

Interbasin Compact Committee
Southwest Basins Roundtable Meeting-DRAFT
Hybrid Meeting from
Dolores Water Conservancy District Cortez, CO
July 24, 2025

Members Present:

Brandon Johnson	At-Large-Agriculture	Larry Dozier	At-Large
April Montgomery*	San Miguel County	John Kleckner	Hinsdale County
Ken Curtis	At-Large	Ed Tolen	At-Large Domestic Water
Danny Margoles	At-Large	Steve Wolff	Southwestern Water Conservation
Steve Harris	Legislative Appointment	Kenny Heldman*	Montrose Muni
John Ey	Florida WCD	Peter Butler	La Plata County
Justin Ramsey	Archuleta Muni	Bruce Whitehead*	Animas La Plata WCD
Raquel Flinkner*	CO River Water Conservati	Chris Chambers	At Large -Environmental
Ryan Gray	Dolores WCD	Adrian Bergere	At-Large
Candace Jones	San Juan WCD	Peter Nylander*	Southern Ute Indian Tribe
Ken Beegles	At-Large-Industrial	Letisha Yazzie	Ute Mtn. Ute Indian Tribe

Public:

Jeff Rodriguez* (CWCB), Laura Spann (CWCB), Wendy Weygandt (Recorder), Elaine Chick (PEPO), Mo Bardier (SWCD), George Gavrieldes* (S. Ute), Skylar Zilliox* (Browns & Caldwell), Dennis Davis* (SDCWA), Robert Sakata* (CDA Ag Water Policy Advisor), Becky Mitchell* (CO River Commissioner), Russ Anderson* (Michael Baker Engineering), Hannah Thill (RGWCEI), Duncan Rose (TU-Snow Spur Restoration), Evan Tyler (City of Durango)

*Indicates Zoom Participant

1. Introductions & Review Agenda

- Roundtable Chair Ed Tolen called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

2. Public Comments.

No public comment.

3. Administrative Reports

- Summary of newly elected Officers

Chairman	Peter Butler
First Viced Chair	Brandon Johnson
Second Vice Chair	Adrian Bergere
IBCC Representative	Ken Curtis

Steve Wolff made a motion to approve Peter Butler as Chairman. Adrian Bergere seconded the motion; all in favor

Ed Tolen made a motion to approve Brandon Johnson as First Vice Chair Brandon Johnson, second by Candace Jones; all in favor

Ed Tolen made a motion to approve Adrian Bergere as Second Vice Chair; seconded by Brandon Johnson; all in favor

IBCC representative Ken Curtis expressed interest in retaining his position; Ed Tolen moved to approve Ken Curtis as the IBCC representative; seconded by Steve Wolff; all in favor

- Review and approve minutes from the April 24, 2025 meeting
 - Ken Curtis approved the April 24, 2025 minutes; seconded by Ed Tolen; all in favor.
- Officer Reports
 - No officer reports
- WSRF Basin Roundtable Fund Balance: \$515,938

4. PEPO Liaison Report-Elaine Chick

- April 13-15-Elaine reminded everyone she had a WIP and PEPO booth at the Durango River Festival.
- May 2-Elaine attended the Statewide PEPO Liaison Meeting in Silverthorn. It was a good meeting for all the liaisons to discuss outreach on water plans and how best to integrate in each basin and create a baseline for water messaging. Five crucial topics: supply, agriculture, conservation, use, and collective problem solving were identified and discussed. Other discussion items included geographical and cultural needs; and the common question throughout the state: what the purpose of the roundtables have other than approving grant funding. Challenges include lack of understanding from the public and Roundtables. Water Education through the Water Information Program (WIP) proved to be a unique asset in the southwest region. PEPO can be a better resource if we know our target audience. PEPO and IBCC representatives can educate roundtable members, crafting clear messaging, creating a tool kit, and increasing involvement with Roundtable members. The Southwest PEPO grant was submitted for next year.
- June 3-4-Water Education Colorado Southwest Basin Tour took place in the southwest region and Towaoc. It provided a networking opportunity to talk with state representatives.
- June 21-25-A Nucla video shoot highlighted a history of the CCC Ditch Company. It highlighted a process that took nine years for a company to dig seventeen miles of ditch by hand. Individuals associated with a fifth generation farm and ranch (125 years) were interviewed. This ranch has proven to be the lifeblood of Nucla since 1894. Additionally, a young lady was featured for her efforts growing herbs and medicine for the community. Elaine will be reviewing four hours of film and will edit it down to a nine-minute presentation.
- July 1-August 1 Forest to Faucets Teachers K-12 Training Workshop in Dolores. It will take place primarily at Fozzie's Farm. Ken Curtis will offer related tours to DWCD and nearby areas. This is free to participants. Participants will receive 16 contact hours and a certificate, with the option to earn 1 credit of continuing education credit. Partners include Mountain Studies Institute, San Juan Mountains Association, Water Information Program, and the Dolores River Boating Advocates. WIP supplies all the kits and transportation. There are 14 teachers signed up.
- August 6 Online Water Law in a Nutshell class with Aaron Clay. This is a crash course on water law. Go to <https://www.waterinfo.org> or email elaine@waterinfo.org for more information.
- Elaine continues to attend other basin meetings to see what they are doing as far as outreach.

5. CWCB Update-Jeff Rodriguez

- There is a new effort with Partnership Colorado State University Water Center to build a water education and workforce hub that was tied to the Colorado water plan. It came out of the 2024 water plan to create a one-stop-shop for water professionals, educators, students, and community members. The first step for this action plan is to gather resources. Stakeholders are encouraged to participate in a short survey that should only take 10 minutes to complete. Please share the link with others. Water Education and Workforce Hub: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/waterhub>
- Some funding updates: The technical assistance and local capacity funding for the Federal cost share program is back. The Projects Bill and the continuation of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding has provided \$500,000. Applications are being taken on a rolling basis. Grantees may have to wait until Federal funding is released before accessing funds.
- The Project Bill Grant is open until the first of August. The CWCB board authorized these monies for statewide investments for supply needs that don't fit into other funding opportunities. Statewide funding amounts usually vary between \$1-10 million. This year approximately \$12-14 million was allotted. The August 1 deadline is the same every year-does not change. Project Bill Grants: <https://cwcb.colorado.gov/funding/projects-bill-grants>
- Water Plan Grant funding deadline was July 1. The total ask from 81 applicants was \$39 million. The two grant cycles this fiscal year had \$36 million available. This will be a very competitive grant process. The review process has begun.

- Water Conditions Monitoring Webinar:
<https://cwcb.colorado.gov/Water-Conditions-Monitoring-Committee>
- C-9 Conference is scheduled October 28-29 in Lakewood, CO. There is some funding for lodging and mileage for roundtable members that want to attend. The agenda and registration will be coming soon. C-9 Summit: <https://engagecwcb.org>
- The fluvial hazard mapping team webinar series will take place the second Tuesday of every month. There will be lots of technical assistance for those projects. Fluvial Futures Webinars:
https://www.casfm.org/2025/06/05/fluvial-futures-webinar-series_20250522/
- The Division of Water Resources (DWR) hosts Ag Water Protection Stakeholder meetings. The Division 7 meeting is today at 5:30 pm; additional meetings are scheduled July 28, and August 20. More information can be found on the virtual CWCB website calendar and DWR Website
- September 16-18 CWCB Board Meeting for the SW Basin is in Durango. Some of the topics will include annual finance committee discussion and ag water protection.

5a. Mo Rock talked about the infrastructure Partnership Meeting—"Pulling people together"

- There were over 20 stakeholders that attended the meeting earlier today
- Discussion
 - highlighted local resources and funding
 - Projects that are happening in the area
 - BIP updates
- Carrie Padgett is a community navigator working on outreach meetings. She is here to assist everyone in the SW region that needs help with grant writing assistance or getting organized in finding funding and existing resources. She is happy to attend membership meetings.
- Joshua Brooks, the new financial and grants coordinator for SWCD was introduced.

6. IBCC Update-Ken Curtis

- Agenda highlights from Grand Junction meeting June 25. Ken Curtis and Adrian Bergere attended.
 - Becky Mitchell, chair of the IBCC is making it more fun.
 - Creating joint meetings with all the regions rather than just the West Slope brings more continuity.
 - Colorado River and Platt River Updates
 - The Platt River is gaining concern. Amy Ostdiek, State of Colorado and State Engineer Jason gave presentations on this canal that runs from Nebraska into NE Colorado. Nebraska filed suit with the Supreme Court. Ken is not sure why Nebraska is concerned, but the impact will likely affect the Colorado River plan on the Platt River.
 - The Yampa White Green focused on PEPO education from youth to adult.
 - The Rio Grande reviewed some of their education on topics that include soil moisture, forest health. They have seen the most extreme variable weather conditions along with the Southwest Region.
 - C-9 Low Regrets subcommittee work is going through IBCC. The C-9 Summit will likely bring their efforts all together.
 - The state deficit will not affect water funding.
 - Senator Dillon Roberts asked individuals to highlight basin projects and communicate progress with that state legislature so that they can learn what roundtables are doing and be informed with what is happening around the state.
- No & Low Regrets (NLR) Subcommittee Report (55.32)
 - Reviewed 2013 NLR Document
 - Compared to C9 Summit Drought Resilience Action Plan (DRAP) Topics
 - Identified progress to date on NLR
 - Reviewed similarities and differences
 - Attended four meetings in four months

- The results of the 2010, 2015, 2023 Colorado water plan review
 - Had similar philosophies
 - Similar priorities
 - Different work product goals
 - There is a need to update NLR to be more relevant to today's discourse
- 2013 No & Low Regrets Action
 - Minimize Statewide Agriculture Acres Transferred (per Basin Goals) and Implement Agricultural Sharing Projects
 - Plan and Preserve Options for Existing and New Supply
 - Establish Low/Medium Conservation Strategies
 - Implement Nonconsumptive Projects and Methods
 - Have a High Success Rate for IPPs
 - Implement and Assess Storage and Other Infrastructure
 - Implement Reuse Strategies
- 2024 C9 Drought Resistance Action Plan (DRAP) Key Themes
 - Nature Based Solutions & Natural Infrastructure
 - Water Efficiency and Storage
 - Collaboration and Education
 - Fire Management and Post Wildfire Recovery
 - Climate Change Adaptation
 - Protecting Colorado Agriculture
 - Urban and Land Use Planning
 - Cross Sector Innovation
- Summary Points:
 - The goal is to create 10 strategies, create a report, put it in the hands of policy makers, and create an online database that highlights those projects.
 - Supporting local implementation for successful IPP's
 - IBCC accepted this as a work plan and plans to create a calendar to take to the C-9 on October 29.
 - Action Item: to create a multi-year work plan 2013-2028 draft plan.
 - The water plan is never ending and is the precursor to technical updates.
 - IBCC does not lobby, but IBCC can interact with legislatures.
 - The likely result will be to create a new document that has its roots in the 2013 document.
 - Water challenges in Colorado evolve and do not go away—as a result new strategies and action plans are added.
- Notes:
 - Bruce Whitehead suggested not to change the language in the crosswalk in the Water Plan.
 - Climate Change is a term that was not used in 2013.

7. Colorado River Issues- Commissioner Becky Mitchell

- Post 2026 Negotiations
 - Upper Basin States proposal crosswalk
 - Lake Powell and Lake Mead supplies are driven by water conditions.
 - The Colorado River cannot control Lake Powell levels
 - Lake Powell should not be driven by demands downstream. Release will be based upon a percentage. Conditions that may contribute to the release guidelines:
 - What is the range of years for natural flows 1-10 years. The sweet spot is around 2-5 years.

- Upper Basin and Lower Basins are bound by the Grand Canyon which will need minimum and maximum flows.
- What is the percentage or volume based on natural flow? This percentage continues to be problematic. Vastly different views. Becky states that she cannot agree to something that puts our water users at risk.

By taking the supply driven approach, legal arguments have the opportunity to be set aside and the Lower Basin can benefit by what existing hydrology exists.

This project

- Is not a delivery obligation.
- The Upper Basin cannot promise what it cannot do.
- Is not a consideration of the whole system since the Lower Basin tributaries (3 mil AF in tributaries) are not included in the 2015 numbers.

Notes: Both the Upper Basin and Lower Basin want to avoid litigation. The Upper Basin is not willing to conserve for the Lower Basin to continue to provide the flows that they are accustomed to receiving. The deadpool zones at Lake Powell and Lake Mead need definitive protection; and should not be simply a goal.

The deadline to avoid litigation is early November. Scott Cameron is the acting assistant secretary for water and science - leading the initiative to see if it is a “go” or “no go” for the basins to move together. Conserved consumptive use should not be automatic delivery to Lower Basin.

If there is no deal; what are the next steps?

The Drought Response Operation Agreement (DROA) Work Group has been initiated. Colorado has lost fifty million AF of storage since the 2007 guidelines were created. It is important that newly determined actions are successful and that we do not go in and fail in the first five years. It looks like DROA releases are imminent next year. In the past DROA releases were mismanaged. Historically, no operational changes in the Lower Basin took place during DROA releases. Elevations in Lake Powell were not protected. The releases need to correspond with Lower Basin changes.

Bruce Whitehead commented on the percentage of hydrology that is on the table; that percentage is more critical now given that the tributaries’ inflow in the Lower Basin are not on the table. These need to be considered in order to get the levels of storage up at Lake Powell.

The second comment from Bruce Whitehead was clarification: The new proposal is no longer driven by downstream demands, meaning it will be taken off the table and priority will be given to balancing the reservoir. He emphasized that the Upper Basin needs to “Stick to our Guns” on the percentages.

Ed Tolen asked about areas with greater participation: Will more coordination be needed among basins in the state? The Southwest Basin was most heavily hit by drought this year. Hydrologic shortage is an indicator recognized in the Upper Basin. Hydrologic shortage is not recognized by Lower Basin states. The Lower Basin is unwilling to recognize hydrologic shortage because they would then have to recognize the sheer amount of cuts they would have to push toward.

8. WSRF Grant Requests

- **Trout Unlimited-Duncan Rose (\$25,288.00)**
 - Project focus is to strengthen the cutthroat trout habitat resilience through increasing drought period/low-water refugia and high altitude overwintering refugia; provide stream bank/bottom-stabilization.
 - Ed Tolen made a motion to approve the project. Ken Curtis seconded the motion; all in favor.

- **City of Durango-Evan Tyler (\$100,000)**
 - WSRF Funding request to assist with design costs.
 - Further discussion: Jeff Rodriguez said the CWCB Loan Program may help; Bruce Whitehead offered possible assistance from the Colorado Water Resource & Power Authority (Ian Loffert); CDPHE (Eric Worker) was another resource recommended.
 - Adrian Bergere made a motion to approve WSRF funding for the project, seconded by Ed Tolen; all in favor.
- **Town of Mancos WSRF Grant request was moved to October.**

9. Upcoming Events

- October 22, 2025-Water Law in a Nutshell-Fort Lewis College
- October 23, 2025-SWBRT Meeting-Mancos-Mt. Lookout Grange #339
- October 28-29 C-9 at the Sheridan Hotel in Lakewood, Colorado
- Other Announcements

10. Wrap Up and Adjournment (At or Before 6:00 PM)

Chair Peter Butler adjourned the meeting at 5:13 p.m.