



Inter Basin Compact Committee Basin Roundtables
Rio Grande Basin Roundtable

Tuesday, February 9, 2021 at 2:00 pm
GoTo Meeting Online

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 2:00 pm by Nathan Coombs, chairman. Those in attendance included Amber Pacheco, Emily Chavez, Ryan Johnson, Alex Puglisi, Andrea Jones, Chuck Finnegan, Bethany Howell, Daniel Boyes, Darin Schepp, Emma Reesor, Malcolm Macleod, Ann Bunting, Cathy Morin, Chris Schaffer, Connor Born, Craig Cotten, Dale Pizel, Cindy Medina, Daryl Kohut, Don Thompson, Dwight Martin, Erin Minks, Eugene Farish, Heather Dutton, Joelle Marier, Judy Jolly, Judy Lopez, Kat Weismiller, Keith Holland, Kelsea Holloway, Kevin Terry, Laura Quattrini, Mike Gibson, Nathan Coombs, Nikita Christensen, Patrick O'Neill, Peter Barkmann, Peter Clark, Rio de la Vista, Russ Sands, Ryan Unterreiner, Sally Weir, Sam Stein, Steven Romero, Tricia Snyder, Virginia Christensen, William Remshardt, Ronda Lobato, Phil Brink, Hannah Thill.

Agenda

Agenda approved by general consensus as sent out with a correction of the date for the minutes. January 12, 2021 minutes will be approved during this meeting. A list of Roundtable members' affiliations was requested for future meetings. Guests are requested to put their affiliations in the chat.

Minutes

Mike Gibson moved to accept the minutes from January 12, 2021. Judy Lopez seconded. None were opposed and the minutes were approved as presented.

Public Comment

Rio de la Vista noted that the Save the Date for the State of the Basin Symposium will be March 20th in the morning and will be virtual. It is hosted by the Salazar Rio Grande del Norte Center. Dan Gibbs from DNR will be the keynote speaker.

Bylaws & Membership Info

Nathan explained that the Roundtable needs to go through the process of determining how to address current membership, assign dates for start of service, sending letters to organizations to notify them of their representatives and term limits. Those who are interested in stepping off the Roundtable or interested in serving are requested to notify Nathan, Judy, or Bethany that they would like to either continue serving or no longer wish to serve. Discussion about complying with bylaws while staggering terms. Discussion regarding the difference between at large and appointed seats and how to open at

large seats versus county commissioners needing to appoint their representatives. Suggestion to notify the public of seat availability and the process to apply.

RTI International

Conejos River Surface Water User Association in partnership with RTI International representatives Enrique Triana and Ryan Johnson discussed the building of the data management system, site monitoring, and data analysis for ground water in the Conejos River basin. Sites have been monitored over a specific period of time. Data includes confined and unconfined aquifers with a focus on the confined aquifer through existing wells and deep aquifer extraction. RTI analyzed the interaction between groundwater and well use as well as other factors such as precipitation and seasonal flows. Correlation of sites with other wells monitored by USGS and other organizations. Synthesis of information from various well sites and data monitoring allows for future predictors in well impact on groundwater level as well as snow water equivalency and precipitation impact and allows for better understanding of aquifer sustainability.

Beaver Institute

Malcolm Mcleod of the Beaver Institute discussed the challenges and opportunities of working with beavers. The institute trains professionals across the US and Canada in non-lethal conflict resolution with humans and beavers. Mcleod discussed environmental impacts, benefits, and conflict management practices.

PEPO Update

Bethany noted that the podcast has a new episode about the past history of water exports and their connection to the current RWR proposal. She is also working with the education subcommittee on a virtual water leaders 2.0 to take place over the next few months. More information will be sent out about that once plans are finalized.

IBCC Report

The IBCC will meet on February 23 and will have more to report after that meeting.

Subdistrict Report

Amber Pacheco from the Rio Grande Water Conservation District gave a brief update on social media for Protect San Luis Valley Water against RWR claims. Subdistricts are submitting to be in the Annual Replacement Plans in time for the well rules and regulations on March 15. Compliance will continue to be a priority. The district is looking for a water resources specialist to help find replacement sources and review how replacements can be beneficial with water administration. The job description is on the website. Subdistrict one representative also gave an update.

Basin Plan Update

Daniel Boyes with the Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project discussed using the modeling system results to include with measurable objectives in the BIP strategy. Subcommittees will meet to discuss. New BIP documents sent to the Roundtable and discussed Volume 1 updated goals and objectives and a summary from the Technical Update. Condensed version of projects list. Volume 1 will be updated as the BIP and Water Plan are updated; it is shorter and easier to edit. Volume 2 will be much longer and with perennial content about history and background of water, compacts, etc.

Colorado Division of Water Resources Report

Craig Cotten from Division 3 explained that DWR staff have been working hard getting ready for the March 15 deadline for all well users to either be enrolled in a groundwater management Subdistrict or be operating under an augmentation plan. The DWR office has been making sure that well users are on track to be in compliance with the new rules. He asked everyone to pass along the DWR's contact information to anyone who is looking for assistance with compliance, joining a Subdistrict, or obtaining augmentation. Regarding Subdistricts, all seven Subdistricts will be submitting their annual replacement plans beginning in early April.

Craig provided an update on Rio Grande Compact water deliveries. Last year, Colorado's delivery will be close to zero (that is, the state did not over- or under-deliver water to New Mexico). This is an ideal situation and what DWR always strives for. DWR is continuing to navigate a lawsuit filed by Texas against New Mexico and Colorado related to the Compact.

In terms of snowpack, the Rio Grande Basin currently has the highest in the state, at 107% of average. Although this is good news, the Basin was at a similar percentage last year, so conditions could change throughout the year and the potential for lower snowpack and runoff remains. Additionally, he explained that even with an average snowpack, we may not see average streamflows in the Basin. Dry soil conditions (low soil moisture) can reduce runoff because as the snowpack melts, more water seeps into the dry soil to replace lost water, resulting in less water reaching streams and contributing to streamflows. Last year, wind caused significant snow loss as well.

Colorado Water Conservation Board Report

Sam Stein from Colorado Water Conservation Board thanked everyone who attended the recent Colorado Water Plan Riverside Chat. For anyone who missed it, a video recording is on the CWCB website and YouTube channel. Sam encouraged everyone to visit engagecwcb.org and fill out the CO Water Plan survey. CWCB Director Becky Mitchell will be attending each of the state's Roundtables over the next few months to continue the conversation and will attend the Rio Grande BRT meeting in April.

Sam informed everyone of [several upcoming workshops](#) related to the Water Plan: Ogallala Aquifer Management– March 3rd; Agriculture Water Infrastructure – March 17th; Land Use Planning – April 14th; Agricultural Viability and Food Supply – April 21st; Environment & Recreation– April 7th; Forest Health – April 8th; Municipal and Industrial - ; Climate Change and Agriculture – May 5th, and more on [this page](#).

The governor has activated the state's Drought Task Force. The next Task Force meeting is February 16th. Sam also mentioned that during the next IBCC meeting, Forest Health, Demand Management, and other topics will be discussed. Additionally, the next CWCB board meeting is March 11 and 12 and Colorado Water Plan, Demand Management, and other topics will be covered.

There being no other business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 4:05 pm.

Guest Attendees:

Cath Morin, Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust and Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project Board Member

Kat Weismiller, CWCB

Sally Wier, Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust

Tricia Snyder, WildEarth Guardians

Laura Quattrini, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies

Andrea Jones, Rio Grande National Forest

Don Thompson, Citizen

Malcolm Macleod, Beaver Institute

Kelsea Holloway, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies

Daryl Kohut, Rio Grande National Forest

Craig Cotten, Colorado Division of Water Resources

Gene Farish, Blanca, Crestone, Del Norte, Saguache, and South Fork

Nikita Christensen, Public

Ryan Unterreiner, Colorado Parks and Wildlife liaison to the roundtable

Judy Jolly, Public

Alex Puglisi, NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION, RIO GRANDE RIPARIAN PROJECT MANAGER

Darin Schepp, Colorado Division of Water Resources

Enrique Triana, Ph.D, PE, Senior Water Resources Engineer, RTI International

Russ Sands, Colorado Water Conservation Board

Sam Stein, Colorado Water Conservation Board

Joelle Marier, Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust

Emily Chavez, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies

Amber Pacheco, Rio Grande Water Conservation District

Roundtable Members