



Arkansas Basin Roundtable

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ARKANSAS BASIN ROUNDTABLE MEETING SUMMARY MINUTES AND RECORD OF DECISIONS

April 14, 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. There are 18 active members as of March 31, 2021; quorum is a simple majority of active members, therefore 10 is a quorum. Mark welcomed CWCB Director Becky Mitchell, who visited the meeting today.

Voting Members Present:

Jim Broderick	Tim Canterbury	Seth Clayton
Jeris Danielson	Paul Fanning	Greg Felt
Mike Fink	Bob Hamel	Terry Hart
Bob Hartzman	Matt Heimerich	Rick Kidd
Scott King	Dwayne McFall	Sarah Mudge
Rego Omergic	Abby Ortega	Terry Scanga
Tom Seaba	Mark Shea	Greg Teter
Tom Verquer	Amber Weber	Mike Weber
Sandy White		

Non-Voting Members Present:

Rick Kienitz

Approval of Prior Meeting Notes

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

Public Comment - none

REPORTS:

Executive Committee – Mark Shea

The Executive Committee had a robust discussion regarding the Code of Conduct provided by CWCB. We do have several seats available on the roundtable, including two at-large seats. There was an all-chairs meeting this week. Mark participated in a couple of the CWCB workshops that have been held recently. Both workshops were about the focus area mapping tool that Jojo La has been working on.

CWCB Report – Becky Mitchell – engagecwcb.org

Becky Mitchell visited the roundtable meeting today and talked about the Basin Implementation Plan and Colorado Water Plan Updates. She thanked everyone for their work on them. There is a possibility of stimulus funds coming in. How do we optimize possible stimulus money as we build back better? The more specific information we have, the better, as we move forward. She acknowledged the complexity of the BIP update process, due to be complete by June 30th.



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Becky gave the roundtable updates on other things happening.

The Colorado River discussion regarding demand management has been progressing. The CWCB board adopted Step 2 of the DM Work Plan. It focuses on the framework and is a tool for the continuing discussion. Greg Johnson will be getting on our agenda to discuss that at a roundtable meeting. It's going to get more difficult, and it will be crucial to stand together as a state.

Regarding the lively discussions of the Code of Conduct - this has not changed much from what DWR already had internally, but needs to be extended to the roundtable level. It's not meant to be a policing, but it is a reminder of who we are and what we stand for. We're asking the roundtables to hold the standard that we hold ourselves too.

The water equity taskforce is about opening up conversations between roundtables and all water users, not about water rights issues or demand management. You are welcome to form your own taskforce. We're not trying to re-look at prior appropriation doctrine, the attention is on how we broaden the conversation. Everyone deserves access to clean water and a voice at the table. We are going to be looking at equity, diversity and inclusion through a broad lens. You can adopt this policy or not, but it has been adopted by the state and applies to all of the roundtables.

It is possible that federal stimulus funding will become available. This funding will come through the Water Plan program. Please be prepared with grant applications in case there is a big influx of funds into the basins. There may be some strings attached about how quickly it must be spent. Water projects are a good aspect of economic recovery.

Re Zoom Meetings – so much of the passion is generated by face-to-face conversations. We know that you are missing that. Staff is missing that as well. Please hang in there with us.

We are pushing to add funds to WSRF every chance we get, but it still holds true that the severance tax fund is expected to be very low for the next three years. The Water Plan grant fund does have \$16 million at this time. Remember that you are the stewards of the money that comes in, and you are shaping how that money is spent. The budget is uncertain, but please do NOT put projects on hold because of that. If/when stimulus funds come in, there will be a level of urgency with that, and projects will need to be ready for funding, so that funds are stimulating the economy as quickly as possible. For instance, forest and watershed health projects are labor intensive, and if funded, start feeding local economies immediately.

Sandy asked about funding for forest management projects. There has been an issue as to who should be responsible for that. CWCB is eager to fund this further, so please raise your voice as to that need.

The first Colorado Water Plan, in Chapter 9, focused on the federal component and the NEPA process. One of the things that we thought about was this question, about how to make project permitting efficient. When things take so long that work must be re-done, that's not efficient at all. We need to clean up our own house first. That was part of the goal of the water plan and BIP updates. What has been achieved is our blue book on how best to get projects done. That was a collaborative project with federal partners and some of the large water utilities.

Link to the HANDBOOK – Colorado Water Supply Planning and Permitting:

<https://dnrweblink.state.co.us/cwcb/0/doc/204742/Electronic.aspx?searchid=6a096399-9602-4dad-953f-32e94af10fe6>



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Greg Felt echoed comments regarding forest health, which is such an integral part of our water infrastructure that it is really present in nearly every project.

Greg introduced Robert Sakata, the newest CWCB board member.

Upcoming Workshops (engagewcwb.org):

Apr 21	Resilient Food Systems Workshop
May 5	Climate Change and Agriculture Workshop
May 6	Water Plan Update Education Scoping Workshop
May 26	Irrigation Innovation Workshop
Jun 2	Water Plan Update Water Sharing & Drought Scoping Workshop
Jun 8	Riverside Chat II

IBCC Report – Jeris Danielson & Terry Scanga

The next IBCC meeting will be held June 23rd. The Yampa/White/Green basin made a Demand Management Statement. Jeris thinks we should review, discuss, and write our own statement. Mark will share the statement with the roundtable. Exec committee can take a first crack at developing our own statement. Will discuss this in May.

Link to Yampa White Green Roundtable-Demand Management Document:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1t-BJ-ZO5wESfVoxcgUegNAdvBYZb-gFj/view>

Needs Assessment Committee – Abby Ortega

The next round of WSRF Grant Applications is due to Abby by April 30th for a Needs Assessment Committee meeting on May 5th, and presentation at the May 12th roundtable meeting. There is \$427,000 available in basin funds and \$5,400,000 in statewide funds available. Abby is expecting two at this time.

If anyone is available and would like to participate in the Needs Assessment Committee, they are welcome to do so. It would be helpful to have more folks review applications.

Enviro/Rec – Bob Hamel, Amber Shanklin, Rena Griggs

Did have a workshop with Jojo La regarding the focus area maps. Gives us the task of how to move on with that in the future. This will be on our agenda. Rena saw it as super-valuable and having a lot of potential. What additional GIS layers could be added in to make it even more useful? More recent environmental projects need to be added and people are eager to do that. It would be good to know what the current layers are. Carol suggested adding fire scar layers and other possible layers that show projects funded outside of CWCB. Mark reminded members that the first BIP was developed without a Decision Support System, something that is still in progress for the Arkansas Basin RT.

CDPHE has put out a request for proposals, after the Newmont USA settlement regarding the California Gulch Superfund Site: Upper Arkansas River-California Gulch Natural Resources Damages – Solicitation for Project Proposals

https://mcusercontent.com/30f0231e9e83e1d491fb461b2/files/70c4756d-780a-47c4-b8c7-ff1b983ab7d9/CDPHERM_HAZ_NRD_Restoration_Upper_Arkansas_River_California_Gulch_NRD_Solicitation_for_Project_Proposal.pdf



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USFS/NRCS federal funds may be coming. It does exclude funding for roadless areas. Mark Shea provide a link.

ARWC – Carol Ekarius

We have a grant contract in place for last year's forest and fire related issues, including planning. Looking at critical watersheds for water supply to feed the forest atlas in the future. We're also making an agreement with CDPHE for additional funds for Spring Creek Fire mitigation.

The board is now meeting regularly outside of the RT day. The board changed the language in the ARWC bylaws to allow the board to nominate additional board members outside of the RT executive committee. Allows us to look for members that can bring specific skills and knowledge. At least 51% of the ARWC board must be RT exec comm members and the entire roundtable will need to approve new member appointments. In May, the ARWC board will discuss the process to add new members.

On the Monarch steep slope pilot project, we are getting to work. The forest service came up with extra money which needs to be matched, which will expand the project to the NW side of Monarch Pass, adding 125 additional acres. Keeping that contractor here for another field season is really important. Around half of the original scope is left, and we are hoping to make it attractive for them to possibly add a hub in Colorado.

PEPO – Paul Fanning, Alli Schuch (meets on the 3rd Wednesday each month, at 1:30 pm)

PEPOW met last month. We are putting together what our revitalized outreach will look like. They have come up with an initial task list for Alli, beginning with website updates. They are also working on the Education Action Plan, which is due in June.

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.

BIP Update – Brett Gracely, Will Koger, Lindsay Griffith

We are making revisions to basin goals, including tweaking language that just came out of the exec comm meeting this morning. This kicked off a strategy discussion around the focus of the content for Volume 1. The strategies are the bridge between basin goals and the projects; telling the story of how the projects will meet the goals. Will develop four or five strategies and bring that back to the roundtable when it is more fleshed out.

Then we will be talking about the development of Volume 2, which is more of a refinement of what was done in 2015, deciding what needs an update, and what is no longer applicable. The goal is to have a draft completed by end of June. There will be an internal review before it's submitted to the roundtable, and those review processes will begin in July.

BREAK

The Importance of Supplemental Water to Agricultural Interests in the Arkansas Basin – Bill Tyner, Division Engineer

- Value of additional water supply to mainstem ditches below Pueblo Reservoir
 - Examples:
 - Bessemer Ditch
 - Catlin Canal
 - Rocky Ford Highline Canal



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- Fort Lyon Canal
- Economic Aspect of Supplemental Supplies
 - Estimating gross revenue per acre for four project area ditches
 - Estimating acreage value of water supply components
 - Estimating revenue enhancement from supplemental supplies

Looked at types of crops grown, and estimated crop yield-crop prices per acre. This resulted in estimated acres irrigated/revenue by source of water.

- Examples of Cooperative FryArk/Municipal/Agricultural Successes in the Arkansas Basin with Well Associations
 - Arkansas Groundwater Users' Association – FryArk/Municipal Contributions for Replacement Water
 - Colorado Water Protective & Development Association – FryArk/Municipal Contributions
 - Lower Arkansas Water Management Association - FryArk/Municipal Contributions

The Frying Pan/Arkansas Project and municipal leases have played a major role in the operation of the three large well associations in the Ark River basin. Numerous municipalities have provided water to the associations. Leases of municipal water have also been critically important as a supply for Compact Compliance to the Offset Account in John Martin Reservoir.

Members asked questions and discussed the benefits of increased storage higher up in the system, alluvial aquifer storage, the benefits and cost of transit loss, enviro/rec benefits, and more. All were agreed as to the value of supplemental supplies.

Bill Tyner also commented on the loss of storage due to sedimentation after fire. If you can use pre-fire mitigation forest health measures to avoid that loss of storage, that is huge.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:52 pm.

Admin Email: ARKBASINRT@GMAIL.COM

MEETINGS/LINKS: (all meetings in 2021 will be virtual)

- Arkansas Basin Roundtable Meeting: May 12, 12:30 pm www.arkansasbasin.com
- PEPOW: April 21, 1:30 pm (3rd Wednesday monthly) www.pepoarkbasin.com
- Enviro/Rec: April 26, 10:00 am
- CWCB: May 19 & 20 <http://cwcb.state.co.us/Pages/CWCBHome.aspx>
- PEPO Statewide: June 22, 1-3 pm
- IBCC: June 23, 8-12
- 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/>