



Arkansas Basin Roundtable

PLANNING OUR
WATER FUTURE

ROUNDTABLE MEETING NOTES

January 13, 2021

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. Mark read off attendees. Mark asked for changes to the agenda, and none were suggested. Twenty-five (25) members were present.

Approval of Prior Meeting Notes

December meeting notes have been circulated for review. *Meeting notes were approved by consensus.*

Public Comment - none

REPORTS:

Executive Committee – Mark Shea

The executive committee met this morning. Mark has had follow-up conversations with the BIP General Contractor team as they complete Volume 1 of the BIP Update. Volume 1 is meant to be a concise part of the BIP that identifies strategies and objectives of the roundtables. There are some significant issues for us to address as a roundtable based on the output of the technical update. For instance, a sizable agricultural water gap resulted from the findings of the technical update. We reviewed the 2015 BIP and provided input re: revising objectives stated in 2015. Same with Enviro/Rec Committee – reviewed and revised objectives for non-consumptive uses that were identified in the 2015 BIP. Mark also facilitated a conversation re: transmountain diversions and what they look like in the BIP update. Issues get to the limitations that the technical committee reached when planning out to 2050. This conversation included SEWCD and Pueblo Board of Water Works as well as northern water providers.

The exec committee continued to have discussions with the PEPO Workgroup, and that group will meet this afternoon after the conclusion of the roundtable meeting.

They also discussed a policy proposal brought by Terry Scanga to address water rights issues that might arise with certain types of project (stream management, for example) that are brought forward as grant applications or letters of support. This is an ongoing conversation, as it is a complex issue to address.

CWCB Report – Sam Stein, Russ Sands & Greg Felt

CWCB is holding a riverside chat on January 27th, updating folks on the Colorado Water Plan. Becky Mitchell will be attending the April meeting of the Arkansas Roundtable.

The Governor's proposed budget contains \$6 million this year for state forest fire grants plus an additional \$4 million for CWCB's watershed restoration program. This funding is in response to the horrific drought and fire season that we've just been through.

The CWCB Board has approved the Demand Management Step 2 work plan. Demand management process continues to be iterative, with open discussion.

The next CWCB board meeting will be held January 25 and 26.

Three IBCC meetings have been scheduled for next year, with February 23rd as the first meeting date. PEPO Statewide will meet the day before each of the IBCC meetings.



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Greg Felt – feel free to reach out to him, in order to familiarize him with your issues. Several groups have reached out, thank you. Please feel free to reach out to him at gfelt@chaffeeconomy.org. 719-530-1118.

Covid really took hold just as we were winding up for the Arkansas River Water Forum, which was then cancelled. The Bob Appel award was never given. This year's recipient was Terry Scanga. Congratulations Terry, and thank you! Terry said a few words of thanks.

IBCC Report – Jeris Danielson & Terry Scanga

Scheduled to meet February 23rd. Jeris let us know that Nick Koch passed away from Covid last week. Nick has been an active roundtable member since March 2016. Mark will send our appreciation and respects to Nick's family.

Needs Assessment Committee – Abby Ortega

The applications that were approved last month will go in front of the CWCB in March.

Enviro/Rec – Bob Hamel, Amber Shanklin & Rena Griggs

Met with the signatories of the Voluntary Flow Management Agreement regarding the renewal of the plan for the next five years.

There is a new issue that has come forward. There is potential for the movement of crude oil train cars over Tennessee Pass and through the Arkansas Valley. We've just learned that there is a lease to do this. There has been some attempt to gain community input. A lot of locals have been writing letters to the Surface Transfer Board. The tracks are in incredible disrepair, and there have been estimates of over \$250 billion dollars to repair them. Lake, Chaffee and Eagle Counties are all meeting together and asking the Surface Transportation Board to not waive the environmental review for reinitiating rail service of any type. It would be shale oil that is being considered being moved in this way from the Uintah Basin. A new railway would be required on that end of the project. The communities in our area have been 25 years without rail traffic coming through town, so this would be a huge adaptation on many levels. Below Salida, there would be hurdles as to how rail cars would even find the ability to pass the Parkdale area and through the Royal Gorge. These rails are already busy with tourist traffic during the day, and Martin Marietta moves rock through the gorge at night. Whatever the outcome, this will be a long process.

Rena: recently attended a meeting for Great Plains Reservoirs effort, hosted by Kiowa County economic development folks. They are excited to learn as much as they can about water and how they can try to get the right amount of water into one or more of the Great Plains Reservoirs with an eye on recreation interests. This group is meeting monthly first Tuesday of the month at 10 am.

ARWC – Arkansas River Watershed Collaborative – Carol Ekarius

ARWC will meet in February to discuss board structure and the future of ARWC. Anyone on the roundtable is welcome to attend.

- We are still doing work on the Spring Fire in Huerfano County. Put in a proposal to the non-point source program.
- Monarch Pass Steep Slope Mitigation – about half of the area was covered in 2020. Monarch Ski Area is putting up interpretive signs about the project and forest health. Monarch will play a short version of the webisode on their TV monitors around the ski area.
- Will be ramping up forest work in Lake County area, including a modification of their existing wildfire protection plan, to look more strategically at water supply and bring that into their plan.



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- We finished the final scope revision for ARWC watershed health funding and will send that in to Chris Sturm this week.

BIP Tiering Process – Will Koger, Brett Gracely

The Tiering Matrix is:

- A tool for Roundtables
 - To characterize/track projects
 - To identify projects for funding
- A tool for CWCB
 - To assess overall funding needs
 - To understand project readiness
- A standard framework for gathering project data
- A tool for considering all projects on equal footing

The Tiering Matrix is not:

- A project ranking mechanism
 - Tiers are like “buckets” of projects and not an A to Z ranking
- A guarantee of funding from CWCB or a determinant of project advancement
 - Proponents can advance projects regardless of tiering.
- Limited with respect to the number of Tier 1, 2, 3 or 4 Projects.
- A means for pitting one project against another.

BREAK

Administration of Un-Decreed Ponds – Bill Tyner (see website for full presentation)

Pond Management Program Described

- *A process to review ponds within the Arkansas River Basin to more-accurately manage the water supply and to meet our legal water obligations to Colorado water rights and Kansas.*
 - Utilizing multiple sources of available data the Division Engineer’s Office has worked cooperatively with the State Engineer’s Office to identify a target set of ponds that don’t appear to fall within administration by having a senior decreed water right or by being included in a plan for augmentation or replacement plan.
 - The Arkansas River Basin is one of the most over-appropriated water basins in the state and has experienced frequent and severe drought conditions, (we use more water than is naturally supplied).
 - Addressing ponds may potentially help relieve some pressure on demand gaps by restoring water to agricultural and municipal users with senior rights.

Pond Management Program Strategy

- Organized to begin first near the mainstem of the Arkansas River and key tributaries in each water district where addressing pond losses will provide a direct contribution to senior water rights and will positively impact our ability to maintain compliance with our Compact.
- Includes an extensive effort to build educational material helpful in providing options to pond owners and providing initial notification of the problem to each owner.
- Anticipates follow-up field visits by each Water Commissioner to answer questions and help determine best options for compliance.



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Options for Compliance

- Vary by Location
- Include Pond in an Augmentation Plan/Exchange Plan
- Breach/Drain Pond
- Backfill Pond (If Ground Water Exposed by Pond)
- If Pond qualifies for a statutory exemption, obtain required permit and/or demonstrate with documentation
 - May require updating such as installation of low level outlets

Q&A:

Jeris commended their efforts.

Estimate of volumes involved in the Arkansas Basin: solving this problem is on the magnitude of tens of thousands of acre feet, likely less than 30,000 acre feet total, but a large issue and time to address it.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:22 pm, but continued through remaining questions for Bill Tyner.

Admin Email: ARKBASINRT@GMAIL.COM

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

- Arkansas Basin Roundtable Meeting: February 10, 12:30 pm www.arkansasbasin.com
- PEPO Workgroup: This afternoon www.pepoarkbasin.com
- Enviro/Rec: January 25
- CWCB: Jan 25, 26 <http://cwcb.state.co.us/Pages/CWCBHome.aspx>
- IBCC: Feb 23
- PEPO Statewide Mtg: Feb 22
- Arkansas River Basin Water Forum: <http://www.arbwf.org/>
- 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/>