

Interbasin Compact Committee
Southwest Basins Roundtable Meeting
Dolores Water Conservancy District
60 Cactus Street, Cortez, CO 81321
and via Zoom
July 29, 2021

Members Present:

Jarrold Biggs	La Plata Municipalities	John Ott	Water Quality Control Commission
Dagan Chadd	Dolores County	Al Pfister	San Juan WCD
John Currier	Colorado River WCD	Kathy Rall	Southern Ute Indian Tribe
Ken Curtis	At Large Member	Gretchen Rank	At Large Member
Carolyn Dunmire	At Large Recreation	Gigi Richard	At Large Member
Glen Fish	Dolores WCD	Ellen Roberts	La Plata County
Karen Guglielmone	San Miguel Municipalities	Charlie Smith	San Juan County
Celene Hawkins	CWCB Representative	Ed Tolen	At Large Domestic Water
Kenny Heldman	Montrose Municipalities	Mely Whiting	At Large Environmental
Brandon Johnson	At Large Member	Robin Young	Archuleta County
April Montgomery	San Miguel County	Val Valentine	Mineral County

Public:

Stacy Beaugh (Basin Implementation Plan (BIP) Update Local Expert Team), Adrian Bergere (San Miguel Watershed Coalition), Elaine Chick (Water Information Program, PEPO Liaison), Clyde Church (La Plata County Commissioner), James Dietrich (Montezuma County), Steve Harris (Harris Water Engineering), Rich Landreth (City of Cortez), Darren Lewis (Town of Pagosa Springs), Blake Mamich (Southern Ute Indian Tribe), Carrie Padgett (BIP Update Local Expert Team), Doug Pickering (Colorado Division of Water Resources), Chris Pitcher (Contractor), Mike Preston (Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative), Lauren Ris (CWCB), Marty Robbins (Colorado Division of Water Resources), Robert Sakata (CWCB Board Member, South Platte), Russ Sands (CWCB), Elizabeth Schoder (CWCB), Don Schwindt (SW Water Conservation District), Danielle Snyder (Brown & Caldwell), Laura Spann (SW Water Conservation District, Roundtable Recorder), Sam Stein (CWCB), Ryan Unterreiner (Colorado Parks & Wildlife), Kat Weismiller (CWCB), Scott Williamson (Water Education Colorado)

1. Introductions & Review Agenda

Roundtable Chair Ed Tolen called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

2. Administrative Reports

Review and Approval of Minutes

Ken Curtis moved to approve the April 22, 2021 Roundtable minutes. Al Pfister seconded. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

Basin WSRF Fund Balance

The WSRF Basin fund balance is \$412,503. An additional \$200,000 deposit to the account is expected soon.

3. Elections

Ken Curtis moved to elect by acclamation current officers Ed Tolen (Roundtable Chair), Brandon Johnson (First Vice-Chair) and Al Pfister (Second Vice-Chair). Mely Whiting seconded. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

With Ed Millard's resignation from the Roundtable and the IBCC, the alternate (Ken Curtis) filled the vacancy. The current IBCC representatives are Al Pfister and Ken Curtis.

Al Pfister nominated Steve Wolff (Southwestern Water Conservation District) to serve as the IBCC alternate representative. Steve Wolff, not present, accepted the nomination prior to the meeting. Mely Whiting moved to elect by acclamation Steve Wolff as the IBCC alternate representative. Brandon Johnson seconded. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

4. Public Comments

There were no public comments or questions.

5. CWCB Update

Sam Stein (CWCB) reported that Russell George stepped down as the IBCC director. Colorado Department of Natural Resources Director Dan Gibbs is currently working to appointment his replacement. Colorado Water Plan grant applications are due on December 1st. The infusion of stimulus funding to the WSRF (\$200,000 to the Southwest Basin Account) must be allocated by May 2023. Dire drought conditions are impacted individuals across Colorado. Ken Curtis thanked the CWCB for providing the A/V equipment for the hybrid meeting.

There was Roundtable consensus to authorize the WSRF subcommittee to propose an increase in the current cap on WSRF Basin Account requests of \$25,000, which the Roundtable will approve via email. This increase would apply to applications considered at the October meeting.

6. Consider Endorsing Statewide Water Education Action Plan

Scott Williamson, Water Education Colorado, briefly summarized the Statewide Water Education Action Plan (SWEAP), which he presented to the Roundtable at their April 2021 meeting. SWEAP is a five-year outreach and engagement effort to achieve measurable objectives in water education by 2025 that contribute to the water plan's goal of sustainable water resources by 2050. Specifically, by 2025, Coloradoans should be engaged in well-informed community discourse and decision making regarding balanced water solutions and empowered to take thoughtful action regarding critical water issues facing Colorado and their communities. Scott summarized the current entities that endorse SWEAP and affirms the plan's goal and value. Gigi Richard moved that the Southwest Basins Roundtable endorse SWEAP. Al Pfister seconded. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

7. PEPO Liaison Report

Elaine Chick, PEPO Liaison, reported that the WSRF application to develop a Roundtable website and fund other Basin Implementation Plan (BIP) outreach opportunities has been approved. Elaine will lead the website development effort with the help of a web designer. The following individuals volunteered to form a Roundtable workgroup to provide input on the new website's content and usability: Ellen Roberts, Laura Spann, Carrie Padgett, Ed Tolen, Al Pfister, Gigi Richard, and Gretchen Rank. Water Education Colorado is coordinating with PEPO liaisons to undertake the Water 2022 outreach campaign, which will highlight the water plan on the 100th anniversary of the Colorado River Compact and the 20th anniversary of the 2002 drought, among other milestones.

8. Colorado River Issues Subcommittee

Ken Curtis summarized the afternoon Colorado River subcommittee. Michelle Garrison, CWCB, detailed the conditions, operations and forecasts for Lakes Mead and Powell. Reclamation projects a 7.48 million acre-feet release from Lake Powell next water year under the Mid-Elevation Balancing Tier. Reclamation also implemented reservoir reoperations to raise Lake Powell's elevation by three feet and ensure ongoing power generation; they have authorized release of a total of 181,000 acre-feet from Flaming Gorge, Blue Mesa, and Navajo reservoirs through the end of 2021.

Celene Hawkins provided updates on the CWCB's demand management feasibility investigation. The next CWCB board demand management workshop is scheduled for August 18th from 1-5pm. CWCB continues to accept public comment on the demand management framework and other relevant documents. The next Colorado River subcommittee meeting will be held the day of the October Roundtable meeting. Topics will include a deep dive into the Homestake Reservoir release.

9. IBCC Update

The spring IBCC meeting was cancelled. The CWCB is currently surveying the IBCC members on next steps they would like to take. The next IBCC meeting is scheduled for October 21st.

10. Basin Implementation Plan (BIP) Update

Carrie Padgett, Harris Water Engineering, reported that the Basin Implementation Plan (BIP) update subcommittee has been working diligently on the content in Volume I and II over the last eight months. Carrie summarized the upcoming timeline for BIP review, comments, and public comments. Volume II is out for review now, with comments due by August 6th.

The BIP subcommittee continues to discuss and refine the draft principles, goals, and strategies. Three strategies and one principle are still being worked on by the subcommittee. Comments are due back by August 6th on these principles, goals, and strategies. All comments will be provided to the subcommittee and discussed at the upcoming August 16th BIP update subcommittee meeting. The goal of this meeting is to finalize this content for Volumes I and II in preparation for the upcoming public comment period and finalization of the documents this winter. Carrie provided a short outline of the timeline for September through January, when the BIP is scheduled to be finalized.

There was Roundtable discussion regarding the process for adding items to the Projects List, which is a tool to evaluate the funding needed to fully implement the water plan. Roundtable members were encouraged to review the Projects List to ensure efforts and water needs in their basin are adequately summarized. Several Roundtable members thanked consultants Carrie Padgett and Stacy Beaugh for their excellent work in a difficult BIP subcommittee process. There was Roundtable feedback to the CWCB that there be review of the BIP update timeline to ensure future BIP updates move at a reasonable pace and focus on aspects of the discussion that are most useful.

12. WSRF Concept Proposal – Colorado Aerial Snow Observations (CASO)

Ken Curtis reported that CWCB funded four test flights in 2021 over the Animas and Dolores basins by Aerial Snow Observatory, which utilizes LIDAR technology to measure snowpack. CWCB also paid NCAR to bring the national WRF Hydro Model to southwestern Colorado to make their forecasting tools available to local water managers. Denver Water and Northern Water Conservancy District are working on coordinating interest, momentum, and funding for a statewide aerial snowpack monitoring effort. As part of this effort, a WSRF grant request may come forward in October to provide local match on winter 21-22 Animas basin flights. There is still discussion regarding the cost-benefit of this new snowpack monitoring tool. There was Roundtable consensus to recommend development of a WSRF application for proposed Colorado Aerial Snow Observations (CASO) flights in southwestern Colorado.

11. WSRF Concept Proposal – Upper San Juan Watershed Enhancement Projects

Aaron Kimple, Chris Pitcher, and Darren Lewis reported on the Upper San Juan stream management planning effort through the Watershed Enhancement Partnership (WEP). As part of the Phase II assessment, WEP has identified immediate multi-purpose environmental/recreational projects south of Yamaguchi Park and north of Pagosa Springs to upgrade river access, enhance riparian areas, and improve aquatic habitat. Specifically, the proposed projects would improve river access points on the San Juan River, channel shaping, removal of debris (e.g. rusting cars, collapsed pipeline) from riverbanks, and placement of rock vanes, boulder piles, root wads and other structures that provide recreational and aquatic habitat benefits along an approximately 12,000 foot-long reach of the San Juan River. Project proponents include the Town of Pagosa Springs, the Upper San Juan WEP, and Trout Unlimited. The total combined project cost is estimated at \$2.16 million. The project may be phased to facilitate necessary match, match the pace of construction, and ensure availability of funding. There was Roundtable consensus to recommend development of a WSRF application for the Upper San Juan Watershed Enhancement Projects.

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13. Upcoming Events

BIP Update Subcommittee Meeting

August 16, 2021

Regular Roundtable Meeting (Consideration of WSRF Applications - Durango)

October 27 or 28, 2021

Regular Roundtable Meeting

January 27, 2022

Regular Roundtable Meeting

April 28, 2022

14. Adjournment

Chair Ed Tolen adjourned the meeting at 5:00 p.m.