



Inter Basin Compact Committee Basin Roundtables  
Rio Grande Basin Roundtable

Tuesday, April 13, 2021 at 2:00 pm  
Zoom Meeting Online

### **Meeting Minutes**

#### **Call to Order**

Meeting called to order at 2:00 pm by Nathan Coombs, chairman. Those in attendance included Charlie Spielman, Gene Farish, Virginia Christensen, Kevin Terry, Anne Bunting, Nathan Coombs, Andrew Rickert, Don Thompson, Travis Smith, Becky Mitchell, Jim Ehrlich, Bethany Howell, Cary Aloia, Cath Morin, Cindy Medina, Daniel Boyes, Danielle Snyder, Darin Schepp, David Gochis, Emma Reesor, Erik Skeie, Erin Minks, Hannah Thill, Jeffrey Deems, J. Slivka, Heather Dutton, Jenny Nehring, Juan Roberto Madrid, Keith Holland, Peter Barkman, Peter Clark, Charlie Spielman, Ann Bunting, Nikita Christensen, Rosalee Reese, Sally Wier, Sam Stein, Sharon Vaughn, Taylor Adams, Willow Cozzens, Chuck Finnegan, Adam Moore, Heather Greenwolf, Priscilla Waggoner, Russ Sands, Robert Sakata, Alex Puglisi. Judy Lopez was excused.

#### **Agenda**

Chairman asked for approval of the agenda as presented by general consensus. Agenda item 7a was added to allow a report on Stream Flow Forecasting Model. The agenda was approved as amended.

#### **Minutes**

Minutes for March 9, 2021 were presented. They were approved by general consensus with the following amendment. Virginia Christensen was present at the last meeting and will be included in the attendance for the March meeting.

#### **Public Comment**

Rio de la Vista announced for the June meeting, Phil Weiser will be in the Valley and it would be great to have him come to the Roundtable meeting in person if possible. Discussion about whether in person would be possible with Director Mitchell. Rio also thanked everyone for participating in the State of the Basin Symposium and a link will be sent out soon.

Emma Reesor of the Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project announced their river restoration project at the Riparian Park with the City of Alamosa is hosting a volunteer day on April 24<sup>th</sup> from 9-noon to plant vegetation. Registration information is on their website and is required.

#### **PEPO Update**

The ag video vignette with Christi Bode is almost complete. Bethany continues to work on podcasts, newsletter, and a video collaboration with RGWCEI to "Meet Your Farmer." Bethany reiterated the focus

on diversity, equity, and inclusivity for the Public Outreach part of PEPO. Invitation for anyone interested to participate in the PEPO subcommittee.

### **BIP Report**

Daniel Boyes discussed the latest subcommittee meetings and the progress made with objectives and refining language. Will continue to work with Brown and Caldwell through June and the updated BIP will be released for Roundtable and subcommittee review in August. Subcommittees will still have some work to do through June.

### **Colorado Water Conservation Director Report**

Becky Mitchell, Colorado Water Conservation Board Director, discussed the need behind creating a new Code of Conduct for the Department of Natural Resources. Mitchell thanked everyone for their work on the Basin Implementation Plan as they are the heart of Colorado's Water Plan, highlighting our differences and our similarities. Discussion of the future and the uncertain state of funding. Public workshops related to Colorado River and related issues will be discussed around the state with CWCB staff soon. Mitchell noted that the Code of Conduct is a template for how Roundtables behave while having communications and discussions. Clarification that the water equity task force is focused on inclusivity and diversity in their conversations with stakeholders. Discussion of how Mitchell has led the CWCB staff through transition and thanks from Heather Dutton, Rio Grande representative to the CWCB Board of Directors. Questions were raised about the difficulty of funding projects, even with a large amount of beneficial projects. Mitchell spoke about the completion of the Colorado Water Plan and ability to complete projects to better answer timelines, spending the funding that we currently have in watershed planning projects funds, being ready to start projects that can be successful. Discussion about the 2020 fire season and its impact on watersheds and forest health. Discussion about public infrastructure through the legislature and the ability to use funds through federal, state, and other emergency methods.

### **Streamflow Forecasting Report**

CWCB Staff member Erik Skeie, Jeff Deems, and Dave Gochis discussed radar and high resolution snow data. The project involves airborne snow data and modeling to accurately predict streamflow data. The process optimizes the data sets that feed into hydrologic modeling system to provide a water supply forecast. High elevation monitoring stations around the Conejos area provides data and is able to be analyzed for the Rio Grande Basin. Presentation of statistical data from Conejos and Rio Grande areas. Discussion of mapping critical snow properties to forecast runoff volume and timing. Questions and discussion regarding process and other similar projects.

### **Subdistrict Report**

Annual Replacement Plans are due on the 15<sup>th</sup>, so Amber Pacheco was not available for a report.

### **Colorado Division of Water Resources Report**

Craig Cotten, Division 3 engineer gave his report. There is 11% curtailment on the Rio Grande, 15% of curtailment on the Conejos system. Forecast for the Sangre de Cristos is 90-120% of average on streamflow forecasting as well as the Culebra Creek basin. The Compact had their annual meeting on April 8, including an issue with the Engineer Advisors' report.

Craig explained that during the Rio Grande Compact Commission annual meeting, the Engineer Advisor's report was not approved. Multiple ditch companies downstream of Elephant Butte Reservoir took issue with some of the report's data, resulting in the report not being approved. Craig also noted that the Rio

Grande Compact supreme court trial involving the states of New Mexico and Texas will begin in September 2021 in Cedar Rapids, IA. He noted that although it mainly involves New Mexico and Texas, there are some potential implications for Colorado depending on the outcome.

Craig reminded everyone that the groundwater rules went into effect on March 15, 2021. DWR staff have been working hard to ensure all well users are in compliance with groundwater rules and regulations. Craig noted that the Annual Replacement Plan (ARP) prepared by Subdistrict 5 (Saguache) was not approved by the State Engineer. The ARP was not approved due to the lack of infrastructure or other means to physically replace well depletions to Saguache Creek and its senior surface water users. For this reason, the wells in Subdistrict 5 are not currently permitted to operate. DWR and the RGWCD staff are working with well users and the Subdistrict to develop a solution to allow users to pump.

#### **Colorado Water Conservation Board Report**

Sam Stein provided a brief update on the recent and upcoming Colorado Water Plan workshops held by CWCB. He encouraged anyone who is interested in upcoming workshops to visit the *Engage CWCB* website: <https://engagecwcb.org/>.

#### **Other Business**

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.