

## Colorado Basin Roundtable

### July 25, 2022 CBRT Minutes.

Reporter: These minutes were prepared by Ken Ransford, Esq., CPA, 970-927-1200, [ken@kenransford.com](mailto:ken@kenransford.com).

1. **CBRT Members Present:** Kim Albertson, Nathan Bell, Paul Bruchez, Stan Cazier, Randy Kim, John Justman, Kirsten Kurath, Kelly McNichols Kury, Merritt Linke, April Long, Ed Moyer, Ken Ransford, Charles Spickert, Richard Van Gytenbeek, Greg Williams, Peggy Bailey, Jeff Bandy, James Dilzell, Maria Pastore
2. **Guests:** Matt Bliss DiNatale, Abby Burk, Sonja Chavez, Jeffrey Deems Airborne Snow Observatories, Inc., James Dilzell, Anna Drexler-Dries, Nathan Elder, Peter Fleming, Angie Fowler, Alyson Gould, Mark Harris, Hannah Holm, Brendon Langenhuizen, Bailey Leppeck, Heather Lewin, Matt Lindburg, Caroline Llanes, Peter Mayer, Shania McCain, Julie McCluskie, Ed Millard, Becky Mitchell, Andrea Harbin Monahan, Dave Payne, Katie Randall, Lauren Ris, Sarah Jean Rodger, Jeff Rodriguez, Tracy Ross, Heather Sackett, Robert Sakata, Russ Sands, Sam Stein, Paula Stepp, Chris Sturm, Lisa Tasker, Kathryn Weismiller, Ted White, John Winchester, Jennifer Yachnin.
3. **CWCB Director Update, Paul Bruchez.**

Paul indicated that Kevin Rein updated the CWCB on Division 6 measurement rules. CASM update regarding the four flights in 2022 to measure the snowpack. By 2026, up to 60 flights are scheduled and the state eventually hopes to conduct 200 flights a year. CWCB moved \$17M into the WSRA Reserve Fund. This will be split between the roundtables and the statewide WSRA. 2022 has been an unusual combination of low snow, high temperatures, and increased summer rainfall. High water temperatures have been an issue on the upper Colorado. If the monsoons had not come as early as they have, the situation could have been much worse. The Williams Fork River nearly doubled in volume yesterday, in part due to enhanced runoff from the fire-scarring caused in 2020. Congratulated staff of the CWCB and the Roundtable for their efforts on the release of the Water Plan

4. **CWCB Water Plan Presentation, Russ Sands, Sam Stein, Jeff Rodriguez.**

The 2022 Water Plan draft was released June 30, and it is now open for public comment. The draft highlighted 50 Partner Actions and 50 Agency Actions. Additionally the plan identifies four core values for water management in Colorado: (1) Promote a productive economy that supports cities, agriculture, recreation, and tourism, (2) Efficient and effective water infrastructure, (3) a strong environment with healthy watersheds, rivers, streams, and wildlife, and (4) an informed public with creative, forward-thinking solutions that are sustainable and resilient to changing conditions.

Russ Sands emphasized that the plan is still open to public comment and he encouraged roundtable members to make comments, and to discuss ongoing projects. It was also

announced that Jeff Rodriguez will be taking Sam Stein's place as the CWCB liaison to the CBRT. The portal is up and running and work continues on the projects database.

5. **CWCB Wildfire Ready Watershed Discussion, Chris Sturm, CWCB.**

Legislation signed by Governor Polis in June 2021 directed \$30 million to CWCB to assess the susceptibility of Colorado's water resources, communities, and critical infrastructure to post-wildfire impacts and to advance strategies to minimize these impacts. CWCB is working on a statewide susceptibility impact analysis and a framework for communities to use. A new funding stream is available through HB 21-1379. The goal is to have post-fire susceptibility evaluations completed at the local level. The state expects these plans to be identified by the end of the year, at which point grants will be available to pay for these plans.

6. **Big River Discussions, Becky Mitchell, CWCB Director and Colorado's Commissioner to the Upper Colorado River Compact Commission.**

In June of 2022 the Commissioner for the Bureau of Reclamation, Camille Touton testified before Congress, stating that 2-4 additional maf is needed to protect Lake Powell and Mead infrastructure, giving the states 60 days to produce a solution. The Upper Basin's options to deliver are limited but the Upper Division intends to lead on this issue while recognizing that the majority of the savings need to come from the Lower Basin.

In the 2021 water year, the Upper Basin consumed 3.5 maf, compared to 10 maf consumed by the Lower Basin states and Mexico. Director Mitchell discussed the Upper Division State's five-point plan.

7. **Dam and Canyon Facilities Rehabilitation Project Update, Mark Harris, GVVUA.**

Mark Harris, General Manager of the Grand Valley Water Users Association provided an update to the updated to the Roundtable on the Grand Valley Irrigation Improvements at the Roller Dam in Debeque Canyon above Grand Junction.

The GVVUA has made improvements to the Roller dam and the first 550' of the canal, the Grand Valley power plant, and subsidiary ditches through the Grand Valley. As well as considerable work on the power plant. Mr. Harris discussed the plan to rehabilitate the canal headworks, which needs to be completely replaced. This project is planned for November 2023 to March 2024.

8. **City of Grand Junction Gravel Pit/Reservoir Presentation and Request for Letter of Support, Randi Kim, Utilities Director for City Grand Junction and Matt Bliss, DiNatale Water Consultants.**

Request for letter of support for a \$265,000 Colorado Water Plan grant request to engineer the repurposing of two existing gravel pits for reservoir storage. The city of Grand Junction will contribute \$95,000 toward the \$360,000 project. Once constructed this project will supplement Grand Junction water supplies as well as Orchard Mesa and provide additional flows to the 15 Mile Reach.

The Basin Roundtable voted unanimously to provide a letter of support.

9. **PEPO Coordinator Discussion and Letter of Support**

A PEPO coordinator can apply for up to \$25,000 per year to fund PEPO activities. The coordinator will act as a fiscal agent and put together a scope of work for the \$25,000. Jason Turner speaks quite highly of her. She works with several groups in Grand County, including the Upper Colorado Wild & Scenic River Stakeholder Group Workgroup, Learning by Doing, and Grand County Open River's and Trail's Group. Anna is interested in coordinating the PEPO grant request. Paul Bruchez has worked with Anna since 2019 and highly recommends her.

Stan Cazier moved to authorize the letter of Support and to have Anna Drexler-Dreis act as the Roundtable's PEPO Liason, Merritt Linke seconded that motion. Motion was approved unanimously.

10. **Other Business.**

The Roundtable Membership discussed how to move projects forward. Kirsten Kurath suggested we have the regional leads report on progress periodically. Paul Bruchez suggested maybe have a dedicated time at future meetings to discuss projects within the various regions. It was also discussed whether WSRF grant funds could be used to support someone to

Merritt Linke attended the National County Commissioner's Conference; and attended a water panel discussion about the Colorado River Basin with Zane Kessler and Carlyle Carrier on the panel. Merrit wanted to applaud them for a great discussion.