

**Interbasin Compact Committee  
Gunnison Basin Roundtable Meeting  
Virtual Meeting  
March 15, 2021**

**Voting Members Present:**

Thomas Alvey	North Fork WCD
Steve Anderson	Industrial
Bruce Bair	At-Large Member
Mike Berry	Tri-County WCD
Sonja Chavez	At-Large Member
Kathleen Curry	Saguache County
Cary Denison	Environmental
Allen Distel	Bostwick Park WCD
Joanne Fagan	Ouray Municipalities
Steve Fletcher	At-Large Member
John Justman	Mesa County
Jay Jutten	Montrose County
Dave Kanzer	Colorado River Water Conservation District
Austin Keiser	Grand Mesa WCD
John McClow	House and Senate Ag Committees
Chuck Mitisek	Ute WCD
Scott Murphy	Montrose Municipalities
Julie Nania	Upper Gunnison River WCD
Bill Nesbitt	Gunnison Municipalities
Mark Ritterbush	Mesa Municipalities
Neal Schwieterman	Recreational
Ron Shaver	At-Large Member
Adam Turner	Local Domestic Water Supplier
Richard Udd	Delta Municipalities
Martha Whitmore	Ouray County

**Voting Members Excused/Absent:**

Mike Cleary	Crawford Water Conservancy District
Jonathan Houck	Gunnison County
Dixie Luke	At-Large Member
Dan Murphy	Hinsdale Municipalities
Michael Murphy	Hinsdale County
Mark Roeber	Delta County
Steve Shea	Agricultural

**Liaisons and Non-Voting Members Present:**

Sam Stein (CWCB), Sharon Dunning (Assistant Recorder), Bob Hurford (Division of Water Resources), Jedd Sondergard (US BLM).

**Public:** Nancy Fishering (COWFA), Luke Gingerich (J-U-B), Jojo La, Russ Sands and Kat Weismiller (CWCB), Sally Thoreson (Public), Tanya Ishikawa (UWP), Roger Rash (Montrose BOCC), Hannah Holm (CMU Water Center), Mike Fabbre (Mount Crested Butte WSD), Heather Sackett (Aspen Journalism), Phil Brink (CO Cattleman's Ag Water Network), Sam Liebl (Gunnison County Times), Sue Nall (USACOE), Paul Kehmeier (CO Dept of Ag), Bill Trampe (Public), Jerry Allen (Shavano Conservation District and NRCS), Linda Ingo (Public), Brett Gardner-Smith (Aspen Journalism), Kyle Vanderberg (Redlands Water and Power Co.), Ryan Unterreiner (CPW).

### **Welcome**

The virtual meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m. by Chairperson Kathleen Curry.

### **Roll Call/Introductions**

After roll call a quorum was declared to be present.

### **Agenda Approval**

Allen Distel moved to approve the agenda as presented. Bill Nesbit seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

### **Approval of Minutes from January 18, 2021 Meeting**

Allen Distel requested a correction to the spelling of his name.

Neal Schwieterman moved to approve the minutes of the January 18, 2021 meeting as amended. Allen Distel seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

### **Bylaw Amendment**

Kathleen Curry stated the purpose of this bylaw amendment is to address having more than one candidate for the Interbasin Compact Committee appointments. John McClow drafted and circulated proposed language for the bylaws to improve process for making the appointments.

Tom Alvey moved to adopt the suggested bylaw amendments. Bill Nesbitt seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

### **Membership Term Discussion**

The purpose of this item is to review language in the bylaws regarding term limits on some Roundtable member seats. The Roundtable discussed the five-year expiration of terms for appointed statutory seats and the 10 at large seats. The question was whether the Roundtable should take action and advertise the expired seats. It was brought up the statutory seats are appointed. John McClow stated the language is from the statute and does not discriminate

between the different types of members. All members' terms expire at the same time. The practice in the past has been to let all terms roll over. It was decided the appointed seats can continue to roll over until someone resigns or the entity appoints someone else. For the elected seats, the decision was made to open up and advertise the 10 expired elected seats in local newspapers and hold an election.

### **Report from the CWCB Representative**

Steve Anderson reported on the March meeting of the Conservation Board, which was held the previous week. He discussed a few staff changes including Jessica Brode, who represents the City and County of Denver, is now the new Chair of the board, and Jackie Brown from the Yampa/White is the Vice-Chair.

There is an instream flow recommendation for Cow Creek. It is just in the study phase at present. There is a window to comment from now until just prior to the May meeting.

There was a work session on demand management on March 2. There was a detailed discussion of essentially the strawman. Steve said they did a good job with flow charts and sheets. They are taking the redlines from the Board at the meeting on and incorporating those changes. He will get revisions to Kathleen, once it is available, to forward to the Roundtable.

Sam Stein gave an update on several topics.

There have been a few board conversations recently about demand management. He encouraged everyone to listen to the workshop from the last board meeting to learn more.

Sam discussed Roundtable code of conduct and expectations, which is being developed to help with base communications and legal requirements.

Roundtables are working hard to wrap up the BIPs to have drafts complete in June. The website [www.engagecwcw.org](http://www.engagecwcw.org) will be used to share drafts with roundtables and then ultimately the public starting in August. Some have expressed a desire for additional work and analysis and additions to the BIP and projects list. If there are any projects or additional work the basin wants to fund, he encouraged everyone to look at the water plan grant program reminding everyone the deadline for water plan grants is December 1.

Sam addressed another funding issue with the statewide match. With the new fiscal year budget there will be substantially more budget than previously thought, but the exact numbers are not yet available.

Sam stated there are a lot of ongoing workshops. To see those, go to the [www.engagecwcw.org](http://www.engagecwcw.org) website for the full list.

## **Education Committee Report**

Dave Kanzer reported business as usual with most educational activity, newsletter, social media, and website posts. They are always looking for feedback and input.

Dave stated the Education Committee budget is stressed. The North Fork Water Conservancy District has augmented the budget by \$100/month. Dave encouraged other districts to consider a similar kind of contribution if possible or feasible. Tom Alvey encouraged other districts to match the \$100. Sonja Chavez stated the Upper Gunnison would contribute \$200/month to the fund.

Friends of Youth and Nature, who are receiving funding from the GBRT, have reported on their activities. Hotchkiss High School sent 11 students to the Youth Water Summit, which was a virtual activity. Some students were sent to the North Fork School of Integrity Studies. Twenty 3rd graders and thirteen 5th graders are going to the Eureka Water Center. Some students will be going on a Colorado canyon overnight camping trip where they are doing things on water education in the river. The remaining funds will be used to help with transportation costs for 4th graders to go to the Water Festival in Montrose. There will be a final reporting on the use of the funds

Dave said as the PEPO liaison he is part of another team in the state. They had an online meeting on February 22, 2021. It was a good meeting and good exchange of information with other roundtables of what they are doing. They were reminded about the mission and of duties the committee needs to fulfil for the IBCC. They are putting together a scope of work that will better define their activities and what is expected so there is some consistency across the state. One item to be completed is an update to the EAP. The draft needs to be submitted by June 30. Dave asked the Roundtable for help, and Neal Schwieterman volunteered. Russ Sands said they are trying to make the timeline align with the BIP to converge and support things that are being done in the BIP. Dave Kanzer said they would have some ideas to get feedback on and possibly a budget to go over at the next GBRT meeting in May.

## **IBCC Report**

Joanne Fagan reported the IBCC met February 23. The following items were discussed:

- **PEPO:** Discussions were about adoption of the code of conduct, the EAP update, equity in outreach, and a new position at CWCB to support PEPO and the equity issue.
- **Water Plan:** Discussion about water plan scenarios and the process of modeling each of them. They hope in the near-term to have something similar to no and low regrets. The Water Plan 2022 will be focusing on the next 7 years. The available workshops and surveys are posted on the [engagewcb](#) website.
- **ATMs:** Joanne said she missed this part of the discussion.

- **Forest Health:** Discussion about the importance of forest health to water in planning. There is a lot of work going on around the state. They are hoping the roundtables will include some ideas about forest health in their BIPs. There will be a workshop in April with presentations from some forest health experts. They to create a menu of options from which the roundtables can select BIP action items.
- **Funding Water Projects:** Discussion about funding water projects and polling results about what people will support. The River District has found the more specific the question is, the more likely it is to get support.
- **Demand Management:** The CWCB staff gave a presentation at the IBCC workshop. An executive summary from a paper by the Yampa/White/Green was distributed to the Roundtable.

Cary Denison attended a good part of the meeting. He had one addition to the report, which was specific to the Gunnison Basin, regarding the use of storage in Colorado. The Aspinall Unit was brought up as a structure that could be used to store demand management water. CWCB staff did a good job of outlining the demand management process and direction.

Steve Anderson stated one thing that is different in the Gunnison Basin is the amount of pre-compact water in our basin. We are better off relying on Colorado water law that exists now than making any concessions except for economic reasons. If it's in our best interest to delve into demand management then so be it, but it's not to appease any apportionment from basin to basin or front range to western slope. Tom Alvey added it will help when the CWCB strawman is out. We will then get some idea of what directions they're looking at and whether it will be something that we should address.

Kathleen Curry discussed the executive summary document from the Yampa Basin. The Roundtable discussed whether they would like to come up with a position similar to the Yampa's and there was support to pursue the discussion. The DM committee will convene to discuss the topic.

### **BIP Update**

Luke Gingerich gave his report on the BIP update. He stated the BIP list is done with 243 projects and a total cost of \$837 M. Some projects have no cost data and he feels there are still missing projects.

Luke has been working with the general contractor over the last couple of weeks on additional modeling trying to get output on efficiency and gaps within the basin. He will get the data to the BIP Committee at the next meeting.

Luke hopes to have a Volume 2 draft of the BIP update on the CWCB site in the May timeframe. Kathleen Curry asked when the draft will be on state's website. She is concerned the GBRT has formally considered the update. Russ Sands said the goal is to have it reviewed by the end of June. They will make it so initially only emails the GBRT selects will be commenting.

The general contractor has asked the local experts to do some outreach on forest health. They have created some interview questions and would like to interview 2 or 3 people. The purpose is to better understand the state of the science. Luke asked for input from the Roundtable. He plans to interview Nancy Fishering from COWFA and Julie Nania who is on the BIP committee. Julie Nania also suggested Dan Omasta with Trout Unlimited who is helping the Upper Gunnison with watershed management and health.

### **Uncompahgre River Improvement Project**

Scott Murphy gave an update and showed a video on the Uncompahgre River Improvement Project. The project restored about 3200 feet of the Uncompahgre River at a cost \$1.6 M. This section of the river had been impacted by historical mining and landfill activities and the project restored it to a more natural system with ecological habitat and stabilization. The project was partially funded with WSRF and Watershed Restoration Grant funds, which also helped to leverage other funding.

Scott said the goals for the project were improvement for quality of life for the City's residents, overall health of the watershed, support of the Colorado Outdoors project and the recreation trail, floodplain management, etc. The City wants it remain a good sustainable asset. This section of the river restoration project was not designed specifically for boaters, but more for catch and release fishing.

Kathleen Curry asked if there was a budget for any kind of maintenance. Scott said there are some funds reserved in the City's general fund for maintenance if the need arises.

### **Environment and Recreation Colorado Water Plan Update**

Jojo La, CWCB, is the Endangered Species Policy Specialist and manages the CWCB's interests in the recovery program. Jojo gave an update on the environmental and recreation portion of the Colorado Water Plan. She discussed the focus area maps which were developed by the basins in 2010. They are asking the basins if there are any updates to the maps. They have now built a database that contains all the mapping information. There will be an Environmental and recreation workshop on April 7, 8:a.m. and 12:30 p.m. where they will discuss the focus area maps for each roundtable.

### **Grant Review Committee Report**

Tom Alvey introduced 2 grant applications.

### **Stuart Mesa Canal Diversion Improvement – Trout Unlimited and Stuart Mesa Ditch Company**

The project is to improve and rehabilitate an existing headgate on the North Fork of the Gunnison River. The total project cost is estimated to be \$489,500. The grant request is for \$65,000 from basin funds.

This project was identified by work the North Fork Conservancy District and the Western Slope Conservation Center did with an WSRF grant. It is a Tier 1 project with multiple beneficiaries, including recreation, agricultural and environmental uses. The Screening Committee supports the project. There is some uncertainty regarding the funding sources and total cost. Since the Roundtable has limited funds, and the construction phase is not scheduled to begin until September of 2022, the committee recommends funding part of the design phase with a grant of \$20,000, with support of the entire project in concept. They are recommending the applicant reapply for further funding when the design is complete.

Marti Whitmore moved the Screening Committee's recommendation to fund a portion of the design phase with a grant of \$20,000 from basin funds. Sonja Chavez seconded.

Neal Schwieterman stated this renovation of the headgate has been a priority on the North Fork for a long time. Most of all the other headgates have been improved, and this last one. This is an important project on the North Fork and he fully endorses it. Kathleen Curry asked if the lower dollar amount would put project in jeopardy. Tom Alvey responded the amount recommended will allow the design phase to go forward. They are reaching out to a wide variety of fund sources. After the design is completed and they know more what the cost is, they are encouraged to come back and apply for funds for the construction phase. Cary Denison agreed they do not know what the construction costs are going to total. They are reaching out to all sorts of funding sources. They are okay with the recommendation of the Screening Committee and appreciate the support.

The motion passed unanimously.

#### Stumpy Creek Ranch Irrigation Efficiency Project

This request is for the improvement of the delivery and irrigation efficiency structures of Stumpy Creek Ranch, which is in the Cimarron River Basin. The request is from a private land owner for \$20,000 to design and begin construction on improvements with completion depending on the funding from the NRCS. The project meets the goals and direction of the BIP. It is a good project and supports the goals of Gunnison basin. The Screening Committee recommends funding the design phase for ditch improvements with a \$5,000 grant. The applicant can apply for more funding once the design work is completed. Tom noted it is important that this funding does not go toward NRCS on-farm improvement design.

Neal Schwieterman acknowledged the environmental and recreational benefits but they are not quantified. Neal would like to ask the applicant to quantify those benefits if they come back for more funding. Tom Alvey agreed. Cary Denison helped applicant and thinks it is a valuable project to pursue. TU also supports the project.

Marti Whitmore moved the Screening Committee's recommendation to fund the design phase for ditch improvements with a \$5,000 grant from basin funds. Neal Schwieterman seconded and the motion carried unanimously

Kathleen Curry and Cary Denison will draft letters to the appropriate entities.

Tom Alvey reminded everyone it is important for anyone who has projects for state funding, the May meeting is the last chance to get on the September CWCB agenda. The deadline to get them into the Screening Committee is April 1 to be heard at the May GBRT meeting.

**Public Comment**

No comments.

**Other Business**

No other business.

**Future Meetings**

Kathleen Curry discussed in-person meetings for the Roundtable and asked if there was support to return to in-person format as early as May. John McClow mentioned the Big Blue Creek Highway Improvement project starting in the spring might limit some people being able to make it to Montrose. Support was varied.

The next regular meeting is May 17, 2021.

There will be a Doodle Poll sent out for the Demand Management meeting.

The Environmental and Recreation Workshop is on April 7, from 8:a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Roundtable, the meeting adjourned at 6:23 p.m.



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Mike Berry, Recorder



**Action Items**

Advertise expired at-large seats in the local newspapers and hold an election if necessary.

The DM Committee to meet and discuss a position paper similar to what the Yampa Basin created.

Kathleen Curry and Cary Denison will draft letters to the appropriate entities for the approved grant requests.