

Inter Basin Compact Committee Basin Roundtable
Rio Grande Basin Roundtable

MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, April 12, 2022 at 2:00p.m.
RGWCD
8805 Independence Way
Or Via Zoom

Call to Order

Chairman Nathan Coombs called the meeting to order at 2:00p.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), Tricia Snyder (WildEarth Guardians), 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), Trey Jones (Farmer), Heather Greenwolf (Headwaters Alliance), Ryan Unterreiner (CPW), Cassandra McCuen (RGWCD), Andrea Jones (Forest Service), Craig Cotton (DWR), Wayne Schwab, Hannah Thrill (RGWEI), Joel Nystrom (COL), Marisa Fricke, Megan O'Grady (DNR), and Rio de la Vista (Environmental Rep), Clinton Philips (Davis Engineering), Dale Pizel (Wildlife), Cindy Morin, Gene Ferish, Jim Erlich (CPAC/Alamosa County), Sheldon Rocky, Greg Peterson (Colorado Ag Water Alliance), David Chelf, Michael Carson, Dwight Martin, Blake Mamich (Colorado Water Trust), Christi Bode, Daryl Kohut, Elizabeth Schoder (CWCB), Ethan Franke, Jered Romero (TRCP), Kate Perdoni, Robert Hurd (Hinsdale Co.), Sally Wier (RiGHT), Tom Browning, Tony LaGreca, Alex Puglisi, and Sue Swift-Miller (BLM) .

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

The minutes from the March 8th meeting minutes were reviewed. There were two corrections to the attendance noted in the minutes. The minutes were approved as corrected.

Public comment

- Erin Minks invited anyone that would like to join for happy hour after the meeting.
- Heather Dutton gave an update on Renewable Water Resources. The commissioners are discussing options to create a Water Enterprise using federal funding. These funds must be used by 2026. Commissioners are still looking into coming down to the valley. Heather asked that letters be sent to the commissioners expressing concerns of this project if people have not done so.

Nathan announced that Rio de la Vista is retiring and thanked her for her time on the board. He noted that a letter of intent needs to be sent to Nathan for interest in the environmental representative. Travis Smith noted that Rio was an original member of the roundtable at the start in 2005. She has been a champion for conservation easements and return flows. Cindy and Travis thanked Rio for her time on the Roundtable. It was noted that Rio will also be retiring from Adams State in June.

Emma Reesor gave a PEPO update. She noted that the Education Committee is meeting at 11 am the same day as Roundtable at SLVWCD office, all welcome to attend that committee meeting. The goal of Water 22 is to educate citizens on water issues. Several events are happening this year to promote Water 22. These events include a speaker bureau, beer activities (opportunity to sponsor beer or create beer), book club, and other events are in the planning phase. The Education Committee will be elevating events and activities with 22 articles this year. Irrigation is April's theme. River Clean Up fliers were passed out. The River Clean Up will be held April 22, 2022 from 4-6. The committee is encouraging volunteers to bring gloves. May 18, 2022 a Cross Basin Tour in Gunnison will be held. The tour will include autotarps, water monitoring, instream flow work and demand management happening in the Colorado Basin. The tour may also include a stop in the headwaters of Saguache to learn about Trout Unlimited work in that basin.

Nathan shared the 101 factsheet on Irrigation. He shared information on irrigation in the San Luis Valley and its interaction with community development and the environment.

Heather Dutton gave an update on the Colorado Water Conservation Board. The board made a decision in March that they will hit pause on Demand management temporary. In 2019 Colorado signed into an agreement with 7 Colorado Basin States. Drought Contingency plans were reviewed to look into ways to avoid compact call on the Colorado. Weather modification was discussed as well as demand management through temporary, voluntary and compensated cut backs to send water to downstream for Powell. This would be used as a storage buffer. Colorado spent millions of dollars looking into demand management with one of the biggest questions being feasibility. Colorado has been a leader on this and is allowing other states to catch up. July Meeting will be a celebration to look at achievement over the years along with BIP and water plans. Other states are working on solutions and CWCB will be looking at demand management at September meeting. She noted that the delivery to Powell was a concern with reservoir releases in the fall of 2021.

Elizabeth Schroder, CWCB noted that HB1051 is being delayed until June 1, 2022, report deadline Sept 1. PEPO grant deadline is June 1, 2022 with new criteria and guidelines on CWCB's website. WSRF funding applications are due June 1. Colorado Water Plan is also due June 1. IBBC meeting will be June 30 in Frisco, Colorado. CWCB board meeting was March 16, 17th.

Master Irrigator Program Previews: Marisa Fricke and Greg Peterson discussed their funding request. The program was started in January of 2022 with double the interest that was anticipated. The committee decided to double the cohort to serve interested producers. The program includes 32 hours of class over 4 weeks. This program started in the Texas area and moved to northern Colorado a few years ago. The focus of the project is balancing consumption and profitability. The peer-to-peer interaction is a really important aspect of the program. This

class is for irrigators only. Currently the program is funding for one class in 2023. \$200,000 for is being requested for 3 class cohorts. \$150,000 is being paid out to producers to incentivize participation. One full cohort is committed. Participates continue to monitor fields that have issues or water efficiency improvements for 3 years and report back to the Master Irrigator Committee. The funding request will be brought to the Roundtable next month and the budget will have more details at that point.

Tony LaGreca with the Colorado Water Trust gave an overview of their program. He noted that they have statewide requests for water projects. Some of these projects restore Colorado rivers and add capacity to instream flow programs. The trust has completed 28 projects across the state. All projects include voluntary transactions with any decrees with division rate above 0.5cfs and storage rights above 20AF. It is important for these rights to have good history of use, willing and able to dry up. He noted that flexibility is key in these types of projects. Styles of projects include: long term loan & permanent acquisition which includes water court water use change. 5/10 Temporary loans, and water conservation programs use administration processes. Operation of lease is 5 out of 10 years. The trust works with water users and snow pack numbers to operate projects when it works for water user and low stream flows create a need. Some of the benefits to water owners is compensation, safeguards against abandonment, water sharing opportunities, flexibility and enhanced streamflow. More information can be found at Coloradowatertrust.org/request-for-water.

Clinton Philips with Davis Engineering presented on the RGSS module which was also presented to Douglas County. He showed a cross section of the aquifers in the San Luis Valley. The study that created the module was started in 1976 with 27 unconfined shallow wells in the subdistrict 1 area. A graph was shown that displays the data from this study. The current level of the unconfined aquifer is -1,102,880 ac ft. The goal of subdistrict 1's plan of water management is to recover a minimum of 400,000 acre feet. Subdistrict 1 has also been replacing to streams for over 10 years. The new plan of water management that Subdistrict 1 is developing will look at 1 in:1 out strategy. An average of 115,786 ac ft per year is needed to reach the recovery goals. Only had 2 out of the last 10 years has subdistrict 1 recovered that yearly amount.

The confined aquifer study has included 31 wells monitored. RGSS module has 5 layers. Subdistricts 3, 4, 5, 6 are deep wells within the confined aquifer. Sustainability within the confined aquifer is measured by the 5 year pumping average not exceeding the pumping average within years 1978-2000. San Luis Creek (Subdistrict 5) is not sustainable due to this rule. The subdistrict is 2000 ac ft over the limit for sustainability. This data is provided on DWR's website July 1 of each year. Clinton noted that RWR proposal would double the pumping within that subdistrict.

Darin Schepp, DWR updated the group on Division 3. Rio Grande Compact currently has a index flow is 450,000 acre feet with an estimated 25% obligation downstream. Current curtailment is on 12%. Conejos River index flow is approximately 250,000 acre feet with an estimated 30% obligated downstream. Current curtailment is 20%.

The revised abandonment list went to water court and protests need to be submitted by June 30, 2022. Rio Grande compact is in mitigation phase. Costilla Compact meeting is May 5, 2022, in San Luis. Rio Grande compact meeting is May 6, 2022, at 9 a.m. in Alamosa.

Heather Dutton mentioned that Rio Grande Basin Implementation plan is being finished up. She thanked Danial Boyes for his hard work on the plan.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

The next:

Roundtable Meeting: May 10, 2022 at 2:00 p.m.

Executive Committee: May 10, 2022 at 1:00 p.m.