



Arkansas Basin Roundtable

PLANNING OUR
WATER FUTURE

ARKANSAS BASIN ROUNDTABLE MEETING SUMMARY MINUTES AND RECORD OF DECISIONS

September 8, 2021

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83339826655?pwd=YzY0eWhmb3Bsc1VFNDhjYWWh0T1JHZz09>

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

Roundtable Business

Mark Shea called the meeting to order at 12:31 pm. There are 19 active members as of August 2021; a quorum is a simple majority of active members, therefore nine is a quorum. A quorum was reached for this meeting.

The decision to have a virtual meeting was based on the number of members who RSVP'd to be in person, as well as the requirements of Pueblo Community College. We will attempt to resume the hybrid meeting style next month while staying aware of the pandemic.

Approval of Prior Meeting Notes

August meeting notes have been circulated for review. *Meeting notes were approved by consensus, with a date correction.*

Public Comment - none

REPORTS:

Executive Committee – Mark Shea

We have a new member- Jack Goble, who has been appointed by the Lower Arkansas Valley Water Conservancy District. Jack has participated in the Roundtable previously and he is the former CWCB director. Welcome Jack! October is the annual meeting for the Roundtable, and we are holding elections for executive committee positions including the Chair, the Vice-Chair for consumptive, the Vice-Chair for non-consumptive, Recorder position, and one IBCC seat. We have reached out to see if incumbents are willing to continue to serve. Among those willing to do so are Mark Shea and Bob Hamel.

Matt Heimerich is stepping down from the position of Vice-Chair for Consumptive Use. We will be accepting Nominees for this seat. Mike Fink will be stepping down from the Recorder Position. Al Tucker has stepped forward as a nominee for the Recorder position.

All seats are available for nominations. If there is only one candidate per seat, we will approve their appointment by consensus. If there are two candidates for a seat, we will vote. Please make a point of attending the October meeting and participating in the election. If there are questions, comments or nominations contact Mark or Elise through the Arkansas Basin email address. Info will be sent out about candidates before the October meeting.

At the Executive Committee meeting, we discussed the hiring process for the new director for the Arkansas River Watershed Collaborative. Jonathan Palakian has accepted the position.

We continue to track the demand management conversation with CWCB and are working on developing and refining comments that the Roundtable can put forth regarding demand management and other issues relating to the Colorado River System. We will have something out for the executive committee to review in October and will bring that to the full Roundtable in October or November.



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CWCB Report – Sam Stein, Russ Sands, Greg Felt – engagecwcb.org

Kat Weismiller - Regarding the BIP update, thank you to the Roundtable members who have reviewed the document. The Roundtable comment period will close Monday the 13th. The public comment period will begin on October 13th. If anyone needs access to the BIP, please reach out to Kat.

An update on the Water Plan- we have concluded the scoping phase and are entering a drafting phase. We plan to have a public draft for review in June of 2022. Our board meeting is next week September 15/16. Interested members can tune in on the CWCB YouTube channel. We also have the public workshop for the Water Equity Task Force on September 30th.

Greg Felt: In addition to the Wednesday and Thursday CWCB meeting on September 15th and 16th, on Tuesday the 14th there will be the annual finance meeting. Kurt Russel will outline funding sources and balances. This meeting is open to the public and will be an informative meeting to attend.

The CWCB board is putting significant time into the demand management conversation. We are questioning the alternatives to a compact call in the event of continued shortage, questioning what a compact call is, and what it means to trans-mountain diversions. We are looking at putting together a statement of concerns and trying to get clear on what we are trying to do and trying to avoid. Greg thanked Robert Sakata for joining the meeting today.

Demand Management

Mark- Regarding the Demand management policy statement we have discussed the need for improved administration and measurement of Colorado River supplies. There was a good panel at Colorado Water Congress, which presented stories and lessons learned from compact compliance in different river basins. Jack Goble participated and spoke about the Arkansas Basin compact. It was interesting to hear firsthand stories from basins with compacts, and providing lessons learned that we may want to consider in our own demand management conversations.

Jack- That was a great panel and it was so interesting to hear from basins with different concerns. The panel was based on a report by Hannah Holm and Kelsey McElroy, which included interviews of basin leaders and is a very interesting read <https://www.coloradomesa.edu/water-center/compact-stories.html>.

FYI, the CWCB will have a presentation at our meeting next week from Hannah on the lessons learned report that Jack has provided the link for.

Mark- on the preliminary policy statement we are looking at risks to trans-mountain diversion projects. Greg has brought up secondary impacts in participation in a demand management program and what exactly that entails, and what is done to mitigate those secondary impacts. We will review the Demand Management policies from other basins to inform this process.

Needs Assessment Committee – Abby Ortega

Reminder: Additional funding is available through the Water Supply Grant Fund, please put forward projects. Abby will send out deadline reminders.

Ag/Muni Committee – Matt Heimerich

Still waiting to get through production season before convening the first meeting. Matt will stay engaged in that role.

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

Bob- We have completed the Voluntary Flow Management Program. This was a great program. A big thanks to all our partners for making this program successful!



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The Black Hills project is ongoing- the request for proposal on hazardous material mitigation is going out on October 1st. Those sites will be cleaned up and turned over to Canyon City and there is a master plan to create a facility that will include a boat ramp and other features to enhance the river walk.

Rena- We were planning on holding off on applying for the Colorado Water Plan Grant for removal of the Low-head Dam, but we are rethinking this and may still try to get our application in this fall.

Bob- Some updates about the forum: The farm tour on the 16th was successful and well attended with new people involved. Thanks to the Lower Arkansas for putting together a good program! The next tour will be in Pueblo, of the Reservoir Operations on October 23rd. Jean Van Pelt will stay on as the program manager, to get through the forum event in April 2022.

ARWC – Carol Ekarius

Carol- Good news! We have selected a candidate for executive director- Jonathan Palakian was program manager for the Grand Staircase/Escalante Watershed Partnership. He has a well-rounded suite of skills, with lots of grant writing experience. We plan for him to attend the October meeting.

ARWC, in partnership with Lake County and Trout Unlimited, has put in a \$5.2 million dollar request to the NRD (Natural Resources Damages) trust fund account that will do forest work including replacing bad culverts with crossings that are fish friendly, improve safety, and can handle post-fire water. There will also be some historic mine reclamation work. We will be coming in for a request from the Water Supply Reserve, Water Plan Grant and a Watershed Grant Program, and will have other partners contributing funding. There are 28 individual projects in our request. There is another request from CPW for a lowhead dam removal, and a request from Central Colorado Conservancy to acquire land on the river to expand public fishing access.

The Monarch project is going forward quickly. We are trying to set up a tour with Executive Director Gibbs at DNR, Director Mitchell and Governor Polis. If that tour comes together, I will request key members of the Roundtable to participate. We have added additional acres and increased the size of that project over the years.

On the Statewide Watershed Analysis- Last year Senate bill 2240 authorized more money for the CWCB. \$29.5 million was focused on 2020 fire recovery work. \$500,000 is going to the CWCB to develop a plan for watershed wildfire protection. Ingenuity Engineering is working this and has brought in about 10 other people to help develop a plan to work on how we do pre and post-fire water protection. We are moving forward with data collection. As we figure out how to prioritize the watershed, there is an opportunity for interactivity with Roundtables. We will work on a framework that can be adapted by local areas in order to fit their area better. We are also looking at putting together information sheets to help communities use their recovery coordinators and emergency managers.

Greg- The idea of putting together a toolkit for the aftermath of a fire is great.

Mark- Having the support for the CWCB to conduct a statewide watershed analysis to investigate the susceptibility of life, safety, infrastructure, and water supplies through wildfire impacts is huge. That process is happening under senate bill 21240. There is another piece of legislation, senate bill 21250, which provided additional funding to the DNR for several efforts, one of which was for a federal national incident management organization comprehensive risk analysis to identify the most strategic landscapes in this state for wildfire mitigation and fuel reduction projects. Another statewide analysis that's happening with the Department of Natural Resources and senate bill 258 also appropriated \$17.5 million dollars to support the initiatives that the legislation kicks off but also to fund projects that are identified through that process. ARWC must ensure that the work it does with the Statewide Watershed Analysis group under senate bill 240 feeds into this statewide assessment being done by DNR under senate bill 258.

Carol- Amber has a question about how ditch companies and act and react- We are looking not just at municipal water supplies but at agricultural supplies diversions, things like that. The intent is to look at water wildfire relations at both the municipal industrial scale and the agricultural scale.



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Carol- The Western Governors Association is going to have a Working Lands Meeting in December and “Post-fire,” is going to be one of the topics. That association is trying to raise the profile of this subject.

Terry Scanga- How will this funding help with the interfacing of the United States Forest Service who have had policies that ignore those lands that have a “Let it burn” policy? It is important to have that conversation with the USFS.

Carol in response to Terry- The Chief came out with a new policy this year that said no more “Let it burn.” The Governor and The Undersecretary of Agriculture signed a shared stewardship agreement between Forest Service and the State of Colorado, so these discussions are happening at a higher level, and we have a new Forest Health Advisory council this year.

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

Paul- Our Education Action Plan has been approved! There is now an Arkansas Basin Roundtable Facebook Page, please follow that and share with others. We are hoping this will be a good tool to communicate with the public. If there is anything of interest that could be added to the Facebook Page, please send it to Alli. Alli has also been updating the website with the addition of educational resources, so check that out. Allie has also participated in numerous meetings and tours on our behalf.

There is a statewide PEPOW meeting in October.

Water 22 planning is going forward. Water Education Colorado is leading that effort which will be like the Year of Water from 2012.

Creek Week will take place September 25- October 3rd. As members of the Roundtable, we can be helpful by meeting and greeting with the community at these events. There will also be a PEPOW workgroup meeting next week. Please feel free to join!

Bill Banks- Heads up that the Fountain Creek Watershed District Greenway Tour is this Friday, September 10th. We will be touring five projects the district has been involved in, please feel free to join!

BREAK

BIP UPDATE – Brown and Caldwell, Local Experts

We are in the Roundtable review process. Please contact Kat if you need access to BIP documents.

Lindsey- showed the BIP with comments and showed how to comment on BIP. Most of the comments are editorial, easy to fix, and suggestions. No huge changes are required at this point. Edits will be processed before moving to public comment.

Lindsey spoke specifically about Section 6, The Strategic Vision for the Future. We would like to add some example projects to highlight the work and vision of the basin. We are also looking for pictures of things that are unique to our Basin. Please send in any relevant photography, we are working toward a magazine-like visually stimulating document.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:13.

Admin Email: ARKBASINRT@GMAIL.COM



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MEETINGS/LINKS:

- Arkansas Basin Roundtable Annual Meeting: October 13, 12:30 pm www.arkansasbasin.com
- PEPOW: September 15, 1:30 pm (3rd Wednesday monthly) www.pepoarkbasin.com
- Enviro/Rec: September 27, 10:00 am
- CWCB: September 15 & 16 <http://cwc.state.co.us/Pages/CWCBHome.aspx>
- PEPO Statewide: October 20
- 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://cwc.colorado.gov/instream-flow-rules-revisions-hb-20-1157>
- DARCA - <https://www.darca.org/>