

Interbasin Compact Committee
Southwest Basins Roundtable Meeting
Hybrid Meeting from Dolores Water Conservancy District
Cortez, Colorado
July 28, 2022

Members Present:

Peter Butler	La Plata County	Geoff Burbey	La Plata WCD
Randy Carver	Montezuma County	Mike Preston	Ute Mountain Ute Tribe
John Ey	Florida WCD	Pete Nylander	Southern Ute Indian Tribe
Bill Frownfelter	At Large Member	Gretchen Rank	At Large Member
Karen Guglielmone	San Miguel Municipalities	Charlie Smith	San Juan County
Steve Harris	Legislative Appointee	Buck Skillen	At Large Member
Celene Hawkins	CWCB Representative	Aimee Tooker	Montrose County
Brandon Johnson	At Large Member	Ed Tolen	At Large Domestic Water
Dave Kanzer	Colorado River WCD	Jim Wells	San Miguel WCD
Rich Landreth	Montezuma Municipalities	Bruce Whitehead	Animas La Plata WCD
April Montgomery	San Miguel County	Mely Whiting	At Large Environmental
Al Pfister	San Juan WCD	Steve Wolff	SW Water Conservation District

Public:

Christian Barnes (Expeditions Outside), Stacy Beaugh (Strategic by Nature), Adrian Bergere (San Miguel Watershed Coalition), Elaine Chick (Water Information Program, PEPO Liaison), Mandy Eskelson (Southern Ute Indian Tribe), George Gavrielides (Southern Ute Indian Tribe), Nick Jacobson (Colorado West Land Trust), Mickey O'Hara (The Nature Conservancy), Danny Margoles (Dolores Watershed Resilient Forest Collaborative), Melissa May (Mountain Studies Institute), Jeff Rodriguez (Colorado Water Conservation Board "CWCB"), Robert Sakata (South Platte Basin Roundtable), Russ Sands (CWCB), Lori Schell (Empowered Energy), Laura Spann (SW Water Conservation District, Roundtable Recorder), Sam Stein (CWCB), Chris Sturm (CWCB), Ryan Unterreiner (Colorado Parks & Wildlife), Kat Weismiller (CWCB), Wendy Weygandt (Montezuma Valley Irrigation Company)

1. Introductions & Review Agenda

Roundtable Chair Ed Tolen called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

2. Public Comments

There were no comments from the public.

3. Elections

Buck Skillen moved to elect by acclamation current officers Ed Tolen (Roundtable Chair), Brandon Johnson (First Vice-Chair) and Al Pfister (Second Vice-Chair). Mike Preston seconded. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

4. Administrative Reports

Review and Approval of Minutes

Brandon Johnson moved to approve the April 28th Roundtable minutes. Al Pfister seconded. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

Officer Reports

CWCB board member Celene Hawkins reported that the CWCB is accepting public comments on the draft 2023 Colorado Water Plan on their website and via online listening sessions through September 30th. CWCB approved guidelines for technical assistance grants to help secure federal infrastructure money (\$2.5 million to consultants engaged by the CWCB and \$2.5 million in direct local capacity grants). CWCB also approved a transfer of \$17

million from the perpetual base fund to the Water Supply Reserve Fund (WSRF) and have not decided on how funds will be allocated among the statewide and basin accounts.

Basin WSRF Fund Balance

The WSRF Basin Fund balance is \$533,080, of which \$120,577 is federal relief that must be appropriated by March 2023.

Engaging New Recorder

Ed Tolen summarized the Recorder selection process and the leadership's recommendation to retain Ms. Wendy Weygandt. Buck Skillen moved to retain Wendy Weygandt as the Southwest Basins Roundtable recorder. Steve Harris seconded. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

Proposed Bylaws Revisions for Roundtable Consideration

Steve Harris summarized final subcommittee recommendations to update the recorder-related provisions of the bylaws, which were circulated to the Roundtable via email at least two weeks prior to the meeting as required by the bylaws. Steve Harris moved to amend the Southwest Basins Roundtable bylaws as recommended. Brandon Johnson seconded. The motion passed by unanimous consent. The bylaws subcommittee will be discussing further changes to update the bylaws not related to the recorder in August to make recommendations which will be sent to the full roundtable for consideration at the October meeting.

5. Public Education, Participation & Outreach (PEPO) Liaison Report

Elaine Chick, PEPO Liaison, summarized progress on development of the standalone Southwest Basins Roundtable website and solicited photos of water use from across the nine sub-basins for use on the site. With support from the Roundtable, Elaine submitted the PEPO grant application for \$25,000 in FY2022-23. The water Information Program will host an in-person Water Law in a Nutshell course at Fort Lewis College in October. More than 4,000 issues of the Rising Rivers Stewards children's activity book, which was sponsored by SWCD, have been distributed across southwestern Colorado.

6. Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) Update

Colorado Water Plan 2023 Update

Sam Stein and Russ Sands, CWCB, provided background on the process that has led to the draft 2023 Colorado Water Plan, including the comments accepted since 2015, the technical update, Basin Implementation Plan (BIP) development, workshops, and now the current public comment period. The state water plan spotlights drought resilience, regional challenges outlined in the BIPs, opportunities for partnerships, and related strategies and goals for the CWCB. Sam encouraged Roundtable members to comment, commit, and share the water plan with others. Vivian Pinelli is now the administrative point-person for the Roundtables. CWCB will be ordering AV equipment for the Roundtable meetings.

Wildfire Ready Watershed

Chris Sturm summarized the CWCB's Wildfire Ready Watershed initiative, which was the result of a legislative directive (SB21-240) which charged CWCB with assessing the susceptibility of Colorado's water resources, communities, and critical infrastructure to post-wildfire impacts and advancing a framework for communities to plan and implement mitigation strategies. CWCB has identified susceptible watersheds as areas with values at risk such as water infrastructure, source water, habitat and conservation areas and risk for post-fire hazards such as floods and fluvial hazards by building on the Colorado State Forest Service's "Forest Action Plan." Chris Sturm detailed the CWCB's framework for local communities and stakeholders to further refine their susceptibility evaluations and determine both pre- and post-fire mitigation strategies to reduce risk to life, property, and infrastructure.

7. Interbasin Compact Committee (IBCC) Update

Al Pfister reported that the IBCC met in Breckenridge on June 28th. CWCB reported that they will be hiring four regional coordinators to support water funding outreach, project development, and the roundtables. There was a session on federal and state funding updates, including the Water Funding Opportunity Navigator to share which

grant opportunities are open and the deadlines. CWCB Director Mitchell outlined the five-point plan that the Upper Basin states shared with Reclamation in response to their request to reduce water use in the basin by 2-4 million acre-feet. Dan Gibbs (IBCC Director) challenged each Roundtable to bring forward several local projects to fund and implement by June 2023. Chairman Tolen will send out an email to the Roundtable encouraging review of the Projects List to identify a shovel-ready effort. There was Roundtable consensus to set up a Projects Subcommittee to review opportunities to bring forward for funding and consider hiring the local BIP experts to support the review.

8. WSRF Subcommittee

Mely Whiting summarized the WSRF subcommittee's recommendation to form a subcommittee for the purpose of reviewing WSRF applications for completeness and helping applicants submit helpful information to the roundtable. After some discussion, there was Roundtable consensus to table consideration of a WSRF Application Review Subcommittee after the basin has more experience in using the CWCB's new grant application portal and best understood the role of the new CWCB Regional Project Managers to support WSRF applications. There was also Roundtable consensus to table the WSRF subcommittee's recommendation to establish a target WSRF expenditure of \$400,000 for FY2023 and revisit the target in April 2023, given the news that CWCB has transferred \$17 million into the WSRF accounts.

9. Colorado River Issues Subcommittee

Ed Tolen summarized the morning Colorado River subcommittee. Cleave Simpson, General Manager of the Rio Grande Water Conservation District, presented on the Rio Grande River basin's experience with compact administration. Amy Ostiek and Michelle Garrison (CWCB) summarized Colorado River hydrologic conditions, recent Drought Response Operations Agreement actions, and the Upper Colorado River Commission's letter to Reclamation with a five-point Upper Basin plan to support reductions in Colorado River water use.

10. River Network Update on IWMP/SMPs

Nicole Seltzer, River Network, provided background on stream management plans (SMPs). River Network works to provide technical support to SMPs and recently published a comprehensive report on progress towards the state's goal to have SMPs on 80% of locally prioritized watersheds. As of year-end 2021, at least eight million dollars have been invested in 26 SMPs across the state which have recommended 269 projects to date, including diversion improvements, data collection, stream restoration and other projects. The River Network has worked to develop best practices and guidance for SMPs as well. The expectation that SMPs would quantify environmental flow needs has not been fully met for many reasons. There are four SMPs in progress in southwest Colorado for the Mancos, San Miguel, Upper San Juan, and Animas River basins.

11. Upcoming Events

WSRF Grant Applications due for October consideration

September 28, 2022

Regular Roundtable Meeting and WSRF Consideration (hybrid from Durango)

October 27, 2022

12. Adjournment

Chair Ed Tolen adjourned the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

