

Interbasin Compact Committee
Southwest Basins Roundtable Meeting
Zoom Videoconference
January 28, 2021

Members Present:

Ken Beegles	At Large Industrial	Blake Mamich	Southern Ute Indian Tribe
Leland Begay	Ute Mountain Ute Tribe	Ed Millard	Montezuma County
Jarrold Biggs	La Plata County Muni	John Ott	Water Quality Control Commission
John Currier	Colorado River WCD	Peter Ortego	Ute Mountain Ute Tribe
Ken Curtis	At Large Member	Al Pfister	San Juan WCD
Carolyn Dunmire	At Large Recreation	Gretchen Rank	At Large Member
John Ey	Florida WCD	Gigi Richard	At Large Member
Glen Fish	Dolores WCD	Ellen Roberts	La Plata County
Bill Frownfelner	At Large Member	Charlie Smith	San Juan County
Becky Guilliams	Hinsdale County	Ed Tolen	At Large Member
Celene Hawkins	CWCB Representative	Val Valentine	At Large Member
Kenny Heldman	Montrose Municipalities	Jim Wells	San Miguel WCD
Brandon Johnson	At Large Member	Mely Whiting	At Large Environmental
Gary Kennedy	Mancos WCD	Bob Wolff	SW Water Conservation District
David Liberman	Animas La Plata WCD		

Public:

Kelly Beal (Public), Stacy Beaugh (BIP Update Local Expert Team), Leland Begay (Ute Mountain Ute Tribe), Eric Bikis (SGM), Devin Camacho (U.S. Representative Boebert), Elaine Chick (Water Information Program, PEPO Liaison), Sharon Cooley (Mountain Studies Institute), Jeff Deems (Airborne Snow Observatory), Jordan Dimick (SGM), Mandy Eskelson (Mountain Studies Institute), Anne Gold (CU- Boulder), Amy Huff (SW Water Conservation District), Matt Lindburg (Brown and Caldwell), Laura Kaatz (Denver Water), Steve Monroe (Public), Patty Montano (We are Water CU Boulder), John McClow (Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District), Clarice Navarro (U.S. Representative Boebert), Peter Ortego (Ute Mountain Ute Tribe), Carrie Padgett (Harris Water Engineering), Jonathan Romeo (Durango Herald), Russ Sands (Colorado Water Conservation Board), Danielle Snyder (Brown and Caldwell), Laura Spann (SW Water Conservation District, Roundtable Recorder), Matt Stearns (CWCB), Sam Stein (Colorado Water Conservation Board), Chris Treese (SW Water Conservation District), Ryan Unterreiner (Colorado Parks & Wildlife), Greg Vlaming (High Desert Conservation District), Kat Weismiller (Colorado Water Conservation Board), Taylor Winchell (Denver Water), Tyson Williams (HydroSource Inc)

1. Introductions & Review Agenda

Roundtable Chair Ed Tolen called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

2. Administrative Reports

Minutes Review and Approval

Brandon Johnson moved to approve the October 22, 2020 and November 19, 2020 meeting minutes for the Southwest Basins Roundtable. Ken Curtis seconded. The motion passed by unanimous consent. Roundtable meeting documents and other files for reference are housed online for public and Roundtable use at <https://waterinfo.org/resources/southwest-basin-roundtable/>.

Resolution - Notice Posting Location

Brandon Johnson moved to adopt a resolution of the Southwest Basin Roundtable regarding the notice posting location, which is on the Roundtable webpage at <https://waterinfo.org/resources/southwest-basin-roundtable/>. Jarrold Biggs seconded. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

Officer Reports

Celene Hawkins, CWCB board member summarized the January CWCB Board meeting, which included a funding update, Colorado River matters, approval of the Poudre River instream flow augmentation project, actions on instream flows in several Water Divisions, instream flow rulemaking, and a CWCB policy regarding review of conservation easements. The proposed funding requested in the CWCB Projects bill has been scaled back because of the state's current fiscal situation during the pandemic. There is hope that the state will receive wildfire preparedness funding in an upcoming stimulus package.

Basin WSRF Fund Balance

The current WSRF Basin Account balance was \$443,251, with two pending requests to the CWCB that would decrease the balance to \$437,503 if approved.

3. PEPO Liaison Report

Elaine Chick, PEPO Liaison, previewed the new educational video on southwestern Colorado focused on watershed health, forest health, agriculture, recreation, and their interdependence. The video was funded by the CWCB (PEPO) and the Water Information Program. Elaine encouraged everyone to watch, share, and present the video, which is available at waterinfo.org. Gigi Richard, Gretchen Rank, Ed Tolen, Val Valentine, Becky Guilliams, and Carrie Lile volunteered to form a workgroup to update the Roundtable's 2021 Education Action Plan. The next Statewide PEPO meeting was scheduled for February 22nd.

4. We are Water Program

Anne Gold and Patty Montano described the We Are Water Program, which provides water-related educational tools for libraries in the Four Corners region. We are Water springs from a collaboration between scientists, Indigenous science educators, learning researchers, informal educators, and library staff. After a needs assessment with diverse groups, We Are Water found that communities are most interested in water conservation and scarcity, the future of water in the region, water rights, access and availability, water quality, economic and environmental aspects, and their cultural and historical connection to water. We Are Water provides a traveling exhibit, water stories and images, youth and family activities, resources for library staff, and other tools. More information is available at wearewater.colorado.edu

5. CWCB Update

Sam Stein, CWCB, reported that CWCB hosted a virtual "Riverside Chat" to update the public on progress with the water plan update and will hold a similar event on June 8th. CWCB Director Becky Mitchell plans to attend the SW Basin Roundtable meeting on April 22nd, to hear about progress on the Basin Implementation Plan (BIP) update. The CWCB's instream flow workshop was held on January 27th and is [now available online](#). For the upcoming February 23rd IBCC meeting, topics will include demand management, forest health, alternative transfer methods (ATMs), finance and climate.

6. IBCC Update

Al Pfister and Mely Whiting didn't have anything to report as the IBCC hadn't met since before the last Roundtable meeting. Ed Millard expressed concern about the IBCC adequately contributing to the demand management feasibility conversation if it only meets three times a year and the meeting format isn't conducive to debate and discussion. Also, he hoped the IBCC could lead on bold, statewide forest health initiatives. Mely Whiting thought the IBCC members did want to focus on equity and proportionality in the context of the demand management feasibility investigation, and that the opportunity for reengagement on this topic may be in the spring or summer once a demand management "strawman" is stood up.

7. Basin Implementation Plan (BIP) Update

Carrie Lile reported that the BIP sub-committee is updating the 2015 BIP goals, strategies, and measurable outcomes, including adding a forest health section. Carrie encouraged attendance at the Roundtable special

meeting on February 25th, at which the first draft update will be presented for Roundtable feedback. After that the BIP subcommittee will work to connect the updated goals, strategies, and objectives to the Technical Update data, planning scenarios, and the projects list to meet future gaps. The updated BIP will have two parts: Volume 1, the new document with strategies and executive summary, and Volume 2, digital outreach tools including story maps to highlight project successes in the basin.

Matt Lindberg, Brown and Caldwell, said that the BIP update process is focused on collecting better project data statewide and sorting the project into tiers. He summarized themes among the BIP update discussions statewide, including better aligning goals and actions as well as developing strategies for meeting future water supply gaps with a special focus on how to address the ag diversion gaps (existing and projected). The consultant team will also provide an analysis of the “state of the science” on forest health with related strategies and tools for individual Roundtables to add to their BIPs.

8. Colorado River Issues Subcommittee

Ken Curtis summarized the Colorado River Issues Subcommittee meeting held that morning, which included discussion of 2007 Interim Guidelines 7d review and the 2026 renegotiation of the Interim Guidelines. It was suggested that southwest Colorado’s best avenue for input is directly to Becky Mitchell as Colorado’s Commissioner to the Upper Colorado River Commission and CWCB Director. The subcommittee also discussed the latest on the demand management feasibility investigation and the flurry of op-eds responding to a New York Times article explaining Wall Street investment interests in Colorado water and their implications. Among the op-eds were two from southwestern Colorado: one submitted by Ed Millard and another from Southwestern Water Conservation District and 8 other Colorado water managers.

9. WSRF Funding Subcommittee

Mely Whiting summarized activities of the WSRF Funding Subcommittee, which has incorporated the recommended changes in criteria adopted at a previous meeting into the Roundtable-specific documents provided to WSRF applicants. The subcommittee adjusted the criteria around multi-benefit projects and suggested this topic for further discussion as part of the BIP update. The Roundtable will only review WSRF applications annually. 2021 requests are due March 1st. The Roundtable will first consider applications at the March 25th meeting and then decide at the April 22nd meeting.

Ed Millard moved that the Roundtable form a WSRF application review committee to review all requests prior to full Roundtable consideration. Ken Curtis seconded. The motion passed by unanimous consent. Ed Tolen will serve as the chair, joined by Mely Whiting, Celene Hawkins, Ed Millard, Jarrod Biggs, Al Pfister, Ellen Roberts, and Carolyn Dunmire.

11. Montezuma Orchard Restoration Project – Water Plan Grant Letter of Support

Jude Schuedemyer presented the request for a Roundtable letter of support for the Montezuma Orchard Restoration Project’s Colorado Water Plan grant application to construct sustainable indoor infrastructure for educational and economic activities around teaching the benefits of water conservation, water efficiency, alternative cropping, and preservation in orchards while providing value-added opportunities to grow the southwest region’s fruit economy. Specifically, funds will be used to construct a 6,000 square- foot, insulated steel building to house classroom/training facilities, apple storage, mobile juice press operations, commercial kitchen, and service crews.

After significant discussion, there was Roundtable consensus to direct Ed Tolen to draft a conditional letter of support for the Montezuma Orchard Restoration Project’s water plan grant application and email it to the Roundtable for final review and consensus approval before submittal.

10. Airborne Snow Observatory Lidar Flights & Advancing Seasonal Water Supply Forecasting

Lorna Kaatz, Denver Water, presented on the Colorado Airborne Snow Observatories (ASO) Expansion Plan. ASO uses Lidar technology during flights to measure snow depth below, which has proven to better estimate snowpack than isolated SNOTEL sites. Denver Water is leading an effort to build a sustainable, phased statewide ASO program to use this new technology for broad stakeholder benefit. The ASO planning team is seeking funding through WSRF grants as well as in-kind contributions from partners across the state.

Jeff Deems (Airborne Snow Observatories, Inc) presented further on an effort to launch aerial snowpack monitoring in southwestern Colorado which will be incorporated into improved forecasting products for water managers and others. Ken Curtis noted that CWCB is funding a few ASO flights and NCAR for hydro modeling in southwestern Colorado. Due to budgetary constraints, there will be a limited set of airborne satellite flights over select areas in our region.

12. Upcoming Events via Zoom

Roundtable BIP Update	February 25, 2021
Roundtable BIP Update or WSRF Grant Review	March 25, 2021
Regular Roundtable Meeting	April 22, 2021
Roundtable BIP Update	May 27, 2021
Roundtable BIP Update	June 24, 2021
Regular Roundtable Meeting	July 29, 2021

13. Adjournment

Chair Ed Tolen adjourned the meeting at 6:15 p.m.