

Inter Basin Compact Committee Basin Roundtables  
Rio Grande Basin Roundtable  
MEETING MINUTES  
Tuesday, April 11, 2023, at 2:00pm  
Rio Grande Water Conservation District  
Alamosa, Colorado

**Call to Order**

Heather Dutton called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

A quorum was determined to be present. The agenda was approved as presented.

The minutes of the March 14, 2023, meeting were approved as presented.

**Public Comment:**

Kevin Terry announced that there is an event to stock the Rio Grande with Rio Grande Cutthroat, Friday April 14, 2023, at the Rio Grande Gorge.

Nathan Coombs recognized Jim Ehrlich as a Colorado State University "Who's Who in Ag".

**New Business**

Heather announced that the Rio Grande Basin has two positions open on the IBCC Board. Keith nominated Kevin Terry to the IBCC board. Daniel seconded the nomination. Kevin nominated Cary Aloia to the IBCC Board. Pete seconded the nomination. Kevin and Cary were elected to the IBCC Board.

Jeff Rodriguez, CWCB Staff gave a CWCB Board update. He reminded the group that the Drought Summit will be May 31 and June 1. C9 Summit is scheduled to be November 14, 2023. The Spring Forecast states that there are 23 counties in Drought. In many other counties, floods are a concern. The Flood Bulletin is also available on the CWCB website. The Wildfire Ready Watersheds program is live and accepting applications on a rolling basis. WSRF funding deadline is June 1 for this fiscal year. Turf replacement program is available as well. Laura Spann, CWCB staff also noted that she is available to help with funding opportunities, especially the Water Plan Grant projects.

Utah State University Climate Adaption Science Fellowship Program presented on their findings of the Evapotranspiration and Weather Trends for the San Luis Valley. They presented their findings to the group. The group's findings were not substantial with the data set that they were able to access. The group will be developing a pamphlet and ArcGIS StoryMap to publish their findings.

The WSRF Rio Grande Basin Fund Balance spreadsheet was shown. It was noted that there is adequate funding for the projects being presented today.

David Marquez presented a funding request for the Guadalupe Sanchez Ditch. The project will include some rehabilitation on the ditch banks as well. This has been engineered by NRCS and the project will hopefully get started by September. Headgate division is included as well as streambank stabilization. There was concern about Riparian habitat and willow fly catcher habitat being affected since the project includes a pipeline. NRCS has included monitoring of this habitat in the project. Board members also expressed that there needs to be a balance between Ag priorities and Wetland priorities. It was also noted that seepage from ditches may not be a beneficial use. The total project cost is \$345,409 with WSRF of \$172,449, Basin funds of \$34,541. Judy moved to approve the project. Virginia seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Sheep Creek Fire Pond Concept was presented by Clint Crowe and Nathan Coombs. Infrastructure will be placed so that the pond can work for a Fire Wise Pond. Augmentation will be provided through the Conejos Water Conservancy District. Access to water is an important part of this project and fire mitigation in the Southwest. Virginia moved to approve the project. Kevin seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Ducks Unlimited, Matt Reddy, Biologist working with Monte Vista and Alamosa Wildlife Refuge presented their project on Wetland habitat restoration. The Monte Vista refuge will have a decommissioning of impediments. There was concern about how the refuge will support these changes through their operational funding. Ducks Unlimited noted that they will be reseeding the project areas. There was concern about monitoring the project as well. It was mentioned that this project is part of a larger project through Ducks Unlimited. Judy mentioned that their projects have been beneficial in the past decade. The Monte Vista refuge project total will be \$687,500, requesting a basin match of \$68,750. The Alamosa National Wildlife Refuge project total is \$331,250 with a basin match request of \$33,125. Pete moved to approve the Alamosa request. Judy seconded the motion. One member abstained. The motion carried. Jim moved to approve the Monte Vista Wildlife Refuge Request. One member abstained. Judy seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Daniel Boyes, RGHRP presented a project request for the Independent Ditch Headgate Improvement Project. He noted that the headgate is inefficient. The project will consist of construction of a new headgate, installing headgate automation and woody debris deflector. Another project will include some riverbank restoration. Preliminary designs were presented. Budget overview includes total project cost of \$227,700 with a request for WSRF funding of \$149,800, Basin funds of \$23,000. Virginia moved to approve the project. Judy seconded the motion and the motion carried. Michael Carson, City of Alamosa, abstained.

Greg Peterson, Colorado Ag Water Alliance, presented a funding request for their Drought Resiliency project. The goal of the project is to provide flexible funding sources for producers and take the leg work out of the grant process. Drought Resiliency projects is regranting to projects that will help producers be profitable within Colorado. Last year they funded \$340,000 between 30 projects. Projects include alternative cropping, efficiency projects, hay/forage, livestock projects, and soil health projects. Phase 2 will help to scale up current projects and provide funding for additional projects. The goal is to provide funding for the next 3 years. Currently, projects are being monitored using OpenET and through partners. CAWA is requesting \$75,000 from each roundtable. Judy moved to approve the request. Daniel seconded the motion and the motion carried.

PEPO Update: Judy Jolly noted that the state PEPO group is working to improve the handbook. Daniel noted that the Ed Committee gave an update on tours. There will be a summary of the Snowshoe tour in the Roundtable Newsletter. The Ed Committee is hosting a Native Hatchery Tour on April 19<sup>th</sup>. Another tour will take place on May 11 and 12 to the Ute Mountain Farm. Basin Symposium is on May 6<sup>th</sup>. Survey coming soon to the roundtable members.

Pat McDermott gave a streamflow forecasting update. Nathan Coombs discussed forecasting and new data sets being used for streamflow forecasting.

Adjourned at 5:04 p.m.