

South Platte Basin Roundtable (SPBRT) Meeting
Tuesday, June 8, 2021
4:00-7:00 p.m. (MST)

South Platte Basin Roundtable Business Meeting Minutes

South Platte Basin Website: <https://southplattebasin.com/>
CWCB SPBRT Website: <https://cwcb.colorado.gov/about-us/basin-roundtables/south-platte-basin-roundtable>

1. Zoom Orientation, Questions, and Comments (G. Varra – 10 min)

The meeting started at 4:04 p.m. Garrett Varra thanked everyone for attending the SPBRT's fourteenth 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: Jim Yahn*, Garrett Varra*, Kirk Vincent*, Matt Jones*, Ken Huson*, Lisa Leben*, Kevin Lusk*, Kelsea Holloway*, Daylan Figgs*, Donnie Dustin*, John Kolanz*, Shane Miller*, Joe Frank*, Jim Hall*, Deb Daniel*, Scott Griebeling*, Sean Chambers*, Joel Schneckloth, Casey Davenport, Christy Wiseman, Robert Sakata, Barbara Biggs, Russ Sands, Sam Stein, Carmen Farmer, Corey DeAngelis, Erik Jorgensen, Jordana Barrack, Kyle Whitaker, Laura Belanger, Mary Presecan, Mary Gearhart, Matt Cook, Matt Lindburg, Melissa Mosier, Monica Mika, Phyllis Thomas, and multiple members of the public. Lori Saine* was excused from the April meeting. 17 voting SPBRT members were present (* denotes a voting member).

3. Approval of May 2021 SPBRT Meeting Minutes (G. Varra – 5 min action required)

Kirk Vincent made a motion to approve the May 2021 meeting minutes and Jim Yahn seconded. The motion passed unanimously without discussion or contest.

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

There were no proposed additions or changes to the June 2021 meeting agenda. Lisa Leben made a motion to accept the June 2021 meeting agenda and Sean Chambers seconded. The motion passed unanimously without discussion or contest.

5. Membership Updates (G. Varra – 5 min)

Garrett Varra did not have any membership updates.

6. Public Comment (5 min)

Garrett Varra noted that SPBRT meetings are fairly informal. He invited members of the public to comment by speaking up or using the chat throughout the meeting.

7. Joint Metro/South Platte Basin Roundtable Meeting at South Platte Forum on December 9, 2021 (G. Varra – 5 min)

The South Platte Forum will be held in person on December 9, 2021. SPBRT Chair Garrett Varra and Metro Roundtable Chair Barbara Biggs have discussed having a joint SPBRT/Metro RT meeting at the event. Varra asked for input. Ken Huson and Matt Jones commented that a joint meeting would be a good idea. Scott Griebeling noted that he is helping to plan the South Platte Forum; the joint Roundtable meeting would most likely in the afternoon. Varra noted that the plan is to discuss major topics that both Roundtables will be working on between now and then. Hearing no concerns from SPBRT members, Varra and Biggs will plan for the joint meeting.

8. Demand Management Discussion (Sean Chambers, Kyle Whitaker, Mary Gearhart, Jim Yahn – 45 min)

Kyle Whitaker from Northern Water, Mary Gearhart from the City of Greeley, Jim Yahn, and Sean Chambers led a discussion about Demand Management. Sean Chambers started the conversation by thanking SPBRT members for taking time to engage. CWCB staff presented on the Demand Management framework last month. Chambers noted that the City of Greeley reached out to Northern Water to figure out how to better engage with Colorado River issues and be better informed as an allottee. Chambers talked about the many ways Colorado River issues impact water in the South Platte Basin and introduced the rest of the panelists.

Kyle Whitaker presented an overview of Colorado River issues, including the Compact (i.e., “Law of the River”), transmountain diversions, 2007 Drought Contingency Plan, and the difference between demand management (or efficiency) in general and CWCB’s Demand Management framework. The panelists discussed other Roundtables’ positions on the topic. Western Slope Roundtables are generally more aligned in their positions.

The panelists and SPBRT members discussed Northern Water’s position towards a potential Demand Management program. Other panelists talked about CWCB’s workgroup process. Jim Yahn reiterated the importance of SPBRT members staying involved in Demand Management discussions. SPBRT members should engage with their IBCC representatives (Jim Yahn and Sean Cronin) as well as CWCB Board member Robert Sakata so that they each can accurately represent the basin. Sean Chambers thanked the panelists and asked SPBRT members to take time and think about this topic: is it achievable, is it advisable, is it worthwhile for Colorado? Garrett Varra thanked Chambers and the other panelists.

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

Matt Cook and Mary Presecan presented the latest BIP update. They covered the completion of the special study (Environmental and Recreational Benefits of Irrigated Agriculture in the Lower South Platte Basin), M&I gap analysis work, and a project timeline update.

10. SPBRT Committee Updates

a. South Platte Basin and Statewide Account Balances / Water Supply Reserve Fund (WSRF) (G. Varra and S. Stein – 10 min)

Garrett Varra reported that WSRF grant applications from last month are being processed on their way to the CWCB Board.

b. Public Education, Participation, and Outreach (PEPO) (C. Davenhill – 15 min)

Casey Davenhill presented the PEPO report. Of note, the PEPO Committee is updating member handbooks for both the SPBRT and Metro RT. SPBRT members are welcome to suggest feedback. In addition, the South Platte video project is wrapping up with a working title of “South Platte Symbiosis” and should be ready in a couple months.

11. Legislative Update (G. Varra and J. Yahn – 15 min)

Garrett Varra reported that the legislative session should conclude soon. Matt Jones shared an [article](#) about fire, erosion, and water quality. Sean Chambers commented on [SB21-258 Wildfire Risk Mitigation](#) and [SB21-240 Watershed Restoration Grant Program Stimulus](#). Jim Yahn noted that CDPHE’s Dredge & Fill Water Permit Program never materialized into a bill. The Water Resources Review Committee may continue to discuss the program idea over the summer. Yahn also commented on a few agriculture-related bills. Garrett Varra added that he has been tracking the dredge and fill conversation; he hopes that CDPHE will gather expertise and input from Roundtables.

12. Interbasin Compact Committee (IBCC) Update (J. Yahn and S. Cronin – 5 min)

Garrett Varra noted that there has not been an IBCC meeting and the next meeting has been canceled due to scheduling conflicts. It will be a few months before the next IBCC meeting, though SPBRT members are welcome to bring up issues relevant to the IBCC in the meantime. Jim Yahn added that the next IBCC meeting will be around October, hopefully in person. Sean Cronin added that CWCB staff wants to get more Demand Management framework input from IBCC members, especially around equity and proportionality. Cronin and Yahn will ask SPBRT members to help them generate feedback. Garrett Varra noted that he will reserve time on an upcoming meeting agenda for another Demand Management discussion.

13. Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) Update (S. Stein and R. Sakata – 10 min)

Sam Stein provided a CWCB update. He thanked everyone who joined the Riverside Chat II event on June 8. A [recording](#) of the event will be posted on [engagecwcw.org](#). The Water Plan update survey on [engagecwcw.org](#) will stay open throughout June. Stein then covered a variety of items outlined in a recent email from CWCB staff to all Roundtable Chairs:

- **In-person Event Requests, Hybrid Meetings and Safety** - Given new direction from the Governor, CWCB is back to processing roundtable event funding requests. Requests for roundtable meetings need to be sent to Elgin Turner (elgin.turner@state.co.us) who will request DNR approval for funding of any food or meeting space. Because of ongoing health concerns and because Zoom accounts are in place for each roundtable, we would ask that any

meeting still make allowances for an online/webinar meeting option for the foreseeable future. Additionally, staff may still be attending remotely in many cases via Zoom.

- **New Water Plan Grant Application Deadline (July 1, 2021)** - The CWCB recently approved adding a new deadline of July 1 for Water Plan Grant applications (to be reviewed at the September 2021 Board meeting). The following round of Water Plan Grants still has a December 1, 2021 deadline.
- **New CWCB Grants Approval Policy** - At the May Board Meeting, the Board adopted a policy effective May 20 to establish a new approval process for CWCB's primary grant programs: Water Plan Grants, Water Supply Reserve Fund Grants, Watershed Restoration Grants, and Technical Assistance for Federal Cost Share Grants. The newly adopted policy changes the approval process based on the grant request amount. For grant requests from up to \$50,000, the CWCB Director now has the authority to approve proposals without prior Board authorization. Requests ranging from \$50,001-\$99,999 will be placed on the consent agenda for approval by the board. Grant requests that are \$100,000 or greater will be added to each Board meeting agenda and will include a presentation to the Board by CWCB staff. Please contact Ben Wade at ben.wade@state.co.us if you have any further questions.
- **WSRF Stimulus Funding** - Pending the full passage of [House Bill \(HB\) 21-1260](#) an additional \$5M will be added to the WSRF grant fund. Consistent with the criteria and guidelines, that funding will be split between the basin (36%) and statewide (64%) accounts. Those basin funds will then be distributed to each basin roundtable account adding \$200K into each basin account. The legislation requires that grant funds expended from this disbursement must be approved by the CWCB Board no later than July 1, 2023 or the funding will no longer be available. The Water Plan Grant program will also receive an additional \$15M from this bill and has the same board approval timing constraints.
- **June IBCC Meeting Cancelled** - The June IBCC meeting has been cancelled due to scheduling conflicts with key participants. As such, the next IBCC meeting will be held on October 21, 2021. In lieu of meeting, we will continue to engage the IBCC to gather critical input about equity and proportionality issues related to the Demand Management Feasibility Investigation. Details to come in the coming weeks.
- **Demand Management Feasibility Investigation** - The Demand Management Feasibility Investigation continues with significant board discussion planned for the July CWCB meeting and a subsequent board workshop in August. Recent outreach to the roundtables and previous Demand Management workgroups is being followed with additional public workshops and a listening session in June. Please see the CWCB [website](#) for more detail, with an additional opportunity for survey input provided at engagecwcb.org.
- **Colorado Water Plan Riverside Chat II** - The event was hosted on June 8, 2021 and talked through the major themes heard during the scoping phase of the Water Plan update. To hear the recording, review past workshops, or provide input via our Water Plan survey (which closes at the end of June), please visit engagecwcb.org.

After Stein's update, SPBRT members discussed the transition to in person meetings and technology needs for hybrid meetings. The longstanding meeting space at the SW Weld County building may not have the technology needed for hybrid meetings. Garrett Varra would like the August SPBRT meeting to be in person.

Robert Sakata then provided a CWCB Board update. He echoed the importance of the Demand Management discussion. He reported on events from the previous CWCB Board meeting in May. At

the May meeting, the CWCB Board discussed an update on the state line delivery pilot release; Colorado River issues; drought publicity of lower basin states; lots of bills; Proposition DD revenues; dam safety; criteria manual changes for floodplains; projects in the Arkansas and Metro Basins; and Linda Bassi's retirement. The next CWCB Board meeting will be in person. Garret Varra noted that he would appreciate a report out from CWCB staff as the floodplain criteria are updated.

Carmen Farmer with Colorado Open Lands discussed [HB21-1233 Conservation Easement Tax Credit Modifications](#). She then talked about how conservation easements (CEs) are a tool for keeping irrigated agricultural lands intact.

Corey DeAngelis shared that DWR's Division 1 office in Greeley is moving; the office is closed through the end of June. Hopefully the move will be completed by the end of June. DWR staff can be reached by phone and email. The 2020 Decennial Abandonment List has been published. Individuals can file an objection with DWR by July 1, 2021. Objection forms are on DWR's website. Garrett Varra complimented DWR staff on their seamless remote work.

Jim Yahn commented on the Chatfield Storage Reallocation Project. Various SPBRT members commented on the recent tornado near Platteville. Garrett Varra wrapped up by making further comments about the intersection of Demand Management, drought effects, and Colorado River issues. The July SPBRT meeting will be remote again. Casey Davenport noted a new [Water Journalism Fellowship](#) for journalists covering water stories.

The meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.