

Inter Basin Compact Committee Basin Roundtables
Rio Grande Basin Roundtable
MEETING MINUTES
August 13, 2024, at 2:00pm
Rio Grande Water Conservation District
Alamosa, Colorado

Call to Order

Amber Pacheco called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

Introductions were made.

A quorum was determined to be present. Mike Gibson moved to approve the agenda as presented. Judy Lopez seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Mike Gibson moved to approve the minutes of the July 9, 2024 meeting as presented. Regan seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Public Comment:

Paul Formisano, Salazar Rio Grande del Norte Center, announced that the Water 101 Class will be held at Adams State University on Tuesday and Thursday this semester. Contact Paul if you have questions about this class.

Cassandra McCuen announced that the next Alamosa River Front Project will be held the 20th from 6-8 pm at the Shooting Stars Cultural and Leadership Center in Alamosa.

Mattea Freel, with the Center and Rio Grande Conservation Districts, announced they are hosting a Soil and Water Connection Workshop Friday, August 23, 2024, and a SLV Farmer to Farmer Field Day on Saturday, August 24th.

Jim Ehrlich thanked Amber for her help with Colorado Agriculture in the Classroom.

Craig Cotten, Colorado Division of Water Resources, discussed the Rio Grande Compact Lawsuit. The Supreme court did not rule in favor of the 3 states and ruled that the consent agreement was not satisfactory. Court cases the Division is preparing for are the Subdistrict 1 new plan of water management and SWAG augmentation plan which will each be 5-week trials. The City of Alamosa will be a 3-week trial in 2026. The Well Commissioner Position is open through next Wednesday.

Laura Spann, Colorado Water Conservation Board, announced that the C9 summit will be October 1st and 2nd, 2024, in Crested Butte. She also noted that the CWCB Guide is in draft form on the Engage CWCB website. Other dates noted: Conditions Monitoring Committee will be on Aug. 27th at 9:30 am, Turf Replacement Grant Application opens from Aug. 31st until Oct. 31st, and the CWCB WSRF Deadline is October 1st. The CWCB Board meeting will be held at Ski Hi in Monte Vista in September.

Cassandra McCuen, Education Committee, announced that there will be a SLV Projects Tour on September 6th. The committee is also working on the communications plan for the Roundtable.

Adam Moore, Colorado State University Forest Service, gave an update on the 2-3-2 Partnership. Two Watersheds, Three Rivers, Two States Partnership goal is to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildfires, increase the number of fire adapted communities, improve water quality and watershed functions. The partnership includes stakeholder collaboration, best science available, weaving in traditional ecological knowledge, and leverages partner resources and capacity. The partnership is hosting an event to review the project on September 18th from 8:30 – 4:30 pm at the Rio Grande Wellness Center at the Rio Grande Hospital

Abby Burk and Jackie Corday, Co-Chairs of the Colorado Healthy Headwaters Working Group gave a Legislative Overview of HB 1379 and SB23-270. SB23-270 outlines the state should facilitate and encourage the commencement of projects that restore environmental health of natural stream systems while respecting water rights. HB 1379 outlines the new state stream and wetlands program. Engagement and rulemaking will begin September 4th. Compensatory mitigation workshops will be held for wetlands on September 13th and Streams on October 4th.

Becky Bolinger, PhD, Climate Change in Colorado presented on the Climate Report found at climatechange.colostate.edu. Statewide the report shows a statewide temperature increase of 2.3F between 1980-2022. In the 2001-2022 period, the state shows a 4% decrease in precipitation. Temperatures are showing a warming trend. Becky provided further details of their findings of climate change. She noted that they hope that this report helps guide future planning and decision making.

Dr. Becky Brice, Geographer at USGS, discussed Drought and Fire Mitigation using Tree-ring reconstructions bridge data. She noted that overall warming is expected in the future. She shared the work she's been doing in the Culebra Range within the Trinchera Ranch. This study has provided some great information to feed into management strategies.

Nikita Cooper presented on the San Luis Valley Canal Implementation Project: Phase II. The main element of the project is to install a 24' Weir to allow automation to work accurately. The project budget totals \$93,750 with a basin request of \$9,375 and statewide request of \$60,937.

Nathan Coombs presented the Confined Aquifer Recharge and Recovery Project. This project will be a 2–3-year study along the Conejos River, installing test wells, looking at sustainability and the legal ramifications of recharge decrees in the confined aquifer.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.