

Interbasin Compact Committee Basin Roundtables
Rio Grande Basin Roundtable
MEETING MINUTES
July 8th, 2025
Rio Grande Water Conservation District
Alamosa, Colorado

The meeting was called to order 2:08 p.m.

Amber Pacheco called the meeting to order.

Introductions were made and quorum was met for Roundtable Members.

Cindy Medina made a motion to approve the agenda. Karla Shriver seconded. All approved and the motion passed.

Nikita Cooper moved to approve the minutes from the June 10th, 2025, meeting. The motion was seconded by Mike Gibson. All approved and motion passed.

Public Comment:

Chayan Lahiri, Adams State University: Adams State University will be offering a GIS certificate in the fall. The certificate will require 16 credits hours of classes. The first class will be an introductory class to GIS. He highly encouraged members to attend the class.

Erin Minks reported the Alamosa County Drought Comprehensive Plan is available for review and public comment.

Richard Hubler with Alamosa County announced the Planning Commission will be meeting on the Comprehensive Plan and then adoption is the following week.

Patrick O'Neill reported on the Colorado River Basin System Conservation Extension Act.

Amber Pacheco announced upcoming tours and events.

- Mosca-Hooper Conservation District hosting a tour on July 19th from 12 to 4:30. They are meeting in Monte Vista and lunch is provided. Looking at innovative water conservation practices happening here in the Valley. You do need to RSVP.
- Regenerative Ag Summit and Range School for Southern Colorado and Northern New Mexico producers being held Thursday and Friday in Conejos County.
- Roundtable is hosting the Subdistrict 4 Restoration Tour on July 24. Lunch will be provided.

Colorado Attorney General Phil Weiser:

Attorney General Weiser joined the Roundtable to express his appreciation for all of its work and to provide several updates on water-related matters:

- **Rio Grande Litigation:** A potential settlement framework is close, with a deadline at the end of August. A Special Master meeting is expected in September.
- **Adaptive Water Management:** The Colorado Water Conservation Board is developing guidelines to support agricultural water protection.
- **Renewable Water Resources (RWR):** He strongly opposes the RWR proposal and is committed to fighting it.
- **AmeriCorps Funding:** Expressed concern over withheld federal AmeriCorps funds and asked for reports if participants are affected.
- **Shoshone Water Right:** Ongoing proceedings continue with upcoming Colorado Water Conservation Board and Water Court sessions.
- **Legal Staffing:** In response to rising water-related legal issues, his office has increased its team of water attorneys.
- **Other Topics Discussed:**
 - Brief discussion on the Rye Resurgence Project.
 - Federal cutbacks and the potential end of the Roadless Rule—he reassured that Colorado’s separate system would remain unaffected.
 - Sale of public lands.

Colorado Division of Water Resources Update:

Division Engineer Craig Cotten reported stream flows are currently 60–70% of average. The runoff season was better than expected and several Conejos ditches received water under priority. There has been a sharp decline in the past few weeks, with many rivers now flowing at less than half of average. Curtailments are currently at 8% on the Rio Grande and 4% on the Conejos. A better-than-average monsoon season is anticipated.

Craig also provided an update on the Rio Grande Compact case, noting that a settlement framework is nearly finalized and is expected to receive sign-off by the Special Master this fall. Upcoming Division 3 water court trials include: Subdistrict No. 1 Plan of Water Management No. 4, SWAG augmentation plan, the City of Alamosa, the newly filed Forbes Park Landowners Association, and the Tim Lovato augmentation case. Craig noted that his office is actively preparing for all these proceedings.

Cindy Medina raised the issue of a rock obstruction at Terrace Reservoir and asked about Army Corps of Engineers involvement. Craig confirmed that he had reached out to the Corps but he will follow up again. Additional discussion included increased standing water in wetlands and favorable conditions for the Empire Canal due to its priority status. An upcoming outreach meeting on ag water protection water rights is scheduled for July 28 at 6:00 PM in Alamosa with a focus on new water leasing opportunities now available across multiple divisions.

CWCB update:

Jeff Rodriguez shared more information regarding the ag water protection rights. Jeff also shared CWCB is partnering with the Colorado Water Center to create a water education and workforce hub. This resource hub will be a one stop place to get info on water education and water resources. There is a survey available now to identify current resources and where the gaps are. Deadline for the survey is July 18th.

The Water Plan Grant cycle deadline was July 1st and they had a significant demand. They are starting the review process which will take a couple months and will make recommendations to the board in September. There were 81 applications requesting \$39 million but there is only \$37 million available.

The Technical Assistance for Federal Cost-Sharing Program is live again and there is \$500,000 available. CWCB is accepting applications on a rolling basis.

Reminder the C-9 Summit date is Oct 28-29, 2025, in Lakewood. CWCB can reimburse up to 10 roundtable members for expenses to attend the summit. CWCB staff is finalizing the agenda.

The Fluvial Hazard Mapping webinar series is held on the second Tuesday of the month from 10-11 a.m.

The Water Condition Monitoring Committee meeting is July 22nd.

Nathan Coombs provided a background on the Shoshone water right and the status of the purchase by the Colorado River Water Conservation District. A hearing in front of the CWCB will be held during the September Board Meeting. Nathan also invited members to attend the July 16 and 17th meeting happening in Salida at the Steam Plant.

Letter of support for the City of Alamosa's Comprehensive Plan Update - Rachel James

Achel James was present to provide an update on the City of Alamosa. The City is working on updates to their Comprehensive Plan and want to include a water efficiency plan in it. They filed for a Water Plan Grant in the amount of \$100,000 for the July 1 deadline.

Cassandra McCuen made a motion to approve a letter of support for the Water Plan Grant application. The motion was seconded by Peter Clark. All approved and the motion passed. Michael Carson abstained from voting.

Education Update:

Cassandra McCuen provided an update from the Education Committee. She reminded everyone to rsvp if they are planning to attend the tour on July 24th. The summer Water Congress Conference is open for registration. Dates are Aug 19th through 21st in Steamboat. The theme is Meeting Demands and Managing Responsibilities. The next Roundtable tour will be on Sept 10-11 to the Arkansas Basin. Cassandra also mentioned work is being done to update the 101 factsheets. Amber Pacheco added the tour will include a visit to a project with the Arkansas River Watershed Collaborative, Pueblo Dam, and the Bessemer Ditch. There will also be an opportunity to network with the Arkansas Basin Roundtable to learn how we can work together as our basins are similar.

Executive Committee Update:

Amber Pacheco gave an update from the Executive Committee meeting. The Committee talked about topics to address with AG Weiser. Discussion was also held regarding the WSRF account for the Rio Grande Basin and ideas on how to manage the funds since there will be no state match for the year. One idea was to form a grant subcommittee to help applicants with grants, to

review the grants for completeness, and to do a preliminary scoring that would then be sent to the entire Roundtable Membership for a final consideration. The subcommittee could also assist in finding other funding opportunities that may be available for projects that may not be able to get WSRF funding. Timing of final approvals was also discussed.

In August, the Committee for a Healthy Rio Grande has asked to come to the Roundtable and provide a response to the request they provide us more details on what they want to see worked on. A meeting has been scheduled on August 5th in Creede with the Committee for a Healthy Rio Grande and other members of the community to provide education on water administration and updates on projects that are currently happening in the basin on the Rio Grande.

Cassandra McCuen asked that anyone interested in being part of a grant subcommittee let amber know. You do not need to be a Roundtable Member to participate in the subcommittee meetings.

American Rivers Update

Emily Wolf gave an update on BLM grants now available. These grants can be found on the Roundtable's website. National Forest Foundation Collaborative Capacity Program for Forest and Communities also has a funding opportunity available. One is for a smaller grant and one for a larger grant.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.