

Inter Basin Compact Committee Basin Roundtables  
Rio Grande Basin Roundtable  
MEETING MINUTES  
Tuesday, October 10, 2023, at 2:00pm  
Rio Grande Water Conservation District  
Alamosa, Colorado

**Call to Order**

Heather Dutton, Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m.

A quorum was determined to be present.

Heather Dutton (SLVWCD, Roundtable Chair), Keith Holland (Ag/Water User At-Large), Amber Ladell (RGNF), Brian Puccerella (SLVGO!), Charlie Spielman (M&I Water Users), Sally Weir (COL), Erin Minks (Sen. Bennet), Nathan Coombs (CWCB/CWCD), Joe Simms (RiGHT), Ryan Smith (CSU), Kathy James (CSU), Luke Mecklenburg (CO Attorney General's office), Emily Zmak (CWCB), Jeff Rodriguez (CWCB), Chuck Sullivan (Wright Water), Jocelyn Catterson (CCALT), Rio de La Vista (RGWCD), Toby VanRy (TU), Leah Clark (water user), Peter Clark (Ag/Water User At-Large), Nicole Langley (Sanchez Reservoir Co), Matt Peterson (RiGHT), Becky Mitchell (State of Colorado), Crystal Benavidez (RGWCD), Michael Carson (RGWCD), Chris Ivers (RGWCD), Anna Greenberg (BCR), Cary Aloia (Wetland Dynamics), Jenny Nehring (Wetland Dynamics), Kevin Terry (TU), Eugene Jacquez (Sangre de Cristo Acequia Assoc), Daniel Boyes (RGHRP),

Attendees on Zoom included: Amanda Lopez (AECOM), Amy Ost diek (CWCB), Darin Schepp (DWR), Karla Shriver (water user), Laura Spann (CWCB), Robert Sakata (CWCB), Travis Smith (NWTf/Reservoirs), Darin Schepp (DWR), Sharon Vaughn (USFWS), Ryan Unterreiner (CPW), Cath Morin (RGHRP), Russ Sands (CWCB), Scott Williamson (CO Dept of Local Affairs), Claire Catlett, Kelly M, Richard Hubler (Alamosa County), Michelle Lanzoni (DWR)

**Agenda & Minutes**

The agenda was approved as presented. First – Eugene Jacquez, Second Kevin Terry.

The minutes of the September 12, 2023, meeting were approved as presented. Kevin T made the motion Peter Clark second.

**Public Comment:**

Anna Greenberg, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies (BCR) reminded everyone that the Landowner Workshop is this Thursday, October 12, 2023, and will cover a range of natural resource concerns. Lunch will also be provided. Talk with Cary Aloia or Anna to register for the workshop. Anna also requested a Letter of Support for BCR grant applications to the Colorado Water Conservation Board's Colorado Water Plan and National Wildlife Foundation for their Conejos River restoration work. BCR is requesting implementation funds for the work.

Jocelyn Catterson let everyone know that she is the new Conservation & Outreach Manager for Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust. She also let everyone know about CCALT's upcoming open house, which will take place Nov 2 2:00-5:00pm at CCALT's new office in Del Norte.

Daniel Boyes, with Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project, let everyone know that the 7<sup>th</sup> annual Rio Reels fundraiser event will be held October 20<sup>th</sup>. It will again be an evening of awesome films, great food and drink, and a fun silent auction. An online participation will be available for our out of basin friends!

Jenny Nehring said the Crane Festival planning committee is beginning planning for the SLV Crane Fest. If you are interested in sponsoring the event or being involved, visit [mvcranefest.org](http://mvcranefest.org) or contact Jenny.

Amber Pacheco let everyone know that the RGWCD just finished allocating funds for the first round of SB22-028 funding. They opened the second round of funding today and will be accepting proposals.

## **CWCB Updates:**

### **I. Other CWCB Updates – Jeff Rodriguez and Nathan Coombs**

Jeff Rodriguez encouraged anyone interested in attending the C9 Summit to register for the event. Jeff also noted that CWCB has a new Deputy Director, Anna Maus. Additionally, Becky Mitchell was appointed as the new IBCC Director. Jeff also provided an update on current WSRF funds balance. Additional funding was also allocated to the statewide WSRF account. Jeff also reminded the group that Wildfire Ready Watersheds and Technical Assistance & Local Capacity grant applications are being accepted on a rolling basis and must be contracted by 12/31/24. There was a discussion of the focus of the local capacity grants.

### **II. Colorado River Update – Becky Mitchell, Amy Ostdiek, and Emily Zmak**

Becky Mitchell announced that Lauren Ris is the new CWCB director. Becky introduced Emily Zmak and Amy Ostdiek of CWCB, and Luke Mecklenburg, Assistant Attorney General. Luke provided an overview of the “Law of the River”, including the “Big Three” laws, governing allocation of water of the Colorado River. Luke also described the responsibilities of the Upper Colorado River Commission under the compact.

Becky discussed recent drought conditions and water volume data for the Colorado River. She also described the Bureau of Reclamation’s call for 2 to 4 million acre-feet of conservation across the basin. She discussed the 5-point plan developed by the Upper Basin states. Becky also discussed how the RGBRT can get involved and have a voice in Colorado River discussions, including elevating the issue with our congressional representatives as well as sharing stories of innovative solutions during shortage and how shortages affect Coloradans.

## **San Luis Valley Well Water Sampling Study Update**

*Kathy James and Ryan Smith, Colorado School of Public Health, Center for Health Work and Environment, University of Colorado, Anschutz Medical Campus.*

Kathy and Ryan Smith presented the results from their study on the impact of drought on geochemical processes and properties of the SLV’s aquifers. Their study focused on toxic heavy metals, such as manganese, copper, and uranium, and their concentrations in groundwater in different parts of the SLV. Water was sampled from over 826 wells across the SLV, varying in depth. Data was provided to well owners, and when a metal was found to be elevated, potential strategies were proposed. The research also attempted to correlate well pumping with land subsidence.

## **Colorado Division of Water Resources Update**

Craig Cotten, Colorado Division of Water Resources, gave an update on the Rio Grande Basin. Spring runoff, especially on the west side of the Valley, was above average, however the summer months were dry and have led to lower flows across the Basin. This transition from a wet runoff to dry summer has changed water rights curtailment significantly. For example, curtailment of water rights on the Rio Grande is currently set at 0%. DWR may extend the irrigation season on the Rio Grande past November 1 and/or utilize winter recharge water to minimize over-delivery of water across the state line. Craig also discussed some new and upcoming court cases. SD #1's new Plan of Water Management may go to trial. This is the fourth POWM for SD #1. Additionally, the Sustainable Water Augmentation Group (SWAG) will likely be going to trial for a second time.

Craig notified the group that the second Assistant Division Engineer position is currently open. Additionally, the State Engineer Kevin Rein is retiring at the end of the year. Craig also provided an update on the U.S. Supreme Court lawsuit regarding the Rio Grande Compact. The case includes the states of Texas, New Mexico, and Colorado as well as the United States. Last year, the special master issued a ruling, siding with the states, and approved a resolution to the case. However, the United States filed exceptions to the special master's resolution. The next step is for the states to file a response and the US Supreme Court will determine whether or not to overturn the special master's resolution.

## **PEPO Update**

The Education Committee organized a tour in early October to experience potato harvest and visit the quinoa processing facility in Mosca. November 12-13 will be a tour of the Bureau of Reclamation Ice Core and sediment Lab and a Water Treatment plant in Aurora.

Heather noted that the November Roundtable, Education Committee, and Executive Committee meetings are cancelled so that Roundtable Members can attend the C9 Summit on November 14th in Westminster.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:33pm.