



Arkansas Basin Roundtable

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Arkansas Basin Roundtable Meeting

Minutes and Recorded Decisions

Wednesday January 10, 2024 12:30 pm

Pueblo Community College, Student Center Building

900 W. Orman Avenue

Pueblo, CO 81004

Members and Guests Present:

Mark Shea	Bob Hamel	Jonathan Paklaian
Al Tucker (online)	Russ Sands (phone)	Lauren Duncan (online)
Tom Grasmick (online)	Sandy White (online)	Jeris Danielson
Steve Kastner	Ariel Hacker	Abba Ahmed
Rick Kidd	Julie Knudson (online)	Heather Sackett (online)
Bryce Ehrlich(online)	Rich Hildebrandt	Tom Verquer
Rich Venmar	Gil Ramirez (online)	Doug Brgoch (online)
Dwayne McFall (online)	Aaron Hilschorst	Jeff Rodriguez
Dale Lyons (online)	Amy Mitchell (online)	Alex Davis (online)
Greg Felt (online)	Kelly Roesch	Travis Payne (online)
Ron Cook (online)	Rena Griggs	Patrick Farrell (online)
Sarah Mudge (online)	Mark Gebhart (online)	Jeff DeHerrera
Gracy Goodwin	Rick Keenis	Robert Sakata
Tom Tharnish	Matt Heimrich	Greg Teter (online)
Tim Canterbury (online)	Harmony Jump (online)	Alan Ward (online)
Justin Kurth (online)	Diane Kielty-Pinion (online)	Dave Wissel (online)
Lisa Fardal (online)	Seth Clayton (online)	Andy Klakulak (online)
Patrick Bachman (online)	Emily Zmak (online)	Mark Gebhart (online)
Greg Baker (online)	Mannie Colon (online)	Rick Kienitz
Sam Kalen		

1. Welcome and Introductions -

- **Introductions** – Mark called the meeting to order with introductions.
- **Quorum** was determined present, meeting commenced.
- **Agenda approval** by consensus.
- **Minutes of December 13, 2023** approved by consensus.
- **Public comment** – None

2. Project Presentations

- **Aurora Water, Wild Horse Reservoir** – **Rich Venmar** presented about the proposed Wild Horse Reservoir near the Town of Hartsel. It would store about 93,000 AF (acre-feet), would be off-channel and thus would not impact existing river systems, 150 feet deep to help reduce evaporation, and with minimal impacts to environment. Additional storage in the South Platte Basin would increase drought resiliency. Aurora Water provides water to over 400,000 people



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within 160 square miles, only half of which is built out. Currently Spinney Reservoir, which offers 53,000 AF, is the largest reservoir in their system. Aurora has been operating under potable reuse systems for over 50 years, and offers use tracking to ensure maximum efficiency of their systems. Their approach aims for conservation, reuse, and additional storage. Most of the land is already owned by Aurora. Everything would be piped from the Otero Pipeline to the new reservoir, then piped to Spinney Reservoir as well. The reservoir would not need new rights or decrees, will not impact existing IGAs (inter-governmental agreements), and will not impact rivers or streams. Rich provided an in-depth evaluation of impacts, including hydrology, archaeology, recreational, environmental, and cultural effects, as well as a summary of the current design and field investigations, correspondence and coordination with other entities, and their schedule looking forward. Estimated total costs of \$700M. The main website for this project is https://www.auroragov.org/residents/water/wild_horse_reservoir

Break 1:25 pm

3. Reports –

- **Executive Committee – Mark Shea**

Mark updated the Roundtable about the morning's executive meeting.

The bylaws are being updated, and discussed adding a chair for the Needs Assessment Committee, as well as tracking attendance, succession, term limits, quorum numbers, and bringing in newer members to officer roles were topics of discussion. Mark briefly discussed the Shoshone Powerplant Water Rights transfer to the Colorado River District, and mentioned some concerns from the Roundtable. Rachel Zancanella, Division 2 Engineer, is likely to present to the Roundtable in February.

- **CWCB Report – Jeff Rodriguez, Greg Felt, Robert Sakata**

Jeff updated the group that the Climate Change in Colorado Report was released and can be found at <https://climatechange.colostate.edu/>. There are interactive charts and maps included on the webpage. Jeff noted that the Soil Moisture Survey is open until February 5th, which will influence where this project will direct their funding and soil moisture sensors in Colorado. Russ and Jeff will present about the CWCB Stakeholder Guide starting in February to get Roundtable feedback. The Guide is a collection of resources for new and existing members with the intention of creating alignment between Roundtables, IBCC, and CWCB Board. The CWCB will have some reports ready by Colorado Water Congress, for BBC Turf Replacement Analysis and for Urban Landscaping Conservation Task Force

(https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScz5MVF_a1Ty_OUTDO1lOrR_iaCi5-4ou385gQJ0AddRXgWBg/viewform). Mark asked if the Roundtable would be interested in a presentation about the Climate Change Report, and Jeff will look into setting up the presentation.

Greg updated that the next meeting to discuss the Shoshone Power Plant water rights discussions with the Colorado River District will be on January 25th. Roundtable members brought up a number of concerns this meeting. Robust Discussion on Shoshone Proposal



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at November CWCB Board Meeting: <https://youtu.be/-K6GG2rledw?t=8023>.

Lauren Duncan reported that they are working through the review for the applicants for the Water Plan Grant and is excited about what they are seeing so far. They will be reaching out to applicants in the next few months. 70 applications were received, and 8 basin-specific applications came from the Arkansas Basin, varying in cost. CWCB will post these on their website and discuss further at the CWCB March meeting.

Robert Sakata shared about the Colorado River Water Users Convention in Las Vegas and would suggest having a CWCB Board member attend annually. He gave a summary of the conference and reported that Commissioner Mitchell stood up for Colorado, and he felt that it was productive to create personal connection with representatives from other states and basins. Robert gave a brief synopsis about his new Agricultural Water Policy Advisor Position, “a voice for Ag”, and is open to comments from Roundtable members.

- 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 and Local Capacity Grants <https://cwcb.colorado.gov/federal-technical-assistance>. Need to be contracted by 12/31/2024 due to ARPA Funds.
- WSRF Deadline is February 1st.
- Climate Change in Colorado Report <https://climatechange.colostate.edu/>
- Colorado River Issues <https://cwcb.colorado.gov/colorado-river-commissioners-corner>
- **IBCC Report – Jeris Danielson**
First meeting will be February 27th in Denver, which will be the first meeting where Commissioner Mitchell is the Chair. The Roundtable would be interesting in an update about Mitchell’s vision for the IBCC. Mark mentioned that it would be important for IBCC to discuss topics such as the Shoshone Powerplant Water Rights and Drought Task Force. There is some concern that the IBCC has not been fully utilized, and that the IBCC does not create its own agendas. Jeff followed by stating the CWCB’s commitment to IBCC members, and to reach out to him with ideas, questions, or concerns. There will be three IBCC meetings per year, with the third being the C9 Summit.
- **Needs Assessment Committee – Gracy Goodwin**
Application Deadline February 15th.
- **Ag/Muni Committee – Matt Heimrich**
Rick, Kent, and Mark will discuss how to move forward. Mark asked that the Ag/Muni Committee updates the Roundtable about new projects in the basin. Matt complimented the Needs Assessment Committee’s fluency regarding public and project correspondence. He updated the group about some of the challenges faced, particularly by Ditch Groups. How can Roundtable support these water users?
- **Enviro/Rec –Rena Griggs, Bob Hamel**
Next meeting is January 29th. Arkansas Basin Forum Local Leaders Dinner is March 5th. The



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registration is now active online. The agenda is very agriculture-centric and available online. Robert Sakata will be a keynote speaker, and Representative Cleave Simpson will speak at the Local Leaders Dinner. www.arbwf.org is the website.

Rena updated that the Salida Lowhead Dam and the Lake George Dam projects are both done, minus some revegetation. Steve expressed interest in an update about the Pueblo Dam recreational safety upgrades.

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

Jonathan introduced Sam Kalen as a new member of ARWC. Sam will help with California Gulch and Twin Lakes area. Lake County provided an official letter of support and a financial contribution. Jonathan updated about the conference in Lake County. \$2.1M for 2024 budget. Wrapped up Spring Fire for Huerfano County, and may have a project debrief at the project conclusion.

- **PEPO – Ariel Hacker**

The December 21st meeting mainly discussed the Water Forum and how PEPO can assist in future years. It is anticipated that PEPO ideas will be generated at the Forum. Maria is moving forward on the projects list and the PEPO group is discussing 2024 priorities. Interested parties are encouraged to email Ariel with questions, ideas, or topics to discuss. Capture any projects that contact Gracy into the PEPO Projects List, and Bob mentioned strengthening the relationship with PEPO and Water Forum. Meetings are every other month and the next PEPO meeting is February 15th at 10:30 on Zoom.

4. Upcoming Meetings –

- Arkansas Basin Roundtable – February 14, 2024 at Pueblo Community College
 - Executive Committee – 10:30am
 - Roundtable – 12:30pm
- Committees
 - Needs Assessment – TBD
 - PEPOW – February 15th at 10:30 am via Zoom
 - Environmental/Recreation Committee – TBD
 - Agriculture/Municipal Committee – TBD
 - ARWC Board of Directors to reconvene – TBD
 - IBCC – February 27th in Denver
- CWCB – January 29-30th
- Arkansas Water Forum Planning – January 30th
- Colorado Water Congress – January 30 – February 2 in Aurora
- Arkansas River Forum – March 6-7th (VIP dinner is March 5th) in La Junta

5. Adjourn; Mark, 2:44pm