

**North Platte Basin Roundtable**  
**Meeting Minutes from March 21st, 2023**

Basement of SCD Building, 312 5th Street, Walden

**3:00 - 3:10 pm                      Call to order, Introductions & Agenda Review**

Attendance

Aleigh Aurin  
Jeff Rodriguez  
Jim Dustin  
Ramon Torres  
Bryce Russell  
Ty Wattenberg  
Mark Hackleman  
Barbara Vasquez  
Pat VanValkenburg  
Wade Allnutt  
Mike Allnutt  
Kari VanValkenburg  
Mike Honholtz  
Amy Honholtz  
Blair Rynearson

Virtual Attendance

Ben Krause  
Erin Light  
Greg Peterson  
Willie Summers  
Michael  
Keeley Lopez  
Jackie Daoust  
Robert Sakata  
Russ Sands  
Randy Miller

**3:10 - 3:15 pm                      Approve minutes of Jan. 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023 meeting**

The meeting was called to order and approved by Wade Allnut and Seconded by Bryce Russell.

**3:15 - 3:35 pm            WSRF Grant Application – Lysimeter Continuation Grant**

Wendy Ryan - Colorado River Engineering

This topic was tabled to be discussed at the next meeting. The information passed along was that the water conservancy is putting in match money. It will be a continuation of the current project. The lysimeter would run the next 5 years and the money would help to have parts on hand, instead of long waits for them to come in. This will not include paying for weather stations anymore.

**3:35 - 3:55 pm            WSRF Grant Application - Agricultural Drought Resilience & Innovative Water Conservation Phase 2**

Greg Peterson - Colorado Ag Water Alliance

Greg spoke to the Basin Roundtable about grants through the Colorado Ag Water Alliance and how the basin can support. The project they are funding answer the question of “what will help you be profitable during drought?” This project is designed to gain grant money to regrant. The idea of “bearing the burdens of grants” by handing more of the process for the individuals applying for grants. It is called for innovative ag drought resilience. In the previous year the program started with \$200,000 and increased with another \$350,000. There have yet to be any projects in Jackson County. They are wanting to scale up the program and continue through the next three years, if there is funding. There is an ask for \$75,000 from the basin and will ask for \$388,000 from the state fund. The current projects fall under the topics of Alternative Crops, Efficiency (non-traditional), Livestock, Soil, and Hay/Forage. The program does have an advisory board. The deadline for next year's projects is Dec. 1st. The idea of asking for federal funds was brought up. There is also an ask for NRCS to match funding. The main question was if the money the basin put into the program would be coming back directly to our basin. The answer was yes. Greg did ask for anyone with ideas to start brainstorming now. The motion was made from Jim Dustin to approve as long as the money came back to the North Platte Basin Roundtable. It was seconded by Bryce Russell. It passed unanimously.

**3:55 - 4:05 pm            Town of Walden Letter of Support**

Jim Dustin - Town of Walden

Jim Dustin, the Town of Walden Mayor, requested a letter of support from the Basin Roundtable. The Town of Walden is needing to replace water and sewer systems. The town found sections in the sewer line that were not existent. There is also a large amount of seepage within the water lines. During irrigation season, the town treated 6 million gallons of water. The remaining

parts of the year, only 4 million gallons are treated. Over 60 water meters in town are not reporting or reporting wrong data. The town is creating 60 million gallons and only 30 million are being sold. The main water line was build in 1960, has broken twice in the last few years, and the water fund is currently losing money. The town is applying for a grant to improve the system. \$1 million of the money would be a loan. Another \$1 million would be a forgivable loan. There will be a grant applied for to help with the match money. The other changes would include a \$4/month increase for each meter or a usage charge increase. There have not been any increases in the last 4 years. The money will assist in a new water line and sewer lines. They can also add water pumps to the system. Currently it is done manually and is inefficient. The board approved signing a letter of support for the town.

**4:05 - 4:20 pm          Colorado State Forest Presentation**

Blair Rynearson - CSFS

This presentation was a pre-presentation to the basin to get an idea if it would be something the basin Roundtable would be interested in. Currently there are a lot of younger age, 15-30 years old, lodgepole pine needing to be thinned. The process is ugly the first few years where there is lots of regeneration. The basic idea behind this is limiting catastrophic standing fires. The idea of prevention through management. Lodgepole is the dominant species making up for 50%. Some of the trees are at 10,000 stems per acre. This population limits growth. Early intervention is best and helps forest health, timber industry, wildlife, and water. These younger age trees would be the first step. By thinning the trees it can help watershed and increase it by around 17%. Previously there has been FEMA funding to help. In 2014 there was over 600 acres thinned. Currently the forest management costs around \$100-\$400 per acre. In the map shown at the meeting (in attached presentation) the red and yellow are what need to be completed now. There are different ways to complete this. Lop and scattering is thinning the trees and leaving them where they lay. This allows for more water yield. The other way is cutting and stacking the trees into piles. The target areas on the northwest aspect of the mountains can be targeted first. This is where the melt is slower. There are around 1000-1500 acres needing to be thinned. The questions included wondering if the trees cut can be resold, why the state land board isn't funding the project, other funding partners or grants available, the chance of masticating or grinding and if it is cheaper. The other partners that they are looking into for funding included CPW. They are trying to find funding to assist. The idea of the watershed restoration grant was brought up. The State Land board won't fund forest operations. The State forest is supposed to fund the state land board. Another statement was that lop and scatter will help decrease regeneration. Masticating and grinding the trees is not a cheaper option. The

board asked if the money ask would be a one time ask or annual. It was decided that it would be best to do a one time ask. In discussion it was thought the ask would be best around \$100,000 with further presentation and information.

**4:20 - 4:30 pm      CWCB and IBCC Comments**

Barbara was appointed to be the CWCB basin representative board member. This means that there is the ask for someone to step into the IBCC board. Kari VanValkenburg was interested. It was voted on and she will be the rep. The IBCC meets quarterly. It was also brought up that we still have funding for a PEPO (Public Education Participation and Outreach) person. This includes a \$25,000 grant for education and outreach.

CWCB updates included that the Drought Summit will be taking place on May 31st and June 1st at History Colorado. The has a June 1st deadline for the fiscal year. The All Chairs Meeting will be April 3rd. The PEPO coordinator meeting will be March 17th. The C-9 Roundtable Summit will be November 14th in Denver. The survey link is <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/K9DXHTV>. The Turf Replacement Program will have two application periods. The deadline is March 31st. The Water Plan Party went well.

**4:30 - 4:40 pm      Quote for Colorado Water Education's Headwaters**

**Magazine**

Barbara had written a quote for the Headwaters Magazine. It was edited and adjusted. The final quote will be added at a future date.

**4:40 - 4:50 pm      Old Business**

**4:50 - 5:00 pm      New Business**

The next meeting will be April 18th at 4 pm. We will have Wendy Ryan speak on the lysimeter project and elections.

**Adjourn**