro Kanno – 10 min)**

Yoichiro Kanno presented an update on the Sustaining Plains Aquatic Ecosystems Study, which was approved for WSRF grant funding in July 2020. Kanno and the CSU project team seek guidance on how best to move forward with the project's second and third objectives: 2) social: assess stakeholders' values and actions regarding aquatic ecosystems and evaluate the stakeholder decision-making network; 3) outreach: develop a video that documents aquatic species, habitat, and people working towards aquatic sustainability.

SPBRT members and the CSU project team discussed several points, including the geographical study area, how much of a time commitment the advisory group would be for volunteers, project timeline, etc. Casey Davenhill invited the project team to attend a PEPO Committee meeting to take advantage of synergies in outreach work. SPBRT members who volunteered to help include: Kelsea Holloway, Larry Rogstad, Garrett Varra, Joe Frank, and Dick Elsner.

#### **9. Poudre River Augmentation Plan Project Update (Emily Hunt – 10 min)**

Eric Potyondy from the City of Fort Collins presented a Poudre River Augmentation Plan project update. The multi-organizational effort's objective is to improve Poudre River stream flows while respecting existing water rights and operations. Project partners include: Colorado Water Trust, City of Fort Collins, City of Greeley, City of Thornton, Cache la Poudre Water Users Association, Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District, CWCB, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife. The project's goal is to improve flows in the Poudre River from the canyon mouth to the South Platte River, when they would improve the ecological health of the river, while ensuring that such options would not adversely affect existing operations and administration on the Poudre River or injuriously affect the owners of or persons entitled to use water under vested water rights or decreed conditional water rights. After the presentation, SPBRT members asked questions, including about the project team's use of the term "seed water." Multiple SPBRT members expressed support for the project.

#### **10. Basin Implementation Plan (BIP) Update (G. Varra and Matt Cook – 60 min)**

Matt Cook and Kayla Ranney presented on the BIP update. They discussed project tiering progress as well as a special study examining beneficial interactions between environmental, recreational,

and agricultural water uses within the Lower South Platte Basin. Multiple SPBRT members discussed the special study's parameters (e.g., geographic scope, whether birds will be considered). The Local Expert team noted that due to budget, the special study will focus on the main stem of the South Platte River downstream of Denver and not on the tributaries.

Matt Cook and Kayla Ranney then went over updates to the BIP's themes, goals, and strategies. Multiple members discussed language of goal 6 "Protect and Enhance Watershed Function" as it relates to fisheries. Sean Cronin brought up the potential to have a goal around promoting intra-basin activities that provide a net benefit to the basin. Existing language in goal 2 "Maximize Development of Native South Platte Supplies" and goal 9 "Support Collaborative Development and Management of Supply Options Outside of the South Platte Basin" don't adequately address this. Mary Presecan suggested that Cronin's idea could be implemented in the measurable outcomes of the BIP. Matt Cook agreed to bring this topic to the Municipal & Industrial Subcommittee at their next meeting.

#### **11. SPBRT Committee Updates**

##### **a. South Platte Basin and Statewide Account Balances / Water Supply Reserve Fund (WSRF) (S. Stein and J. Roudebush – 10 min)**

Jason Roudebush summarized the eight WSRF applications presented at the November 2020 meeting. The next deadline for WSRF grant applications is in April.

Sam Stein reported \$626,865 for the South Platte Basin balance and \$96,927,583 for the statewide balance.

##### **b. Public Education, Participation, and Outreach (PEPO) (C. Davenhill – 5 min)**

Casey Davenhill provided a PEPO update. A written report was included in the January 2021 meeting materials folder.

As a reminder, the focus of the South Platte Video project is the hydrologic function of the South Platte River, the value of agriculture, and the unique character of the watershed. The intended audience for this video are Roundtable members, community groups, and educational media platforms. Since last month, videographer Christi Bode has completed all interviews including: Mark Beardsley and Brad Johnson speaking to headwaters condition and protection history; Former Mayor Wellington Webb speaking to the urban renaissance of the South Platte River in Denver and the importance of preserving South Platte River values for future generations; Marc and Brett Arnusch speaking to the value, history, and future prospects of agriculture in the South Platte River Basin; and Emily Hunt speaking to municipal water supply capacity and the City of Thornton Stewardship project in northern Colorado. The video team has started a conversation with Matt Jones, volunteer fire fighter and current Boulder County Commissioner, in order to develop an appropriate forest health/wildfire segment. The team is in the process of reviewing all interview transcripts in preparation for the first draft version of the video. The next step will be to edit audio to tell

the story. Visuals will be added after the audio is completed. The video schedule has been thrown off by the effects of the pandemic in 2020. However, it is in line with budget projections. Casey Davenhill included an item for video promotion in the 2021 WSRF and PEPO funding requests.

Please note that Christi Bode, Moxiecran Media, has been asked by the Colorado Film Commission to create a video on the topic of agricultural buy and dry with support from the Rio Grande Water Conservation District. The PEPO committee has discussed adding support to this effort. Would the Roundtable like more information in order to consider supporting this project?

The PEPO Committee has completed reviewing a narrative provided by Evoque Communications as part of their agreement with the Live Like You Love It (LLYLI) campaign. Thanks to the PEPO Committee members for their thoughtful review of a message which seeks to clarify the statistic that 86% of South Platte water is used in agriculture and positively showcase agriculture's role in the community and watershed. The PEPO Committee is asking for an updated "life cycle of water" graphic that illustrates agricultural water use, return flows and the value of agriculture. The audiences for this effort are Colorado residents, educators, interested citizen groups, taxpayers, and voters. Roundtable members are encouraged to share any graphics or resources that depict the concept of return flows and explain the math for how 1.4 million acre feet of native supply and 0.5 million acre feet of trans-basin diversions equal 4 million acre feet of water supply diversions.

The Education Action Plan is currently being updated for 2021. The updated plan is due in March 2021.

The application for 2021 PEPO budget supplement has been submitted along with letters of support from the Metro and South Platte Roundtables.

Please visit the South Platte Basin [website](#) and provide feedback via the email link on the site. Garrett Varra asked if Davenhill has access to website metrics (e.g., number of visits). Website metrics will be included in the PEPO report for the latest WSRF funding cycle.

#### **12. Interbasin Compact Committee (IBCC) Update (J. Yahn and S. Cronin – 10 min)**

Sean Cronin announced that there is no IBCC update. The next IBCC meeting is on February 23. Sean Cronin and Jim Yahn will report on that at the March SPBRT meeting.

#### **13. Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) Update (S. Stein and J. Yahn – 10 min)**

Sam Stein shared several CWCB updates. Stein announced that CWCB is hosting a virtual Riverside Chat on January 27 to discuss the Water Plan update. There will also be an Instream Flow Workshop on January 27. CWCB Director Becky Mitchell will be doing a virtual Roundtable tour; she will be at the February 9 SPBRT meeting. Mitchell expresses her appreciation of all the Roundtable members'

work on BIP updates. The next PEPO meeting is on February 22, a day before the IBCC meeting. The next CWCB Board meeting is on January 25-26. The CWCB Board has recently adopted a Step 2 Workplan for Demand Management, which will focus on developing a framework for a potential DM program. Tune into the CWCB Board meeting for more details.

Jim Yahn reiterated the upcoming CWCB Board meeting on January 25-26. The CWCB Board will also look at ATM guidelines and grant and loan applications.

**14. Public Comment (5 min)**

Garrett Varra noted a few housekeeping items. A link to the online CWCB calendar was added to the meeting agenda template; SPBRT members are encouraged to broaden their perspective by attending other Roundtables' meetings. Varra also thanked Christy Wiseman for her work as the SPBRT's recorder. Varra reminded everyone that he wants to examine the 2013 By-Laws in the next coming months; SPBRT members will be asked to volunteer for that effort. Sean Cronin and multiple other SPBRT members thanked Varra for his service as Chair. The meeting adjourned at 6:48 p.m.