

North Platte Basin Roundtable

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 17th, 2025

7:00 p.m. - 9:10 p.m.

Basement of SCD Building, 312 5th Street, Walden

7:00 - 7:05 pm Call to order, Introductions & Agenda Review

Attendance in Person: Kari VanValkenburg, John Hughes (Refuge Manager), Brian Anderson, Ty Wattenberg, Bryce Russell, Randy Miller, Mike Allnutt, Barbara Vasquez, Rick Wyatt, Wade Allnutt, Pat VanValkenburg, Jim Dustin, Jimmer Baller, Cade Waldren, Aleigh Aurin

Attendance Online: Erin Light, Jackie Carano, Jeff Rodriguez, Amy Hohnholz, Helen Silver

7:05 - 7:10 pm Approve Minutes of September 25th, 2024 Meeting

Rick asked questions from the last minutes. What is the high cost of the wetlands survey costs for and why is it so high? This question is for the Dredge and Fill parties. They will be back in September to present again.

Rick asked Barbara about the ten strategic plans. She has not seen them yet. Here is the link to the report. https://engagewcwb.org/10strategies_to_protect_ag?tool=ganda

Vote on Approval of Minutes: Ty made a motion to approve and bryce seconded - Everyone voted I's with Jim and Rick abstaining from the vote.

7:10 - 7:40 pm Election and Membership

Recorder - All voted yes to keep Aleigh as the recorder.

Chair - Pat made a motion for Kari to remain as the Chair. Rick seconded the motion. All voted for Kari to remain as the Chair.

IBCC rep - Kari agreed to remain as the IBCC rep. Everyone voted yes to keep her as the rep.

Vice Chair - Ty made the motion for Bryce Russell to be Vice Chair and Jimmer seconded it. All I's passed to have Bryce as the Vice Chair.

Members and Roles - Ty will be moving to the commissioner roll, so we will need a ag rep. Carl Trick is no longer a member of the NPBRT. Jimmer is the Michigan River Water Conservancy representative. Pat will be the Jackson County Water Conservancy representative. John as non-voting member for the Refuge. We will need to get more ag representatives. There

are 10 at large reps; one environmental, one industrial, one local/domestic, one agricultural, one recreational, and five other at large members. Five of the ten at large have to be water rights holders. There are also conservancy/conservation district reps; one from Jackson County and technically a Larimer County rep. There should be a legislative appointee, as well as, municipal reps from Jackson and Larimer Counties.

7:30 - 8:00 (Addition to Agenda) - Helen Silver Colorado Open Soil Moisture Monitoring Network

Co director of In-Riches - She is asking for a letter of support. The project focuses on soil moisture monitoring. Colorado has very few soil moisture monitoring sites. CoCoRaHS is the Colorado Collaborative Rain, Hail, and Snow Network. Along with others, they have a few sites throughout the state. More information is present in the attached PowerPoint. The goal is to install 50 or more sensors, creating a 50% increase in capacity. They want to create an “AI enabled open knowledge platform with access to near time data to support policy makers, ag communities and producers, and others”. There are already 25 new stations to be installed now and hopefully 25 more before fall. There is a plan to create expansion through the Colorado Water Plan Grant. Following the presentation there were questions. Rick asked “what are social science methods”? They are interviews and surveys to understand what the impact is, how they are using the knowledge platform, and what will make them use it more. There will be interviews and surveys for the stakeholder engagement process. Kari asked “compared to the Upper Missouri Basin dashboard, how it is helping them and are they using it”? They are using it to help them figure where they can expect their moisture levels to be, as well as, grass forecasting. Pat asked if the State Land Board leases will get notice of the machines being on there, if on state property. Yes, she believes it will be with their consent. Another question was asked and the answer was that we don’t have one for soil moisture monitoring yet. We can take two years of data and project data based on soil type and land use, not perfectly but get an estimate. Barbara asked where the new sites are. Helen stated they will be distributed evenly throughout the state, but this round will have 10 in the eastern plains and 5 in Moffat County. These two grants are an initial investment into the growing project. As it continues they will work to fill gaps. It was then asked what drew them to Moffat County. There are known gaps in that area and relationships with landowners in the area. Pat asked if these sites are operated by

power or solar. They are solar, with most being augmented as well. Jim asked questions about how this originated and what need is being filled. This addresses natural resource management issues with soil moisture and relates with wildfires as well. There are questions in Colorado about normal snow pack years and less than expected stream flow. This project can give more data into drought monitoring. Cade asked "How are you monitoring it? Weighing the soil"? There will be normal soil core samples and analysis. The samples would stay on file at CSU. It was asked for general knowledge of the amount of the grant she is seeking in total. They are asking for around \$500,000. Kari asked what the range of the total amount from all partners will be. CWCB requires 25% match and for them it would be around \$640,000 match funds. Bryce asked Barbara what fund it would come out of. This would be a Water Plan Grant. The Water Supply Grant is separate and the Water Plan Grant is funded from sporting betting. Barbara commented that this has value for statewide support.

We voted on a letter of support - Everyone voted in support of the letter of support.

7:45 - 7:50 pm (Amended time of start 8:00 pm) Project Updates - Barenberg Reservoir and Aqua Fria

Kari VanValkenburg

Barenberg Reservoir - They did not have the water right at time of application. We approved it. It was approved by CWCB and broken into two parts, as recommended. There has been no opposition to the water right application and they have an engineer. They have had a site visit with both the engineer and wetlands consultants. At this time they completed soil tests at well. They are still waiting for the consultation report from DWR on the application for the water right.

Aqua Fria - There has been another setback in the project. Sessions and Sons had to back out due to not being in a position to complete the masonry work. They are continuing to look for suggestions on masonry work.

Chapman Ditch - The construction is supposed to begin on Sept. 1st.

7:50 - 8:05 pm Cloud Seeding Update and Conservancy District Report

Jimmer Baller

As of now we have three generators operating; two that the conservancy district is operating and one the state is operating for the county. Owl Mountain, Green Ridge, and Eric Brinkers place by Spicer Peak. Operated them as much as they could but there were not many

storm opportunities. Jimmer has asked Frank if they could get us information on which and when they were getting turned on. Most of the time it was all three. The target area is Illinois Pass to Cameron Pass. They are visiting with the state about doing the same program this year. Also, there is discussion about next year adding a fourth generator. This is maybe adding one a little more to the south. They will have to look at the target area and how far they can go. From what he can see from SnoTel they were about 100% but waiting on totals. He still believes we are getting our 5-10% return on snowpack. They may want to come try and do some soil samples this fall up here. There was radiometer training a few weeks prior. We should have it installed in September. This means it should be ready for next winter.

8:05 - 8:20 pm (Began around 8:15) Partnership Discussions for Headwaters of Colorado Initiative and Wildfire Ready Action Plan

Kari Van Valkenburg

We have been presented an opportunity. She watched a presentation on Wildfire Ready Action Plans. It is state funding and state programming that looks at wildfire risks in basins. It helps areas do an assessment of risk and susceptibility. Also looking at mitigating for structures. There has been one here in Jackson County. It was submitted by Ft. Collins because water flows that direction. This includes thinning and clearing around infrastructure. She has been looking into some of it and speaking with another IBCC rep (who is chair of Headwaters of Colorado Initiative). It focuses on fuel reduction. Ken (the other IBCC rep) suggested since they are already on the other side of the mountains on the west side of the county, it might be worth exploring the opportunity of expanding their work into the west side of our basin. They have a meeting tomorrow in Saratoga and Kari would like to know the NPBRT members thoughts on attending and learning more about it. Rick asked if it is fuel reduction or is it just them trying to fix beetle kill? Kari would ask and find out more information if attending. Barbara stated that there is state money as well.

Do we have interest and want Kari to go? Pat said any information we can gain would be great. It was agreed for Kari to attend.

8:20 - 8:40 pm Reviewing/Clearing up Project List - Moved to next meeting

This discussion was addressed later in the agenda then scheduled. The list of the projects can be sent out to the NPBRT members to be reviewed for the Sept. meeting.

Some may have been completed or others we have not heard anything from FS. This is from the original water plan. Discussion followed. After discussion, the only possible open project known is by CPW for Manville State Wildlife Area - Roaring Fork. We will dispense with the FS projects and they can bring them back to us if they need. The projects viewed and

discussed had a projected start date before today. They can also get moved to a not pursuing list. These can always be brought back into the main list. A few people will reach out on some of the ones we believe are in process or have been completed and we will update at the next meeting.

8:40 - 8:50 pm CWCB Update

Barbara - There were two proposals funded that went in from us. The first day was a long day. Major topic was the Shoshone water right. The intention is to work with CWCB and create instream flow. There was a lot of public comment that was given, mostly positive of this approach. There were 3-4 that were arguing about calculations of historical use. It will likely go to the courts, but they are having a meeting to see if they can resolve it internally.

Jeff - They CWCB has received funding to start a new water plan cycle. The tech update will likely be with the basin implementation plan. This will ideally give more time for the tech update and get more basin roundtable feedback. More information is to come. They hope to have a contractor by the end of the year. He emphasized that now is a great time to review the previous plan.

The use of ag water protection water rights was expanded to state wide coverage. There is more information on the DNR page. August 4th in Steamboat is our division 4 meeting. The C9 will be October 28th and 29th in Lakewood. There is some support for funding to attend.

<https://engagecwcb.org/basin-infographics> CWCB is hosting a webinar series on the Fluvial Hazard Mapping program. They are the second Tuesday of the month from 10-11.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1Yv1-dst2r8M2mMfatwfsCX3zHmAF13TLP0af1HvrGhA/viewform?pli=1&pli=1&edit_requested=true

Stakeholder meeting for the Dredge and Fill is tomorrow. Here is more information on the project. <https://cdphe.colorado.gov/dredge-and-fill-engagement>

Ty asked what is the budget for the Water Plan update. The request was for around 4 million for the entire analysis, update, and tech analysis. It will still happen in phases but this way have the funding has already secured. Ty also asked if they have they given thought to basins opting out of the water plan update and is it worth spending the money if they are not going to change much for some basins. Jeff said that they have not looked at this but he will investigate. They will still have all the money asked though.

A Dredge and Fill in person is requested for the next meeting.

DWR Admin Page Link <https://dwr.colorado.gov/services/water-administration>

8:50 - 9:00 pm IBCC and PEPO updates

Kari - There is a meeting coming up. They are still just trying to figure out what they are doing. They had a sub committee meeting to look at ideas from the C9 Summit and other documents. They are working on how they can help with the decrease in water throughout the state.

PEPO Update - We were hoping to hear from Greg Peterson, who was going to give a presentation on an education presentation option. We will discuss next meeting.

Missy Dressen is the new district ranger for FS.

Rick Wyatt wanted to speak on Barbara and her position as the CWCB representative. Rick felt Barbara did a poor job representing Jackson County. There was discussion that followed. It was reiterated by Barbara that the Dredge and Fill came from CDPHE and was from the state level, not CWCB. They will be back in September to speak again. Jeff said that it is out of what Director Vasquez does and outside the scope of the CWCB board.

9:00 - 9:05 pm Old Business

There was no old business.

9:05 - 9:10 pm New Business

Randy Miller was contacted by Ray Ranch on the Mar Ditch. The head gate and diversion structures need to be replaced. This will be an application for a new project. Information was given to Randy on where to begin and resources to help.

Jim Dustin - Jim wanted to let the board know that the town is trying to figure out what to do with its shares in the Walden Reservoir. They are looking into alternative options, leases, or trades for other water rights.

Adjourn - Randy made a motion to adjourn and Barbara seconded. It was adjourned at 9:12 pm.