



Arkansas Basin Roundtable

PLANNING OUR
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ROUNDTABLE MEETING NOTES

March 10, 2021

GoToMeeting Link: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/631824957>

More information and presentations may be found at: www.arkansasbasin.com

Roundtable Business

Mark Shea called the meeting to order at 12:30 pm. Mark read off attendees. Mark invited changes to the agenda, and none were suggested. Twenty (20) members were present.

Approval of Prior Meeting Notes

February meeting notes have been circulated for review. *Meeting notes were approved by consensus.*

Public Comment - none

REPORTS:

Executive Committee – Mark Shea

Eileen Llewelyn with Brown & Caldwell contacted Mark, regarding Forest Health and Watershed Health. Mark and Sandy White will be giving some input to B&C regarding those topics and the BIP update. If anyone else is interested in providing input, they are welcome to, and should contact Mark about that.

Also discussed at this morning's meeting was the establishment of a new committee within the Arkansas Basin Roundtable, the Ag/Muni Consumptive Use Committee. Matt Heimerich will chair that meeting, and he will reach out to some folks who might be interested. All members, stakeholders and interested parties are welcome to participate. Matt can be reached at matt@palmerlandtrust.org.

March 17: PEPOW (PEPO Workgroup) will meet monthly on the 3rd Wednesday each month at 1:30 pm, beginning March 17th.

March 29: Enviro-Rec meeting.

We did pass on our condolences to the family of Nick Koch. There are now two At-Large roundtable seats available.

CWCB Report – Sam Stein – engagewcb.org

Today's meeting conflicts with the CWCB board meeting, so Greg Felt and Russ Sands are not at our meeting today.

Earlier in the month, the CWCB board participated in a demand management workshop. That is available on YouTube if you'd like to watch it: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6X78NOckjHg>.

It has been almost a year of online meetings. Sam acknowledged everyone's persistence and diligence. The CWCB will be using engagewcb.org website to share draft BIPs, which will be completed in June. Water Plan Grant funding may be combined with basin funds to do more BIP work if needed. The deadline for water plan grants is December 1st.

A lot of Water Plan-related workshops have been planned. Timeline is available on the website.

Mark asked about the Roundtable code of conduct, and whether the roundtables would be involved in updating that.



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Upcoming Workshops:

Mar 17	Agriculture Water Infrastructure Workshop
Apr 7	Environment & Recreation Workshop
Apr 8	Forest Health Workshop
Apr 14	Land Use Planning Workshop
Apr 21	Agricultural Viability and Food Supply Workshop

IBCC Report – Jeris Danielson & Terry Scanga

The IBCC has met. Director Mitchell announced the new code of conduct. PEPO update – looking at how they can better communicate with constituents and roundtables. Looking to coordinate PEPO activities with roundtables themselves more closely. Russ Sands provided an update on the Colorado Water Plan (CWP). ATM update – the ATM survey was shared, and there was discussion about how ATMs would fit into the CWP. That survey is available on the IBCC website. Scenarios and climate change in the water plan were discussed, along with the five scenarios. A panel addressing trending water issues was held, and two districts discussed how they achieved mill levy increases. Demand management update, with a lot of discussion, including the question about whether it would even be legal under our water rights system. The Yampa/White/Green basins made a combined statement regarding the subject. Their statement of principles may be something that we should consider:

1. Preservation of quality of life in the basin.
2. Equity of responsibility and opportunity.
3. The State of Colorado should establish a marketplace for demand management water transactions that is equitable and transparent.
4. Concern about rural communities and the impact of demand management programs on rural communities.
5. Recreation & Environment
6. Compensation for value of water conserved. Is an acre-foot that is saved by Denver of the same value as an acre-foot that is saved by drying up a corn field in Grand Junction? There should be varying levels of value for water saved.
7. Trans-mountain diversions – basins which benefit from water that has been diverted from the Upper Colorado River must be considered as part of the demand management program.

Terry added comments around the practicality and logistics of how demand management would work. He thinks that if we're going to do it, we should do it right. Take it through water court, do a consumptive use analysis, notify the world that you're doing it so that others have the opportunity to protect their water rights, and prove what you can move to new use. Where would the state get the money to purchase this water? Why would we send water down the Colorado River to Lake Powell, lose a bunch to evaporative and transit loss, when what we really should be concentrating on is building storage in Colorado? If we're going to have this water, store it in Colorado, and if it's needed, release it from here. In the meantime, we might find we have a lot of surface water that we can also lease for other purposes.

Jeris added comments about the legality. If you read the language of the Upper Colorado River Compact, the allocations to the states are for beneficial consumptive use within the state. If you take water and export it to Powell, have you lost dominion over that compact allocation? The other issue that we talked about is that the model now contemplates a 500,000 acre-foot pool in Lake Powell to offset a lower basin call. If the call comes, it will be large, and someone pointed out that 500,000 acre-feet might buy us four or five months of alleviating the



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call, but after that we're back under the call situation. A complex issue with a lot of moving parts and a lot of questions.

The 2026 Guidelines have not been discussed at IBCC. These are the guidelines for operating Lakes Powell and Mead which need to be re-negotiated by 2026. The current demand management conversation is around the interim guidelines that are now in place.

Sandy asked what a call would really entail – would a statewide reduction in consumptive use be required? The State Engineer has been asked that question repeatedly. The upper stem users are senior, and they'd prefer the straight priority system. Yampa/White/Green users are junior, and they'd prefer to share the cost statewide.

Link to article regarding the Colorado River: <https://www.watereducation.org/western-water/milestone-colorado-river-management-plan-mostly-worked-amid-epic-drought-review-finds>

Link to the 2007 Interim Guidelines on the Colorado River: <https://www.watereducation.org/aquapedia/colorado-river-seven-states-agreement>

Needs Assessment Committee – Abby Ortega

We are at an in-between point, so nothing to report.

Enviro/Rec – Bob Hamel, Amber Shanklin, Rena Griggs & JoJo La, CWCB

Met in February. We don't have much new to report. Our next meeting will be March 29th. They invited JoJo to have the floor for a short presentation.

Colorado Water Plan Update-Enviro/Rec: JoJo La, Endangered Species Policy Specialist, CWCB.

One measurable objective that we set for the Colorado Water Plan was to cover 80% of locally prioritized rivers with stream management plans and 80% of critical watersheds with watershed protection plans before 2030. We like to track that information, see where we are. We'd like your input as to what prioritization means to this basin as far as Enviro/Rec. As part of the 2010 SWSI work, this basin put together focus area maps that provided a starting point for prioritization. We know you put a lot of work into them. We'd like to tie that work to the water plan goal and see where we're at. Any updates or high-level reviews are welcome. We know you're busy with the BIP update, and this work is for the Colorado Water Plan update that will follow.

It looks like Jeris is the only current roundtable member present that worked on the original focus area map committee. JoJo thanked Jeris and the committee for their work.

JoJo shared her screen and reviewed the focus area maps that were created by the Arkansas Basin.

Purpose-Focus Area Mapping

- Useful guide for water supply planning: avoid future enviro/rec conflicts.
- Identify enviro/rec water needs.
- Help basins plan
- Collaborative efforts for future multi-objective projects.

This resulted in a common technical platform of non-consumptive data with maps representing local focus areas. JoJo then shared some of the attributes that went into the ranking of enviro/rec needs. They fell into broad categories as follows:

Environmental

- Significant Riparian & Wetland Plant Communities
- NWI Wetlands
- Audubon Important Bird Areas
- Threatened & Endangered Species



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- Special Value Waters

Recreational

- Waterfowl Hunting (State Wildlife Areas)
- Significant Fishing Areas
- Birding Trails
- Significant Whitewater & Flatwater Boating Waters

In the Arkansas Basin, we divided the basin into 12-digit HUC Areas. The attribute ranking resulted in nine sub-categories. Three areas of concentration were noticeable:

1. The main stem of the Arkansas River upstream of Pueblo
2. The Fountain Creek Watershed
3. Areas around reservoirs on the Lower Arkansas River between Las Animas and Eads

CWCB is working on putting this data in an interactive Story Map form, so that folks can look at layers, zoom in to areas of interest and dig further into the data. Jojo is also working at bringing all the basins into one big database, as basins used various methods of determining and portraying Enviro/Rec needs in the first BIP. She hopes to have that ready by the workshop on April 7th. Please save that date – the workshop will be held from 8:00 am – 12:30 pm.

Contact info: jojo.la@state.co.us

PEPO – Paul Fanning

Paul and Alli both attended the statewide PEPO meeting. The Education Action Plan is a two-year plan, which is now due in June. Expectations were discussed regarding the development of metrics for PEPO that are integrated with the Basin Implementation Plan. PEPOW will be meeting on the third Wednesday of each month at 1:30 pm. The first of those meetings will be held next week.

BIP Update – Brett Gracely, Will Koger, Lindsay Griffith

- Project Tiering – Local Experts

They've received project input from folks all across the basin. Have subsequently moved nearly all the data out of SmartSheet and back into the original excel template. Working through the tier criteria as provided. There will be an opportunity for project proponents to review that first pass of tier scoring. That will also be an opportunity to update information that may have changed since you submitted it to them. There's just a few less than 400 projects that are in the status of planned, conceptual or implementing (active). Looking to get that emailed out by the end of the month.

- Draft Revised BIP Goals and Actions – Lindsay Griffith, Brown and Caldwell

Looked at the 2015 BIP Goals and Actions, had four focus-group meetings, and discussed storage, muni/industrial uses, agricultural and enviro/rec. This presentation reflects the work done to-date and can be found on our website: arkansasbasin.com. Changes include:

Storage

- Streamlined goals regarding “new” storage, while removing numerical target.
- Updated actions.

Municipal & Industrial

- Goals unchanged
- Updated actions: subbasin focused, focus on vulnerabilities

Agricultural

- Goals modified to reflect focus on sustaining ag communities, recognize ATM implementation
- Updated actions



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Environmental/Recreational Goals

- Streamlined goals from 9 down to 5 goals within BRT influence
- Combined/updated actions

BREAK

2021 Lower Arkansas River Basin Virtual Tour – Scott Williamson, Jayla Poppleton

Tour Goals

- Illustrate strategies from the Arkansas Basin Implementation Plan and their broader application to statewide issues in Colorado's Water Plan
- Show the nexus between water and local priorities.
- Convey the importance of partnerships and collaborations in water resource management, water supply planning and habitat restoration.
- Help elected officials, community leaders and interested citizens gain a well-rounded, objective look at water management considerations.

Tour Outline – went over outline of the tour.

SWEAP-Statewide Water Education Action Plan – Scott Williamson, Jayla Poppleton

SWEAP website: cowateredplan.org

Outline:

- Why SWEAP – need for SWEAP and how it was created
 - Colorado Water Plan, chapter 9.5
- How does SWEAP work? – Learn about the framework and benefits to local educators and others
 - Vision: Coordinated, well-funded and impactful education, public outreach and engagement achieving measurable objectives in water education by 2025 that contribute to sustainable water by 2050.
- How can I get involved? – There are many ways to participate based on your goals and resources
- What are the next steps? – Find out about the SWEAP timeline and how we'll measure success.

Jayla asked for the Arkansas Roundtable's endorsement of the "value of the SWEAP vision and framework and the importance of achieving its outcomes."

Roundtable members were in consensus to endorse SWEAP as quoted above.

ARWC Board Workshop Report – Carol Ekarius

- The board will start meeting on a regular basis, separate from the roundtable meeting.
- Will consider the ability to expand the ARWC board of directors beyond the RT executive committee. The board AND the roundtable would need to vote to approve additional members.
- The board will meet again this Friday at 1:00 pm. Will discuss these things and also the budget.
- If you would like to participate, please let Carol know. It is an open meeting and they would love more input.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 pm.

Admin Email: ARKBASINRT@GMAIL.COM



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MEETINGS/LINKS: (all meetings in 2020 will be virtual)

- Arkansas Basin Roundtable Meeting: April 14, 12:30 pm www.arkansasbasin.com
- PEPOW: March 17th, 1:30 pm (3rd Wednesday monthly) www.pepoarkbasin.com
- Enviro/Rec: March 29, 10:00 am
- CWCB: March 10 & 11 <http://cwcb.state.co.us/Pages/CWCBHome.aspx>
- IBCC: June 23, 8-12
- PEPO Statewide Mtg: June 22, 1-3 pm
- Arkansas River Basin Water Forum: <http://www.arbwf.org/>
- Colorado Water Plan: <http://coloradowaterplan.com/>
- Colorado Flood Threat Bulletin: www.coloradofloodthreat.com
- Stream Management Plan Resource Library: <https://coloradosmp.org/>
- In-Stream Flow Rule Revisions: <https://cwcb.colorado.gov/instream-flow-rules-revisions-hb-20-1157>
- DARCA - <https://www.darca.org/>