

Inter Basin Compact Committee Basin Roundtable  
Rio Grande Basin Roundtable  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday May 10, 2022

**Call to Order**

Vice Chairperson Emma Reesor called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Those in attendance were Nathan Coombs (CWCD/Roundtable Chair), 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), Keith Holland (Agriculture Member at Large), Peyton Valentine (CWCD), Amber Pacheco (RGWCD), Cary Aloia (NAWCA), Cindy Medina (ARK), Chuck Finnegan (Conejos County), Darin Schepp (DWR), Erin Minks (Senator Michael Bennet), Peter Clark (Water User at Large), Virginia Christensen (Water User at Large), Vern Heresink (Alamosa County Commissioner), Heather Greenwolf (Headwaters Alliance), Ryan Unterreiner (CPW), Cassandra McCuen (RGWCD), Andrea Jones (Forest Service), Craig Cotton (DWR), Wayne Schwab (Trenchera), Hannah Thrill (RGWEI), Marisa Fricke, Megan O'Grady (DNR), and Rio de la Vista (Environmental Rep), Dale Pizel (Wildlife), Greg Peterson (Colorado Ag Water Alliance), Michael Carson, Daryl Kohut, Elizabeth Schoder (CWCB), Sally Wier (RiGHT), Sue Swift-Miller (BLM), Charlie Spielman, Judy Lopez, Adam Moore (Colorado State Forest Service), Jenny Nehring, Ronda Lobato, Steven Romero, Orla Bannan (WRA), Robert Hobbins (Sonoran institute), Jess Crowther (CPAC), Cloe Dickenson, Hannah Holm, Cathy Garcia, Erin Kimper (2-3-2), Glen Miller, Anna Greenburg, Waverly Klaw (Sonoran Institute), Antonio Huerta (Hickenlooper), Rachel Pittinger (CWCB), and Andy Brown (RiGHT).

The agenda was approved as presented with no objections. The minutes from April 12, 2022, were reviewed. The minutes were approved as presented.

Emma noted that the executive committee received one environmental representative letter of interest from Cary Aloia. Rio moved to appoint Cary as environmental representative. Kevin seconded the motion and the motion carried.

**Public comment**

- Keven Terry announced that Trout Unlimited will be hosting their annual meeting/fundraiser on May 21, 2022 at the Colorado Farm Brewery. The goal of this event is to be more inclusive and casual. The fundraiser portion of this event is being hosted online and includes an action of different types of guided trips on the water.
- Rio de le Vista reminded the group that Adams State has a Water Minor and offers Water 101 for \$150/semester which does not include college credit or homework.
- Erin Minks shared the title of a book with a good history of the Sand dunes, titled "*Sea of the Sand*".
- Anna Greenburg announced that the Avian flu is present in Colorado. She noted that taking bird feeders down will help limit risk of wild birds contracting Avian Flu. She also asked that if dead birds are found, individuals should contact CPW so they can track any outbreaks if needed.
- Heather Greenwolf with Rio Grande Headwaters announced that the Run Off Run Off is June 4<sup>th</sup> in Mineral County.
- Heather Dutton mentioned that Judy Lopez position with the conservation easements has changed. She mentioned that the roundtable should think about if that position should be represented by someone that has a direct connection to conservation easement groups or if the position is fine being represented by a member with a huge amount of knowledge of

conservation easements like Judy. Judy will reach out to the easement community to get their feedback on the issue.

- Peter Clark introduced Andy Brown, the new Executive Director for RiGHT.

Emma Reesor gave an update on the Education Committee and PEPO activities. The committee has published Basin and Cross Basin Articles, Newsletters, 101 Factsheets, plus Social Media Posts. The committee is also working on some Events and Tours for Water 2022. The committee is happy to share partner events on social media. The statewide Water 22 fliers were passed out.

There will be a Gunnison Basin Tour on May 18, 2022. The tour will begin with look at flood irrigation using autotrips and will end with a stop at past creek to look at Rio Grande Cutthroat population losses in that area.

Congresso de Acequias will be held May 21, 2022. The education committee had to reschedule the River Cleanup due to a large dust storm, it has been rescheduled for May 27. Rio Trio Adventure Race is on June 11 which includes a 5K run, 3 mile paddle, 8 mile bike ride. The education committee is also working on other tours for the summer.

Emma explained the new structure for PEPO and education funding. Bethany Howell had previously secured funding for the PEPO position with Rio Grande Water Conservation Education Initiative as the fiscal agent. The Rio Grande Restoration project took over fiscal responsibility when Bethany transferred out of that position and RGWCEI no longer had the capacity to manage that grant. Previously, PEPO was funded directly through roundtable with no grant process. Starting with the new fiscal year, both PEPO and recording secretary will be funded through the grant process that Emma is working on. She requested a Letter of Support from the Rio Grande Basin Roundtable for the Rio Grande Restoration Project to apply for PEPO funding on behalf of the education committee. Emma outlined the tasks included in the grant funding: CWCB/Roundtable Coordination (minutes, meetings, assist potential grantee), roundtable programs, events, roundtable sponsored youth programs, education materials, PEPO Grant Administration and reporting. It was recommended to work with the National Heritage Center to find additional support for youth programming. It was clarified that the executive committee is still the contact for WSRF Funding, however the education committee and this funding may help new potential grantees with the Water Plan Grant process. Cindy asked who is holding liability insurance for tours and events. Rio Grande Restoration Project is financially responsible. Keven Terry moved to approve a letter of support for the PEPO/Education Funding. Virginia Christensen seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Kevin Terry noted that the free fishing day in Colorado is June 4 and 5<sup>th</sup>. He reviewed the SLV Fishing 101 with the group and noted useful tips and links throughout the handout.

Heather Dutton updated the group on the Colorado Water Conservation Board. The board will be meeting the following week to review policy, loans, and the water plan. The PEPO grant deadline is June 1, 2022. WSRF grant deadline is also June 1 to be reviewed at the September meeting. Water Plan Grant deadline is July 1 to be presented at the September CWCB board meeting. July meeting will be in Steamboat Springs.

USFS 2-3-2 project update was given by Aaron Kimple, Dana Gunn, Jeremy Marshall, and Andria Jones. This project is a Collaborative Forest Restoration Project. Jeremy Marshall with Rio Chama CFLRP noted that this project is for watershed restoration in the headwaters of the Rio Grande, Chama, and San Juan Rivers including 3.7 million acres in two states. Goals for this project include reducing risk of wildlife, restoring natural fire regimes, increasing forest diversity and old growth, improving fish and wildlife habitat, water quality and watershed function, and mitigating climate change. This fiscal year's budget priorities for CFLN include priority 1: agreement with stakeholders, priority 2: obtain full funding. The

next step includes developing a 10-year program of work. The name of this project is “The Road to the Two Watersheds, Three Rivers, Two States Cohesive Strategy Partnership”. The federal priorities have been set and the project leaders are now working on state and local priorities. This project can help leverage funding for other projects within the area. Heather noted that the group has done excellent job pushing this project through.

Greg Peterson, Colorado Ag Water Alliance presented information on the Master Irrigator Program. The main goal is to teach irrigators to balance conserving water and profitable. Greg gave brief history of the Master Irrigator Program in other basins and states. Originally, Colorado Ag Water Alliance had secured enough funding for 3 years of the program, however the program received overwhelming interest and the committee decided to proceed with two cohorts in the first year. The budget request is for \$94,112.50, Match \$104,350, with total project cost of \$198,462.50. Participants will receive \$1,500 from the Master Irrigator program, and \$500 will be taken off of subdistrict fees for that year. There is follow up with participants for 3 years on fields that were chosen for irrigation improvements. Keith Holland moved to approve the funding for the Master Irrigators. Nathan Coombs seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Heather Greenwolf, Rio Grande Headwaters updated the group on her work on the Willow Creek Comprehensive Plan and noted that she will be stepping away from executive director position. Rio Grande Headwaters have hired a new executive director, Tomas Hansen. The Willow Creek Comprehensive plan included a risk assessment and mitigation planning, and strengthened relationships with integrated approaches. Water quality is a huge issue along this Creek. Good neighbor agreements will be beneficial if Silver mining becomes possible again in Creede. Willow creek has been collecting data since the 1960s. Stream stabilization and flood mitigation north of Creede has been designed and the Rio Grande Headwaters will now be looking for funding for the construction of that project. There was no objection to writing a letter of support for funding that project.

Amber Pacheco updated the group on the Subdistricts within the Valley. Rio Grande Water Conservation District is done filing annual replacement plans. Subdistrict 5 is only subdistrict that has not been approved but has requested a variance. The staff is working on finding a solution within the next 35-40 days. Subdistrict 1 is working on revisions for the plan of water management. The plan will be going in front of the Rio Grande Water Conservation District Board and then will be moved forward for state review. The goal of this plan is 1:1 surface water to pumping ratio as well as ask for additional time to reach sustainability. Other Subdistricts are working to secure wet water.

Craig Cotton, thanked the organizations that helped with the reception for the Rio Grande Compact meeting. Supreme court lawsuit is still moving forward with mitigation. Currently the Rio Grande 10% and Conejos 16% curtailment. The Rio Grande and Conejos most likely already hit peak runoff. Craig noted that dust on snow is major concern for a runoff rate increase.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

The next:

Roundtable Meeting: June 14, 2022 at 2:00 p.m.

Executive Committee: June 14, 2022 at 1:00 p. m.