



Arkansas Basin Roundtable

PLANNING OUR
WATER FUTURE

Arkansas Basin Roundtable Meeting

Minutes and Recorded Decisions

Wednesday November 8, 2023 12:30 pm

Pueblo Community College, Student Center Building

900 W. Orman Avenue

Pueblo, CO 81004

Members and Guests Present:

Bryce Ehrlich	Abba Ahmed	Jeff Rodriguez(online)	Gracy Goodwin
Al Tucker (online)	Terry Scanga	Sarah Mudge	Ariel Hacker (online)
Sandy White	Jeris Danielson	Bob Hammel	Jonathan Paklaian
Greg Felt	Tom Verquer	Blake Osborne	Thom Tharnish
Greg Teter (online)	Jim Baldwin (online)	Brad Lubbers (online)	Chris Woodka (online)
Jeff DeHerrerra (online)	Jeff Hodge	Andy Klakulak	Kent Ricken (online)
PJ Klavon (online)	Tom Grasmick (online)	Dillon O'Hare(online)	Robert Sakata(online)
Zach Schmidt(online)	Dwayne McFall(online)	Maria Brandt(online)	Rena Griggs (online)
Amy Ostiek (online)	Scott King	Will Koger(online)	Jack Goble
Rick Kidd	Alli Schuch	Gil Ramirez	Chris Lanson
Mike Holmberg	Kelly Rousch	Lisa Windham	Juliana Anderson
Justin Zeisler	Justin Kurth	Mark Gaiburn	John Kusman
Mark Valentine	Kim Gortz	Jenny Bishop	Tom Tarn
Rich Hildebrandt	Emily Zmak	Will Koger(online)	Amy Mitchell (online)
Julie Knudson(online)	Greg Felt (online)	Dana Davison(online)	Lisa Pace
Rebecca Hutchison(online)	Todd Doherty	Mark Valentine	Stephen Myers (online)
Joel Barber	Cathy Garcia-Winder (online)		Emily Magnuson

1. Welcome and Introductions -

- **Introductions** – Steve called the meeting to order with introductions. Mark Shea is excused absence.
- **Quorum** was determined present, meeting commenced
- **Meeting Agenda** approved by consensus
- **Minutes of October 11, 2023 meeting** approved by consensus
- **Public comment** – None

2. Reports –

- **Executive Committee – Steve Kastner**

Steve updated on new membership changes. Dave Wissel for Park County. Aaron Hilschorst was appointed after IBCC approval. Kelly Rousch to be appointed to legislative after approval. Rich Hildebrandt approved for At-Large Water Rights Holder position, vote to be held next month. Rich briefly introduced himself. Review of C-9 Summit; CWCB can reimburse for up to 10 members per basin for mileage and lodging. The Roundtable plans to continue to meet at PPCC, but will seek alternate locations for



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dates that conflict with PPCC room availability. 6 Water Application Grant applications today. Ark Basin Water Forum is March 6-7 in La Junta, and they are seeking agenda topics and proposals, desired deadline is Dec 12. Talked about setting ARWC meetings at beginning of the year. Discussed amending the bylaws.

- **CWCB Report – Jeff Rodriguez, Greg Felt, Amy Ostdiek;**

Amy presented quick updates on Colorado River Issues and feedback received by the CWCB, such as requests for clarity on presented graphics. She continued with updates on the SPPP 2024 proposal, which interested parties can track on the CWCB Commissioner's Corner webpage. The Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) was released on October 25th for the Bureau of Reclamation regarding the 2007 guidelines for the Colorado River and its major reservoirs. Comments are due on December 11th.

Jeff gave an overview of upcoming events:

- SPPP Webinar – November 13th from 10-11 am
- C-9 Summit – November 14th in Westminster <https://forms.gle/mkn2mSLWrgxJFKZe6>
- CWCB Stakeholder guide – CWCB staff will be visiting roundtables for feedback
- WSRF Deadline – December 1
- WPG Deadline – December 1
- Wildfire Ready Watersheds still accepting applications
<https://www.wildfirereadywatersheds.com/> or contact Steve Reeves
(steven.reeves@state.co.us) if interested in learning more. Need to be awarded 12/31/24 because of ARPA Funds
- Technical Assistance Awarded 12/31/24; if interested contact Michael Regan
(michael.regan@state.co.us)
- Climate Change in Colorado Report <https://climatechange.colostate.edu/>
- Colorado River Issues <https://cwcb.colorado.gov/colorado-river-commissioners-corner>

Greg gave a brief overview of finalizing the projects bill and the Colorado River District's Shoshone Permanence Project discussion. Chris Stern attended the Forest Council meeting to present about wildfire ready watersheds, and Greg reported that he felt the work that has been done in Chaffee and Lake Counties have prepared well and could easily implement some projects. Greg has been working with WECO on a program for county commissioner education, to be presented at the Winter Conference for Colorado Counties on November 27th in Westminster.

- **IBCC Report – Jeris Danielson**

The IBCC meeting will blend into the C-9 Summit. Becky Mitchell is new chair of the IBCC.

- **Ag/Muni Committee – None until after irrigation season.**

- **Enviro/Rec –Rena Griggs, Bob Hammel**

Bob commented about illegal ponds in the basin, that there are several thousand illegal ponds in the basin, and what defines a legal vs illegal pond. There have been requests for the roundtables to discuss illegal ponds, and Sandy suggests including the Division Engineer in these discussions. Steve reported that ponds are a major concern for the Division Engineer,



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that there are about 20,000 known ponds, and more being constructed all the time. Many people are not aware of the expense of augmentation on ponds due to evaporation. Rena inquired if there was a way to keep the most beneficial ponds. Terry and Sandy responded that it is about property rights, and cost and injury analysis. Amy Mitchell interjected that fire suppression ponds have very strict regulations and review processes, and believes they are tools that are very necessary to prevent fire, especially in rural areas. Ponds are a very complicated topic in the Arkansas Basin and its compact. There have been concerns about low flows below the Pueblo Reservoir for the fishery, which would be a good topic for the roundtable to discuss as well. Work on the low-head dam in Salida has begun.

- **Arkansas River Watershed Collaborative – Jonathan Paklaian**

Jonathan updated that he will be attending the C-9 Summit. The 4th quarter ARWC meeting is planned to be held on December 15th. Jonathan will report at the ARCC Board meeting about the funding ARWC received. ARWC will be receiving federal money from the Bureau of Reclamation, but it is currently restricted to the upper Arkansas Basin. Let Jon know if interested in being a part of that endeavor. Year-end Fundraising – CO Gives, which was used last year as well. Goal of \$1000.

- **PEPO – Ariel Hacker, Maria Brandt**

Maria is looking for direction on project lists for next steps after contacting projects and receiving support from roundtable on moving the projects forward after getting details from the projects. Steve will discuss with Mark and add this topic to the executive committee agenda in December or January. The next PEPO meeting is December 21st at 10:30. The C-9 Summit will have a breakout session for PEPO, and if members have ideas or questions, they can contact Ariel to discuss during that session.

Break 1:35pm

- **Needs Assessment Committee – Gracy Goodwin and Project Presentations**

Colorado Water Plan Grant Applicants – voting for letters of support. Next deadline Feb 15th for April 1st deadline

- **EPC Regional Indirect Potable Reuse Project – Jenny Bishop, PPRWA and Loop Water Authority**

Jenny summarized the efficient use and reuse of water physically and legally available in El Paso County, with goal to benefit as many EPC users as possible without obtaining additional water rights. After meeting with multiple entities, the Chilcott Ditch was found to be the most efficient diversion from Fountain Creek to Williams Reservoir, and allows existing infrastructure to be used. This project meets municipal and storage goals listed in the BIP and helps build partnerships with multiple entities in El Paso County. It also meets CO Water Plan goals for vibrant communities and resilient planning. This project is requesting \$250,000 from the CWCB Water Plan Grant. Jenny discussed next steps and concluded that this is a feasibility and design study. Approved by consensus for a letter of support.



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LAC Water-Sharing Program – Todd Doherty

Presented the water-sharing company concept, to meet the state's current and future municipal, industrial, and agricultural needs through water sharing agreements as recommended by the Colorado Water Plan. This would protect up to 5800 AF of farmland irrigation and provides 80 family farms the currently relied-on, severable year-to-year contracts. This will be 30% municipal and 70% agricultural use. Municipalities could access economically feasible and sustainable water supplies. Multiple entities have been involved in the development of this and it will be built from the ground up by the steering committee. It is currently in its conceptual phase, and they are looking for funding from the Water Plan Grant of \$300,000. By consensus, this proposal will move forward with a letter of support.

Fountain Creek Watershed Floodway Control and Greenway District – Alli Schuch

Alli gave an overview of Fountain Creek and the Watershed District, and its funding. So far, they have done about \$35 Million on creek restoration projects, mainly funded by CO Springs Utilities. The CSU SDS funding has limitations and is running out, so they are looking for sustainable funding for the work in the watershed. They have no sustainable funding or maintenance budget for past or future projects, and the funding they receive from their member governments is not enough for projects. There are many projects that federal funding could support in the district, including habitat enhancements, reducing erosion and sedimentation, and supporting the district and their limited resources. By consensus, this proposal will move forward with a letter of support.

Donala Water and Sanitation, Aquifer Storage and Recover Demonstration Pilot Project - Mark Valentine, Joel Barber, and Juliana Anderson

Mark gave an overview of confined aquifer storage and recovery, water quality tests collected, water stored and recovered, and the studies that have been performed for this project so far. He summarized the permitting process through permitting entities such as the DWR, CDPHE, and EPA. The pilot study will be shorter durations to observe water quality interactions, with the goal of showing that long term storage is possible, which they believe is feasible after the studies they (LRE Water) have performed. Their initial proposal for the CWCB grant request will be \$1million. The Roundtable moved by consensus to provide a letter of support.

South Arkansas River Riparian Project - Chris Lamson

This project will take place in or near the City of Salida, which is experiencing rapid development. The river in this area is affected by erosion, lack of habitat diversity, poor trail locations, and irregular channel widths. The project proposes to remedy these problems, as well as use the area for education and outreach programs for the city. The City has committed to buffering 1/3 mile and providing an accessible educational trail. The city and other landowners have given expressed support for the project, as well as conservation districts in the area. The funding requested is for the feasibility study and concept design, and they are requesting \$55,000-60,000 from CWCB Grant funding. By consensus, this proposal will move forward with a letter of support.



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Colorado Landscape Industry Education Plan for Water Conservation – Lisa Pace

Lisa presented on a concept from Colorado Springs Utilities that is not looking for a letter of support at this time, but feels the roundtable should be aware of it as they create the proposal. They plan to identify how to change their landscape plan to get them where they feel they need to be in the next few decades. Two meetings will be held for discussing this topic, and they plan to work with many water providers and stakeholders to define what this should look like (statewide). No objections to providing a letter of support, even if one was not requested yet.

3. Upcoming Meetings –

- Arkansas Basin Roundtable – December 13, 2023
 - Executive Committee – 10:30am
 - Roundtable – 12:30pm
- Committees
 - Needs Assessment – As necessary
 - ARWC – December 15th
 - PEPO – December 21st
 - Environmental/Recreation Committee – TBD
 - Agriculture/Municipal Committee – TBD
 - IBCC – at C-9 Summit
- C-9 Summit, November 14, Westin Hotel in Westminster

4. Adjourn; Steve, 3:13pm