

Yampa/White/Green River Basin Roundtable Minutes Summary
 Wednesday, March 12, 2025
 Location: CNCC Craig Campus, Room 185
 2801 West 9th Street • Craig, CO 81625
 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
 Recorded by Kristin Skowronski

1	Call Meeting to Order
	A regular Yampa White Green Basin Roundtable (YWG BRT) meeting convened virtually and in person. The meeting was called to order by Vice Chairman Ken Brenner @ 6:01 PM
2	Introduction of Members and Audience
	A quorum was formed with voting members present at the call to order (at least 16 required)
	<u>VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:</u> Alden Vanden Brink, Andy Rossi, Bill Badaracca, Callie Scritchfield, Chris Collins, Doug Monger, Doug Overton, Frank Alfone, Jackie Brown, Julie Baxter, Ken Brenner, Miranda Kawcak, Patrick Ae'mon O'Toole, Rebecca Briesmoore, Rich Thompson, Sonja Macys, Stephen Hinkemeyer, Tim Sullivan, Travis Day
	<u>OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:</u> Sally Cariveau, Kristin Skowronski, Ryan Bailey, Liz Chandler, Robert Sakata, Ryan Messinger, Greg Petersen, Michelle Mahosky, Jayla Poppleton, Vanessa Trout, Jenny Frithsen, Alessandra Desiderio, Heather Sackett, Ashley Garrison, Mendi Figueroa, David Graf
3	Review and Approve Agenda
	Frank Alfone moved to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Tim Sullivan, and unanimously approved.
4	Review and Approve January 8, 2025 Minutes
	Patrick Amon O'Toole moved to approve the minutes from the January 8, 2025, meeting, seconded by Julie Batxter, and unanimously approved.
5	Public Comment for Items Not on Agenda
	Julie Baxter (City of Steamboat Springs) thanked the Roundtable for its letter of support for the Yampa River/Walton Creek Confluence Restoration Project. She reported that although the project was selected for B2E federal funding, the funds are currently frozen and encouraged members and their organizations to consider submitting letters to advocate for the release of funding. Brenner clarified that while the Roundtable cannot engage in political advocacy, individual members and the entities they represent are free to act independently.
6	Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) Update
	Budget and Report – Jeff Rodriguez provided a budget report and update on the Statewide Fund. He noted that the statewide WSRF account is expected to be fully allocated after the upcoming board meeting and that future projects will need to rely on basin accounts, which continue to receive the standard \$300,000 annual allocation if under the \$750,000 cap. He emphasized that CWCB staff are closely tracking state budget developments, but projections remain fluid. Rodriguez highlighted several new CWCB publications, including the Water Plan Progress Report, 10 Strategies to Protect Irrigated Agriculture, and the forthcoming State of the Science Turf Replacement Guide. He encouraged participation in the upcoming Water and Climate Workshops scheduled for April 3 (Pueblo) and April 23 (Clifton), which will include interactive planning sessions with state agency partners.
7	CWCB Board Member Report/Introduction
	Jackie Brown introduced Mike Camblin as the newly appointed Director of the CWCB, which was confirmed by the Senate the previous week. She encouraged members to send photos and project updates for inclusion in his upcoming Director's Report. Brown expressed support for the agency's internal promotions, noting both Camblin and Section Chief Kat Weismiller rose from within the organization. She added that in-stream flow recommendations for Vermillion Creek and Milk Creek will be reviewed at the next CWCB board meeting. Brown also shared that Becky Mitchell has taken over as Chair of the Interbasin Compact Committee (IBCC).
8	Action Items

	Grant Committee
8a	Grant Committee Update
8b	Alfone reported that the Roundtable began 2025 with \$710,000 in its local WSRF account and approved a target spend of \$550,000 for the year. Including the current YRFRP request, approximately \$240,000 has been allocated to date. No applications were submitted during the second cycle, but 3–4 are expected in the fourth. The basin is on track to meet its spending target and remain eligible for the full \$300,000 allocation in 2026.
	Yampa River Forest Restoration Project – Ryan Messinger YVSC
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ryan Messinger presented a grant proposal for the Yampa River Forest Restoration Project, which aims to plant 1,000 native trees along 2,000 feet of riparian habitat across seven sites. The total project cost is \$97,060, with a request of \$48,933 from YWG BRT WSRF funds. Bill Badaracca moved to recommend approval of the grant request for the \$48,933 of YWG BRT WSRF funds, seconded by Rossi. Alfone, Baxter, and Sullivan recused themselves from the vote due to organizational affiliations. Alden Vanden Brink voted against the motion, citing concern about the project’s cost. All other voting members were in favor. The motion carried.
9	Presentations
9a	White River Return Flow Study – Dr. Ryan Bailey, CSU
	Dr. Ryan Bailey (Colorado State University) presented findings from a groundwater return flow study in the Meeker area of the White River, funded by CWCB, the Colorado River District, and the YWG Roundtable. Using field data, monitoring wells, and a groundwater model, the study found that up to 80% of diverted water returns to the river , with groundwater contributing roughly a third of downstream flows . Bailey emphasized that while improved on-farm efficiency reduces diversions, it may also reduce late-season return flows critical to river health. The project was developed through the White River Integrated Water Initiative. Liz Chandler was recognized for her significant role in field data collection and project coordination.
9b	Routt County Water Quality Project – Greg Peterson, CAWA
	Greg Peterson (Colorado Ag Water Alliance) shared results from an edge-of-field study on irrigated hayfields near Yampa. The project, in partnership with CSU and CDPHE, found that fields reduced phosphorus, selenium, and suspended solids in runoff, acting as effective filter strips. Nitrogen and salinity impacts were minimal. Most nitrogen loss was traced to fertilizer, not livestock. The study highlighted practical strategies like irrigation timing and buffer zones, and emphasized the value of voluntary, producer-led research.
10	Division of Water Resources Report
	Erin Light announced that the White River Basin has been formally designated as over-appropriated as of early March 2025. A public meeting was held on March 4 in Meeker, with no formal objections raised. Grace periods are in effect: new well permit applications will be processed under previous rules until April 30, and modifications to existing wells are allowed until December 31, 2025, with proof of use as of May 1, 2025. Light has met with the Rio Blanco Water Conservancy District and plans to meet with Yellow Jacket in April to answer questions. Her office is also offering in-person well permitting consultations in Meeker, with strong community participation prompting plans for additional sessions.
11	Colorado River District Update
	Rebecca Briesmoore reported that the River District’s next board meeting will be held April 15–16, with updates planned on Regulation 87 and the state’s developing dredge and fill permitting program. Briesmoore also shared that the District’s \$40 million federal grant for the Shoshone Water Rights Preservation Project was approved but is currently paused due to a federal funding freeze. With this grant, the project has secured \$96 million of the \$99 million goal. The District plans to offer the water right for in-stream flow use to CWCB in May. Upcoming State of the River events will take place March 25 (Upper Yampa) in Steamboat, March 26 (Lower Yampa) in Craig, with another in Rangeley the following week.
12	Roundtable Projects and Committees
12a	Big River Committee/IBCC
	Meyers and Brenner shared updates from recent IBCC and Big River Committee meetings.

12b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brenner noted that Becky Mitchell is now serving as Chair of the IBCC, bringing new leadership to statewide water discussions. Topics included conservation programs, demand management, and interstate obligations on the Colorado River system. • The BRC is particularly focused on long-term drought planning and Colorado’s position in relation to Lower Basin states. Meyers emphasized the importance of local engagement and encouraged Roundtable members to stay informed about these broader negotiations and strategies that could affect West Slope water users.
	<p>PEPO</p> <p>Sally Cariveau shared that the 2025 PEPO grant was approved for \$25,000 to support administration, outreach, and recording services. She encouraged participation in the upcoming Story Map project, which will run from April through December. A subcommittee for the project has been formed and includes Kristin Jespersen, Chris Collins, Chuck Whiteman, Alden Vanden Brink, and Ken Vertrees. An RFP for the Phase 2 contractor was issued in February, with selection expected by April 1. Cariveau also mentioned efforts to highlight local water projects through newspaper articles and field trips. Patrick Stanko added that he Cariveau and are preparing the 2025 PEPO budget request for the April Grants Committee meeting</p>
13	<p>Announcements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Upper Yampa State of the River (CRWCD) March 25, 2025 b) Lower Yampa State of the River (CRWCD) March 26, 2025 c) White River State of the River (CRWCD) April 2, 2025 d) Yampa Basin Redezvous May 28-29, 2025 CMC SBS e) Yampa River Fest – State of the Yampa, May 29, FOTY f) Yampa River Festival May 29, June 1, 2025 FOTY
14	<p>Next YWG BRT Meeting May 14, 2025 @ 6:00 PM CNCC Craig, CO</p>
15	<p>Adjourn Meeting</p> <p>Meeting adjourned at 8:56 PM.</p>