

**Inter Basin Compact Committee Basin Roundtables
Rio Grande Basin Roundtable**

MEETING Minutes

Tuesday February 8, 2022 at 2:00pm

RGWCD
8805 Independence
or
Via Zoom

Call to Order

Chairman Nathan Coombs called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m.

Those in attendance were Nathan Coombs (CWCD/Roundtable Chair), Judy Lopez (Trinchera Foundation), Kevin Terry (Trout Unlimited, Recreation Rep), Heather Dutton (CWCB, SLVWCD), Emma Reesor (RGHRP/Roundtable Vice Chair), Nikita Cooper (Rio Grande County Rep/Roundtable Secretary), Daniel Boyes (RGHRP), Connor Born (RGHRP), Erin McWilliams (RGHRP), Charlie Goodson (COL), Keith Holland (Agriculture Member at Large), Peyton Valentine (CWCD), Amber Pacheco (RGWCD), Cary Aloia (NAWCA), Cindy Medina (ARK), Tricia Snyder (WildEarth Guardians), Anna Greenburg (Bird Conservancy of the Rockies and NRCS), Sam Stein (CWCB), Sally Wier (RiGHT), Rio de La Vista (Director, Salazar Rio Grande Del Norte Center, ASU), Chris Shaffer (USFWS), Bethany Howell (CDA), Jim Ehrlich (Alamosa County), JoAnn Slivka (Baca Grande Water and Sanitation District), Chuck Finnegan (Conejos County), Darin Schepp (DWR), Erin Minks (Senator Michael Bennet), Peter Clark (Water User at Large), Virginia Christensen (Water User at Large), Travis Smith(Reservoirs), Mario Curto (SLV Well Users), Vern Heresink (Alamosa County Commissioner), Danial Spivak, Jenny Nehring, Karla Shriver (Legislative Appointee), Kat Weismiller (CWCB), Kurt, Nora Flyn (CWCB), Russ Sands (CWCB), Glen Miller, Trey Jones (Farmer), Paul Hempel (CRWA SWAP), Rose Vanderpool (RGWCD), Chilton Tipton, Christi Bode, Heather Greenwolf (Headwaters Alliance), John Irizarry (USBR), Leslie Bechaver (Jim McCullough Farms), Cathy Morin, Senator Larry Crowder, Ryan Unterreiner (DNR), Sally Wier (RiGHT), Cassandra McCuen (RGWCD), Charlie Spielman (Industrial/Domestic).

Note: To streamline the meeting, agenda topics were voted on through acclimation.

The minutes from the January 11, 2022 meeting were reviewed. Wayne Schwab emailed that he also attended the meeting and asked to be added to the attendance. The minutes were approved with no opposition.

Public Comment

- Danial Boyes mentioned that the BIP is completed and is on the CWCB website. The story map has also been posted to the Roundtable website as well.
- Rio de la Vista noted that the Rio Grande State of the Basin Symposium will be held virtually February 26, 2022. They have great speakers lined up and will be covering current issues in the basin.
- Colorado Rural Water Association SWAP team introduced themselves and noted they work with drinking water sources and are located in Pueblo.
- Charlie Spielman made a statement that at several recent roundtable meetings, he has suggested that all members of the RGBRT read the book by John L. Casey entitled Dark Winter, primarily because he utilizes scientific fact to conclude that energy from the sun is by far the dominant factor that determines that temperatures of the earth, this energy is cyclical, temperature of the earth has not increased significantly for the past 17 years and is now entering a cooling period. He believes the effect is unlikely to be one of constantly increasing temperatures

or more drought. Mr. Spielman also recommended that the RGBRT give serious consideration to determining the physical, legal and economic feasibility of constructing augmentation ponds for subdistrict 1.

Nathan Coombs gave an update on the Renewable Water Resources Concept. This concept started in 2018 with no engineering designs behind the project. RWR petitioned Douglas County to use 20 million American Recovery act funds investment into this concept. ProtectSLVWater.com is organizing the opposition. Douglas County Commissioners are researching the facts at this time. There have been and will continue to be stakeholder and community meetings both in Douglas County and the San Luis Valley for the commissioners to hear the different sides of the story. Heather Dutton asked that letters be sent her for Environment/Agriculture Meeting to be held in Douglas County. She noted that the SLV Commissioners Association sent in a letter opposing this proposition. Douglas County will also be coming to the San Luis Valley on March 26 for a Town Hall. This meeting will likely be held at the Ski Hi Complex. Erin Minks, Senator Bennet's Office, noted that they are tracking this issue and its effects at multiply levels. At the federal level there are a number of issues that will arise if this concept is pushed forward. Senator Larry Crowder asked if a group has considered obtaining \$20 million from the American Recovery Act to study the water export and its effect on the Rio Grande Basin. Nathan noted that at this time, the RWR proposal is just a concept. RWR will have to follow the same rules as other Groundwater users which include sustainability. The water the RWR is trying to use is not a secured water right in subdistrict #4. The roundtable board will use the roundtable contact list to send out information on this issue. One other note was that Douglas County did find out that they cannot use the 20 million of American Recover Funds for this project but have reclassified 10 million to use as an economic hardship fund. Marissa and Emma have shirts made with the slogan to Protect SLV Water. A link will be sent out to purchase these shirts. The group recommended that people wear them March 26 to show opposition to this concept. Please submit articles and letters to ProtectSLVWater.com.

Judy Lopez gave a Water 2022 and PEPO update. The Education Committee met to discuss Water 2022 with a charge to keep the Rio Grande Basin involved with that educational effort. At this time the group is discussing doing articles, bringing in speakers, and using our great products like beer produced here in the valley to promote water education. Other ideas that were brought up were a Rio Float Day, Hikes, ATV rides and other ways to engage people around the valley. Judy noted that this educational effort is extremely important with the pressure from the Font Range. The Colorado Water Plan is going to be finalized by the end of the year. The group would like to use other anniversaries and events to gain momentum for water education. There will be 22 articles going out with 10 articles comparing and contrasting with another basin. Pepo funding has changed a bit in the last year. Education was not a funded mandate previously but PEPO will now be funding with \$25,000 per year with options to gain access to more funding.

A documentary about the Rio Culebra from Rocky Mountain PBS was shown.

Amber Pacheco, RGWCD, gave the subdistrict Report. The office is hard at work preparing the ARP's for the coming year. Pumping numbers are down for 2021. RWR is one of the most challenging issues currently. Currently all subdistricts are meeting sustainability requirements except subdistrict 1 and 4. subdistrict 4 needs to decrease pumping by 1,500 to 2,000 acre feet to reach sustainability. Other subdistricts have more flexible plans to allow them to react. Erin asked about the large augmentation plans that have been filed. There are two major augmentation plans under Kruse and SWAG. The timeframe for those augmentation plans is currently unknown as they have received as a lot of opposition. SWAG is filing a Substitute Water Supply Plan. A permanent source of water is required for these plans and Lag depletions stay with those wells.

Division of Water Resource, Darin Schepp gave an update. The estimated annual flow for the Rio Grande River will be 445,000 acre feet for 2021 with 25% obligated downstream. The Conejos had

225,000 acre feet with 27% obligated downstream. Colorado under delivered slightly on both systems. The Rio Grande Basin is at 89% of normal on the Snotel system which is close to last year's trendline. The Basin will have a warmer and drier outlook for the west. The abandonment list includes 566 water rights in division three, with majority of those structures on the downgrade list. The abandonment list can be found on DWR website and on the Courts website. Protests for abandonments need to be submitted by June 30. Virginia asked about Creeks on the abandonment list. Darin noted that most creeks are off the list and there are just a few in the Saguache area.

Sam Stein, CWCB, he thanked the group for their hard work on the BIP. The BIP are now updated on CWCB website. Last meeting of the Task Force was held. The meeting is going to be posted on the engage CWCB website. Roundtables can meet in person, but a hybrid option needs to be available. He asked that agenda be shared with state staff at least 5 days prior so that it can be posted on the website. IBCC meeting will be held on February 23, 2022, at the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Headquarters in Denver and will be held virtually. PEPO meeting will be held on February 22, 2022. Sam introduced a new staff member of CWCB, Nora Flynn. Nora was previously at the Colorado Water Center at CSU and looks forward to working with CWCB staff.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

The next:
Roundtable Meeting: March 8, 2022 at 2:00pm
Executive Committee March 8, 2022 at 1pm
Location TBD