

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

MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, March 8, 2022 at 2:00pm
RGWCD
8805 Independence Way
Or Via Zoom

Call To Order

Chairman Nathan Coombs called the meeting to order at 2:00 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), Bethany Howell (CDA), JoAnn Slivka (Baca Grande Water and Sanitation District), Chuck Finnegan (Conejos County), Darin Schepp (DWR), Erin Minks (Senator Michael Bennet), Virginia Christensen (Water User at Large), Travis Smith(Reservoirs), Mario Curto (SLV Well Users), Vern Heresink (Alamosa County Commissioner), Danial Spivak, Jenny Nehring, Nora Flyn (CWCB), Russ Sands (CWCB), Glen Miller, Trey Jones (Farmer), Heather Greenwolf (Headwaters Alliance), Ryan Unterreiner (CPW), Cassandra McCuen (RGWCD), Charlie Speilman (Industrial/Domestic), Mike Gibson (Member at Large), Robert Sakata, CWCB, James Henderson, Andrea Jones (Forest Service), Chris Ivers, (RGWCD), Craig Cotton (DWR), Estrella Woods, Sarah Palmer, Jake Kunugi, Pam Rice, Wayne Schwab, Kate McIntire, Liz Dowling, Adam Moore (Colorado State Forest Service), Hannah Thrill (RGWEI), David Chelf, Joel Nystrom, Gregory Baker (Aurora Water), Kate Booth, Larry Sveum, Marisa Fricke, Mason Brown, Megan O'Grady (DNR), Rhonda Lobato (Costilla Conservancy District) and Sue Swift-Miller (BLM) .

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

The minutes from the February 8, 2022 meeting were reviewed. The minutes were approved with no opposition.

Public Comment

- Rob Sataka noted that he is enjoying being a roundtable representative and noted that Heather Dutton does a great job representing the Rio Grande Basin.
- Trisha Snyder from Albuquerque thanked the group for their effort with Renewable Water Resources as she has been concerned from a down river water user. She sent a letter to the Douglas County Commissioners opposing the export and Trisha is concerned with the precedence it will set if successful.

- Joel Nystrom with Colorado Open Lands mentioned that they will be having an event at the end of May with more details coming soon.
- Charlie Spielman noted that the Crane Festival is the following weekend in Monte Vista.

Nathan Coombs updated the group that the Renewable Water Resources proposal. The Douglas County Commissioners had planned to come to the San Luis Valley to meet with stakeholders withing the valley, however they have canceled the meeting at this time. They are still planning to meet with local elected officials in private meetings. Nathan mentioned that there are fliers to help explain facts about the export and the water situation within the valley. Ground water rules is one of elements that help protect valley water from being exported. Nathan feels that it is important to keep legislation in place to keep ground water rules. The Worth amendment is an important part of the protection for the San Luis Valley. Danial has drafted a letter of opposition to RWR for Roundtable approval. Travis moved to take an official public position opposing RWR and to approve submitting a opposition letter to the Douglas County Commissioners. Keith Holland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Nathan will email out the letter this week and if no opposition, the letter will be sent to the commissioners.

Travis Smith with the National Turkey Federation and Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative introduced Kate McIntire and Liz Dowling with the Rock Mountain Restoration Initiative. He noted that the valley spent time an effort on a great proposal in 2013. Kate and Liz gave some background on the project. Liz is focusing on fundraising and building relationships for RMRI. Kate noted the federations view is that restoration is “A problem for all, takes all to solve”. National Turkey Federation and National Forest Service partner to help natural resources and watersheds. The federation hopes that RMRI is a model to use across the west with the goal to increase resilience of forest. There are currently three focus areas within Colorado. The values of the project are as follows: clean water, recreation, forest and wildlife, and communities. The current projects successes were reviewed. The federation is working on getting more funding to get the all the first 7 landscapes onboarded to the program. The timeframe is unknown at this time. Kate noted that communities need to be ready to implement funds as they are rolled out. Heather Dutton noted that our project is “shovel ready”. Adam Moore asked if the project is confined with the original blueprint. It was explained the adding to or editing the proposal will be allowed.

The Education Committee noted that the 101 factsheets are being passed out. There will be articles this week as well as well as the newsletter. April’s education topic is Irrigation.

Amber Pacheco, RGWCD, gave the Subdistrict report. The office is busy with report writing. Preliminary water reports show that pumping was lower in most subdistricts. The district is working on Annual Replacement Plans for 2022. The goal is to avoid by and dry. The district received a Watersmart grant to look at Water Markets with Colorado Open Lands as a partner. ATM options are being researched and ditch companies are starting to look at that process. This year the Monte Vista Canal has a ATM project with Subdistrict 6. The project will fallow quarters along the Monte Vista Canal with a rotation. The district is also looking at buying

permanent water supply and looking at land that is close to towns that may be taken out of production for other reasons. Subdistrict 4 doesn't currently meet sustainability rules. Saguache Subdistrict (5) couldn't get agreements on Saguache Creek and have not yet found a solution to issues that were denied last irrigation season. Subdistrict 1 is writing the revision of plan of water management #4.

Division of Water Resources, Craig Cotton, gave an update. Craig reported that March runoff numbers are as follows: Alamosa River 98%, Conejos River 99%, Rio Grande @ DN 82%, Rio Grande at South Fork 99% of normal. The average number decreased this past year. Rio Grande average was previously 515,000 AF and is now at 480,000 AF. Craig mentioned that the groundwater rules are in place. Irrigation season will most likely start around April 1. Abandonment list is reviewed every 10 years. The list has been submitted to water court, most structures listed are downgrades. The compact meeting has been postponed to May 6, 2022 in person in Alamosa.

Sam Stein, CWCB noted that the Basin Implementation plan survey is still online. He reviewed that the state needs the agenda for roundtable meetings atleast 5 days prior to the meeting and request for funding 30 day in advance. The IBCC meeting was February 23, 2022 with the next meeting set for June 30th. CWCB board meeting will be March 15, and 16th in person with demand management a discussion item. July board meeting will review the Water Plan. Sam introduced and welcomed Megan O'Grady, Senior Environmental Specialist to the CWCB staff.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

The next:

Roundtable Meeting: April 12, 2022 at 2:00 p.m.

Executive Committee: April 12, 2022 at 1:00 p.m.