

South Platte Basin Roundtable (SPBRT) Meeting
Tuesday, January 11, 2022
4:00-7:00 p.m. (MST)
Virtual Meeting

South Platte Basin Roundtable Annual 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. Welcome and Introductions (Garrett Varra – 10 min)

Prior to the meeting officially starting, attendees commented on the Marshall Fire. The meeting started at 4:09 p.m. Garrett Varra welcomed everyone.

In attendance: Gene Manuello*, Loretta Daniel*, Jim Yahn*, Garrett Varra*, Kirk Vincent*, Matt Jones*, Ken Huson*, Stephen Larson*, Lisa Leben*, Kelsea Holloway*, Daylan Figgs*, Donnie Dustin*, John Kolanz*, Joe Frank*, Allyn Wind*, Jim Hall*, Dick Elsner*, Bruce Gerk*, Scott Griebbling*, Lynda James*, Lori Saine*, Sean Chambers*, Sean Cronin, Casey Davenhill, Christy Wiseman, Robert Sakata, Sam Stein, Elizabeth Schoder, Russ Sands, Dan Gibbs, Kelly Romero-Heaney, Lauren Ris, Corey DeAngelis, Amy Mitchell, Bryan Beckner, Carmen Farmer, Christy Crosser, Dan Betts, David Rausch, Erik Jorgensen, Erin Minks, Heather Dutton, Isabelle Lheritier, Jamie Sudler, Josh Kuhn, Josh Weaver, June Vincze, Kayla Ranney, Kyle Whitaker, Mary Gearhart, Mary Presecan, Matt Lindburg, Matt Machado, Patrick Wells, Ray Douglas, Will Ettema, Wilynn Formeller, and multiple members of the public. 22 voting SPBRT members were present (* denotes a voting member).

2. Approval of November 2021 and December 2021 Minutes (Garrett Varra – 5 min action required)

Dick Elsner made a motion to approve both the November 2021 and December 2021 meeting minutes and Kirk Vincent seconded. The motion passed unanimously without discussion or contest.

3. January 2022 Agenda Additions or Changes (Garrett Varra – 5 min action required)

Casey Davenhill announced that in order to save time on the agenda, she plans to submit a written PEPO report instead of verbally presenting during item 8.b. Scott Griebbling made a motion to accept the change and Sean Chambers seconded. The motion passed unanimously without discussion or contest.

4. Dan Gibbs, Director of the IBCC – DNR Updates (Dan Gibbs – 30 min)

Dan Gibbs, Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Director of Compact Negotiations and Chair of the Interbasin Compact Committee (IBCC), verbally presented several DNR updates. Gibbs explained the structure of DNR's various divisions and areas of regulatory oversight. He explained his recent appointment as Chair of the IBCC by Governor Polis; Gibbs is attending Basin Roundtable meetings in order to introduce himself to all the Roundtables.

As Chair of the IBCC, Gibbs is working to bring basins together and formulate ideas as a state. Gibbs described his personal and professional background before giving a brief update on snowpack levels and outlining the goals of the IBCC. He pointed out the cross-basin focus on forest health and watershed health. Gibbs summarized recent and pending legislation related to DNR's work and grant programs (including CWCB grant programs). He introduced a few fellow DNR staff attending the meeting, including Kelly Romero-Heaney and Lauren Ris.

After Gibbs' updates, he asked for the SPBRT membership's input on major priorities and things he needs to be aware of as new Chair of the IBCC. Multiple SPBRT members commented and provided input. Topics included funding, getting multi-benefit projects built, storage, the water/energy nexus, development in the WUI, wildfire mitigation, and the need for more messaging guidance from CWCB and the IBCC on various water issues.

Gibbs and SPBRT members then discussed the January 11 announcement from Nebraska's Governor that Nebraska plans to fully develop their rights on the South Platte River and will invest \$500 Million to develop a channel to divert water in the South Platte River. After the discussion about Nebraska, Dick Elsner talked about a legacy ponds bill being introduced by CCI. Lastly, Sean Chambers summarized the SPBRT's work on creating a Demand Management statement. Garrett Varra thanked Gibbs for joining the meeting.

5. Membership Updates and Annual Elections (Garrett Varra – 15 min action required)

Garrett Varra expressed gratitude for his time as SPBRT Chair for the last 4 years and made remarks about the importance of the SPBRT's work.

a. Election of Chair

Garrett Varra opened the floor for nominations of a new Chair. Bruce Gerk nominated current First Vice Chair Lynda James and Kirk Vincent seconded. Jim Yahn nominated Sean Chambers and Larry Rogstad seconded. Varra instructed SPBRT voting members to submit their vote for either James or Chambers privately via the Zoom chat. While members voted, James and Chambers each made short statements about their time on the SPBRT and their desire to take over leadership. Sean Chambers won the vote with 20 votes to Lynda James' 2 votes. After the election, SPBRT members thanked Varra and commented on his time as Chair. Newly elected SPBRT Chair Sean Chambers expressed his excitement and thanked everyone.

b. Election of Vice Chairs

Each of the current Vice Chairs (Lynda James and Jim Hall) announced their interest in continuing to serve. There were no additional nominations for Vice Chair. Garrett Varra explained the difference in duties between the First and Second Vice Chair roles; the First Vice Chair steps up to run a meeting if the Chair cannot attend. Both roles assist with agenda setting. James and Hall confirmed that they are content to continue in their existing

roles, with Lynda James as First Vice Chair and Jim Hall as Second Vice Chair. There was no opposition so James and Hall were elected unanimously.

c. Election of WSRF Needs Committee Chair

Garrett Varra announced that he has been serving as the Chair of the WSRF Needs Committee for several months and is happy to continue in the role. Scott Griebeling helped in the last two WSRF cycles and is interested in serving as Co-Chair. No one else expressed interest in leading the WSRF Needs Committee so Garrett Varra and Scott Griebeling were elected as Co-Chairs. Sean Chambers thanked them both for volunteering.

d. Kirk Vincent: Watershed Health Roundtable Seat Discussion

Kirk Vincent initiated a discussion about the possibility of adding a voting seat focused on watershed health to the SPBRT. Vincent attended the November CWCB Board meeting and was intrigued to hear that the Arkansas Basin Roundtable had created a watershed health seat. Sean Chambers stated that he wants to have a robust dialogue about whether this would be in the SPBRT's best interest and what role this seat would play. Chambers commented that there are lots of people with technical expertise on watershed health that would be well suited if the SPBRT decided to create a new seat. Russ Sands discussed state statutory requirements (from HB05-1177); CWCB may need to consult the Attorney General's office on this matter. Lynda James agreed with the approach of taking the question to the Attorney General's office. She sees a need for the position but wants to make sure the SPBRT has authority to add a new voting seat.

Jim Yahn noted that the Rio Grande Basin Roundtable has added several voting seats. Heather Dutton, the Chair of the Rio Grande Basin Roundtable, was in attendance and talked about history of creating seats on the Rio Grande Basin Roundtable. They changed their bylaws, interpreting the statute to say that they could add seats from time to time as long as the base seats identified in the statute remained. Dutton stressed the balance between being responsive to people's interest and not adding too many seats such that it creates a quorum problem.

There was further discussion about the best course of action. It was decided that the SPBRT (and Metro Roundtable if they have interest in adding a watershed health seat) will wait for guidance from CWCB on how to proceed. Lynda James added that if CWCB advises that the SPBRT cannot create a new watershed health voting seat, then the SPBRT could discuss writing a legislative proposal that would amend HB05-1177 and uniformly add a watershed health seat to all Roundtables that want one. Via chat, Kelsea Holloway commented that watershed health is not only forest health; it incorporates agricultural land, municipalities, forests, grasslands, etc. and how we all work together to manage it. Many voting SPBRT seats represent these aspects already. The SPBRT needs to think about what a special seat representing "watershed health" specifically would add.

- e. ***Note that the next membership term is up in 2025; At Large SPBRT voting members will need to be re-elected at that time**

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

Corey DeAngelis from DWR talked about impacts to water users from the Marshall Fire and gave an update on the 2020 abandonment process.

7. **Basin Implementation Plan (BIP) Update (Matt Cook – 15 min action required)**

- a. **Approval of the South Platte BIP (subject to incorporation of the responses to public comments approved by each BIP subcommittee and the Joint Steering Committee)**

Garrett Varra announced that Matt Cook could not attend the meeting. The Local Expert team working on updating the BIP is looking for approval of the South Platte BIP, subject to incorporating pending final comments approved by each BIP subcommittee and the Joint Steering Committee. Kayla Ranney and Matt Lindburg explained how the consultant team has worked with all three subcommittees and the Joint Steering Committee to review and work on response to public comments. They anticipate completion of final draft in late January. Casey Davenhill asked where people could see how comments were incorporated. Lindburg responded that the team created a spreadsheet to track comments and responses. As soon as that is finalized, he will send the spreadsheet out to the subcommittees and Joint Steering Committee.

Multiple SPBRT members discussed Nebraska's announcement and how portions of the draft South Platte BIP was taken out of context; not all projects listed in the draft BIP impact native South Platte River supplies.

Joe Frank made a motion to adopt the South Platte BIP subject to comments being incorporated by the BIP subcommittees and the Joint Steering Committee. Garrett Varra seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Lindburg thanked everyone who participated in the BIP update process.

After the vote, there was further discussion of Nebraska's announcement and the area of Colorado that would be impacted by the proposed canal (e.g., Sedgwick County). Bruce Gerk serves as the Sedgwick Municipality representative. However, Sedgwick County's voting seat on the SPBRT is currently inactive. Davenhill expressed the need for DNR to quickly release a statement about the situation in order to get ahead of public questions.

8. **SPBRT Committees**

- a. **Water Supply Reserve Fund (WSRF) (Garrett Varra and Sam Stein – 10 min)**

Garrett Varra reported the South Platte Basin WSRF balance, including stimulus funds. Stimulus funds need to be expended by May 2023. The next WSRF application deadline is

April 1, 2022. Varra will work with Scott Griebing to set up an informational meeting with potential WSRF applicants.

Casey Davenhill noted that she has been working with the Metro Roundtable's WSRF committee to create a simpler one page WSRF proposal template for the South Platte Basin website. She will share that with Varra and Griebing if it's helpful.

Varra brought up the differences between the processes for reviewing and voting on WSRF grant applications versus Water Plan grant applications. Varra suggested that the SPBRT allow the WSRF Needs Committee to review Water Plan grant applications in the future (i.e., for them to make a recommendation like they do with WSRF) rather than Water Plan grant applications simply going to the SPBRT Chair. Varra noted the importance of reviewing full applications but was open to discussing the simpler one pager approach because that has worked well for the Metro Roundtable. This process change would put both types of grants together in one location and relieve a burden of the SPBRT Chair. Sean Chambers suggested that the SPBRT discuss this idea further in a future meeting.

b. Public Education, Participation, and Outreach (PEPO) (Casey Davenhill – 5 min)

See written report in January 2022 meeting materials folder.

9. Interbasin Compact Committee (IBCC) Update (Jim Yahn and Sean Cronin – 5 min)

Sean Cronin reiterated that Dan Gibbs is the new Director of the IBCC. The next IBCC meeting is on February 23. Jim Yahn added that the IBCC will have more discussion about what the IBCC should be doing and what direction to go. IBCC members want to be actively involved in ongoing Demand Management conversations.

10. Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) Update (Sam Stein and Robert Sakata – 10 min)

Sam Stein expressed condolences to everyone impacted by the Marshall Fire. He thanked everyone who worked on the BIP update. CWCB will conduct a survey about the BIP update to gather feedback on how to improve the process for next time. At their November 2021 meeting, the CWCB Board adopted changes to WSRF grant guidelines. They also approved changes to the PEPO program. PEPO basin coordinator funds were increased to \$25,000 per fiscal year (up from the previous \$6,000 allowance). CWCB wants to support PEPO and is looking forward to seeing what the coordinators can do with more funding. Stein plugged the drought leadership training program available through CSU beginning in February. Lastly, he congratulated Sean Chambers on his new role as Chair and thanked Garrett Varra for his tremendous service to the SPBRT. Robert Sakata noted that the next CWCB Board meeting is January 24-25.

Sean Chambers went over the upcoming meetings schedule. Garrett Varra made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Scott Griebing seconded. The meeting adjourned at 6:19 p.m.