

Inter Basin Compact Committee Basin Roundtables  
Rio Grande Basin Roundtable  
MEETING MINUTES  
May 14, at 2:00pm  
Rio Grande Water Conservation District  
Alamosa, Colorado

**Call to Order**

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

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

**Public Comment:**

Cary Aloa noted that there is a proposal for a solar farm between the fish hatchery and the Alamosa Refuge. There is a 60 days to comment period on that project and the impacts. She recommended that anyone that would like to make a comment contact Richard Hubler with Alamosa County.

Anna Greenburg, Bird Conservancy announced that she is leaving the valley and would like to have a meet and greet with her replacement.

Heather Dutton, Chairman announced that she will be stepping down from the Roundtable Chair in July.

Leslie Alison, Western Landowners Alliance presented on the Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances Program. Western Landowners Alliance is a West Wide landowner fed and landowner led organization. She noted that there are free memberships available. The Candidate Conservation Agreement project centers around the endangered species act. There is currently a regulatory assurance agreement that was developed that protects farmers/ranchers from increased regulation on properties with endangered species. This project is to make the assurance agreement more accessible to producers/landowners.

Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) Staff, Jeff Rodriguez gave an updated on the projects bill that passed. It appropriates \$23.3 million in Water Plan Grant projects. He noted the next Water Plan Grant deadline is July 1. Funds will also be allocated to the Turf replacement program. Federal Technical Assistance and Local Capacity funds need to be contracted by October.

CWCB Staff, Russ Strands, reviewed the WSRF Guidelines and entities eligible to apply for WSRF Funds. WSRF funding is severance tax funds oil and can fund any entity including for-profit entities. Colorado Revised Statute also clarifies these eligible entities. In the past the Attorney General's office has confirmed that for-profit entities are eligible for funds through the basin roundtable and CWCB, WSRF funds. Russ also clarified that the Roundtable doesn't have the authority to modify the eligibility.

Casandra McCuen, Education Committee gave an update on upcoming tours. There will be a Baca Wildlife Refuge Tour May 17, 2024. Alamosa National Wildlife tour is also coming up with more details to follow. Colorado River Basin Tour will be June 12-14<sup>th</sup>. Casandra noted that the Education Committee is applying for PEPO grant again with very similar funding request than previous years along with additional funding to partner with Rio Grande Water Conservation Education Initiative. Casandra requested a letter of support from the roundtable for the PEPO Grant. \$25,000 will be the total request

with \$13,000 matching funds. Kevin Terry moved to approve a letter of support. Karla seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Anna Greenburg, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies and Trout Unlimited presented their project for Ventero Creek Restoration Project which is 1.5 mile section upstream of Ventero-Culebra confluence on the Wild Horse Mesa servicing flooded irrigations. The project consists of Headgate replacement, meadow development, and instream riparian restoration. The ditch diverts 3.25 cfs from Ventero Creek and is senior to Sanchez Reservoir. The project also includes autotarps and soil moisture meters for 50 acres of wet meadows. The project request is \$42,997.96, from the roundtable and total project budget is \$85,97.96. TU is working on this project to look at the groundwater return flows and temperature of water as it returns. Jim moved to approve the project. Keith seconded the motion and the motion carried. Kevin is recuse himself for this project

Greg Peterson, Colorado Ag Water Alliance presented his project for the Master Irrigator Program. 150 participants have been in the program that offers a 32 hour course that covers water issues and water law. This stage of the project will allow producers to put technology in the field. This project will also fund consultants to help farmers use soil moisture probes and analyze the data. The total project is \$76,854, Roundtable request is \$45,677 with matching funds of \$31,177. The project will cost share with 24 farms for 50% of cost of soil moisture probes. The producers will be required to provide feedback and pumping data. The goal of the project is to help prove that soil moisture probes reduce pumping and are economical. Keith moved to fund the projects. Travis seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Great Outdoor Fund, Lobatos Bridge Outdoor Classroom & Recreation Enhancement Project was presented. The project celebrates the history and culture of the historic location of the Lobatos Bridge. Project includes the Outdoor Classroom, Boat Ramp, Picnic Sites, Parking Area, Fencing, Vault toilet, and Cameras to allow the public to enjoy the area. RGBRT Funding request is \$62,500, State wide request \$359,473 for a total cost \$624,901. Cindy moved to approve the project for funding. Marty seconded the motion and the motion carried. Brian Puccerella recused himself from the vote as a partner with the project. Heather noted that she will work through the project with CWCB staff to make sure the project fits the WSRF founding.

Adam Moore, CSU Forest Service presented the Health of Colorado's Forests Report. Adam shared the 2023 Report with key takeaways. The report can be found on [csfs.colostate.edu](https://csfs.colostate.edu). Alamosa field office is also working in the Good Neighbor Authority on field projects.

Richard Hubard, Alamosa County shared that Alamosa will have a Community meeting May 14 at the Waverly Community Center.

Cleave Simpson, Colorado Senator gave a quick update about bills effecting water that were reviewed during session this past year. Bills included Turf grass, grey water systems, Sports Gaming Revenue and an extension of the conservation easement program. Cleave noted that the federal funding has dried up and budgeting has gotten more complex.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05pm.