



Inter Basin Compact Committee Basin Roundtables
Rio Grande Basin Roundtable
Tuesday, January 14, 2021 at 2:00 pm
GoTo Meeting Online

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 2:00 pm by Nathan Coombs, chairman. Those in attendance included Nathan Coombs, Bethany Howell, Daniel Boyes, Amber Pacheco, Rio de la vista, Emma Reesor, Marisa Fricke, Judy Lopez, David Marquez, Chuck Finnegan, Christi Bode, Cindy Medina, Kevin Terry, Heather Dutton, Virginia Christensen, Russ Sands, Mario Curto, Emily Chavez, Joann Slivka, Peter Barkman, Heather Greenwolf, Erin Minks, Zena Buser, Darin Schepp, Tyson Williams, Ken Curtis, Chris Shaffer, Ann Bunting, Sally Wier, Daryl Kohut, Hannah Thill, Nikita Chirstensen, Matt Stearns, Kyle Balint, Jim Ehrlich, Craig Cotten, Alex Puglisi, Ryan Unterreiner, Karla Shriver, Jenny Neiring, Kat Weismiller, Mike Gibson, Taylor Winchell, Jeff Deems, Sam Stein, Keith Holland, Cary Aloia, Lurna Kaatz, Robert Hurd.

Agenda

Chairman asked for approval of the agenda as presented by general consensus. No changes were made so agenda was approved.

Minutes

Minutes for the November 20, 2020 were presented. They were approved by general consensus with no amendments.

Public Comment

Rio de la Vista said that the Salazar Center is getting ready for the state of the basin symposium before the end of March. The symposium will be on a Saturday for broader community participation. Cindy Medina congratulated Rio for receiving the [Colorado 2020](#) Distinguished Service Award [from the University of Colorado Regents](#).

Chair/Vice Chair/Secretary Vote

Judy Lopez as acting vice chair entertained nominations for structuring the Roundtable leadership for 2021. For the chairman position, Judy entertained a nomination for Nathan Coombs to continue as chairman by Rio de la Vista. Karla Shriver seconded. All approved and the motion passed. Vice chair nominations were opened. Rio de la Vista noted that the length of the Rio Grande Headwater Restoration Project's contract might preclude Emma from being vice chair during the next year and that Judy might take on the actual vice chair role since the term for leadership is annual. Discussion around this issue turned into a nomination for Judy Lopez to serve as vice chair by Emma Reesor. **Nathan Coombs** seconded. All were in favor and the motion passed. Secretary nominations were entertained. Bethany Howell was nominated by Nathan Coombs. Mike Gibson seconded the nomination. None were opposed and the motion passed.

2021 Projects Discussion

Nathan walked through the WSRF funded project process as initiated by Daniel Boyes he covered prioritization of future projects using the new tiering process. The project proposals would be solicited for review early in the year, so that everyone interested in having their projects funded in that year would give members the opportunity to understand the types of projects they would expect to see. Nathan further noted that this does not preclude any projects that come up during the year. This change in our traditional funding procedures is especially important with the new tiering tool. The early preview gives members a quick look at projects that are in the pipeline, to consider their priority within the group and gather information before making final decisions. It was proposed that we do the 2021 project preview at the March 2021 meeting. Heather Dutton added that we should update the Facebook page and website about project criteria to stay consistent. Mike Gibson asked how the material would be presented at the next meeting. Rio de la Vista suggested using the project sheets which are simple and are easily summarized and can be sent to members before the meeting electronically. Anyone who wants to present a project for funding in 2021 will fill out a project sheet and submit it to Roundtable leadership will sure they make it out to the rest of the Roundtable. Kevin Terry asked if the old project sheet would be used and Daniel Boyes suggested using the new ones as they include project tiering and data fields used in the tiering process. That sheet will be sent out to our mailing list and all members are encouraged to share to anyone with a potential project.

PEPO Update

Bethany reviewed 2020 statistics and the upcoming six months for 2021 for PEPO activities.

IBCC Report

Keith Holland did not have a report as there hasn't been a meeting recently. Ann Bunting noted that February 23 would be the next meeting.

Subdistrict Report

Amber Pacheco took gave the subdistrict report as Cleave Simpson is in legislative session. The consultant working with the district on the water export response, Protect San Luis Valley Water, shared that the social media presence is doing well. Amber discussed the lack of water for the subdistricts to use, but that all the districts are moving forward and doing well with their annual replacement plans. Marisa Fricke also gave an update on her subdistricts. The aquifer is still at the level it was in 2018, with all recovery from 2019 lost. Reduced pumping in 2018. Participation in programs is higher than ever. Lack of snow in 2020-21 is still a challenge. Cindy Medina asked for an update about Renewable Water Resources. There has not been any news. Cindy also asked about outside marketing people working with the district. Amber reiterated that there has been social media sharing and content and rebuttal of misinformation perpetrated by Renewable Water Resources through videos and fact sheets. Rio asked about potential discussion at the next Rio Grande Water Conservation District meeting regarding water sales. Heather Dutton noted that there had been a challenge by a community member for locals to buy water rights and act in that role instead of an outside entity. Mike Gibson asked about the identity of the community member and Erin Minks responded that it is John Mattingly.

Denver Water Presentation

Laurna Kaatz and Taylor Winchell of Denver Water presented to the Roundtable on the Colorado Airborne Snow Observatories Expansion Plan (ASO). ASO aims to bring information and knowledge about SWE in all basins. Denver Water did pilot flights in April and June for initial mapping. The planning team involves Denver Water, Northern Water, Lynker Technologies, and ASO Inc. A collaborative work group involves extensive partners and four tasks for approach: basin flight planning, stakeholders value analysis, funding flow, and governance structure. Funding comes from various basins and organizations for both hard cash and in-kind match. They invite other partners and basin support We also have a lot of data already in place from previous ASO flights for the Rio Grande Basin and it needed our local Division 3 water engineer to help interpret the

data. Craig Cotten from Division 3 noted that the Rio Grande Compact is the only one in the state that directly relies on streamflow forecasting and that it is critical that we have accurate data. ASO flights have been used in the past for that purpose.

Basin Plan Update

Daniel Boyes with the Rio Grande Headwater Restoration Project discussed next steps for the Basin Implementation Plan (BIP). A project tiering meeting was held last month to review the BIP Identified Projects and Processes (IPP) prioritization process. An IPP tiering matrix tool was developed by the 2019 Implementation Working Group with input from the state's Roundtables. It is intended to be data driven and provide the Roundtable with a tool to help prioritize projects to fund. Along with the tiering matrix, a new IPP database format was developed which is dynamic and can be updated over time. The tiering matrix captures the "readiness" of each project and assesses project alignment with the Colorado Water Plan, BIP, local plans, and the basin's critical water issues. The tool tiers projects on a scale from 1-4, with descending levels of "shovel ready" projects. Over the next few weeks, subcommittees will begin scheduling meetings to develop strategies for to mitigate the basin's water supply gap, improve E&R attributes, etc. Strategies will be driven by technical update results. Information is being gathered to populate the BIP documents with a format of Volume 1 – Action Oriented and Volume 2 – Evergreen. Much from the 2015 BIP will be utilized. The format of these two volumes will be approved at the next Roundtable meeting. Question regarding timeline: it will take over the next year to complete, but a general timeline will be released with the document outlines.

Colorado Division of Water Resources Report

Craig Cotten from Division 3 explained that the past water year wasn't very good, 58% long term average on Rio Grande at Del Norte, went down 170,000 AF from the first estimate, with 377,000 AF overall. Obligation to downstream states was 25% of average (92,600 AF). On the Conejos system, 167,000 AF overall (55% long term average). Obligation to downstream states was 28,000 AF or 17% of index. Groundwater situation isn't much better, the basin lost all the gain and a little more from 2019. The basin moved back into Article VII this fall (storage in post-compact reservoirs prohibited). Craig reminded attendees that the final date for compliance with the groundwater use rules and regs is March 15, 2021 DWR has updated their website making it more user friendly. The office will continue to be closed through March 2021 to walk in customers. About average for snowpack this year and doing better than most other basins in the state. Hopeful for an average year.

Colorado Water Conservation Board Report

Sam Stein from Colorado Water Conservation Board noted that they are hosting a Riverside Chat on April 27th about the Water Plan Update effort. Materials will be put online for review. They will solicit feedback after. Additionally, Director Becky Mitchell is doing a "Virtual Roundtable Tour" to see the progress with the BIP and other updates. The tour will kick off at the Riverside Chat. Mitchell will attend the Rio Grande April meeting. The next IBCC meeting is February 23 and the PEPO liaisons will meet February 22. The next CWCB board meeting is January 25-26, where demand management will still be a discussion point. The Board has adopted the Step 2 work plan for demand management on the Colorado River. They are also considering potential demonstration projects relating to demand management. Board will consider high level draft of the framework in the near future, and participation in the ASO flights with the Conejos basin in conjunction with the radar project data. Heather thanked Sam and Russ for working with the basin through this digital format.

Other Business

Mike Gibson reminded the Roundtable that according to November's minutes, House Bill 1177 was supposed to be sent out to new members and asked that acronyms be spelled out. Nathan agreed that he would send out the language for the bill.

Meeting adjourned at 3:48 pm.