

South Platte Basin Roundtable (SPBRT) Meeting
Tuesday, October 12, 2021
4:00-7:00 p.m. (MST)
Virtual Meeting

South Platte Basin Roundtable Business Meeting Minutes

South Platte Basin Website: <https://southplattebasin.com/>

CWCB SPBRT Website: <https://cwcb.colorado.gov/about-us/basin-roundtables/south-platte-basin-roundtable>

1. Welcome and Introductions (Garrett Varra – 10 min)

The meeting started at 4:03 p.m. In attendance: Loretta Daniel*, Jim Yahn*, Garrett Varra*, Kirk Vincent*, Audrey Butler*, Ken Huson*, Lisa Leben*, Kelsea Holloway*, Donnie Dustin*, John Kolanz*, Jim Hall*, Dick Elsner*, Larry Rogstad*, Deb Daniel*, Scott Griebing*, Lynda James*, Lori Saine*, Sean Chambers*, Casey Davenport, Christy Wiseman, Robert Sakata, Sam Stein, Carmen Farmer, Corey DeAngelis, Dan Betts, David Riordon, Erik Jorgensen, Juan Madrid, Kyle Whitaker, Mark Shea, Mary Gearhart, Matt Cook, Matt Lindburg, Mike Strugar, Will Koger, and multiple members of the public. Matt Jones*, Kevin Lusk*, Daylan Figgs*, Bruce Gerke*, and Sean Cronin were excused from the October meeting. 18 voting SPBRT members were present (* denotes a voting member).

2. Approval of September 2021 Meeting Minutes (Garrett Varra – 5 min action required)

Kirk Vincent made a motion to approve the September 2021 meeting minutes and Jim Yahn seconded. The motion passed unanimously without discussion or contest.

3. October 2021 Agenda Additions or Changes (Garrett Varra – 5 min action required)

Garrett Varra proposed to add one item to the October 2021 agenda. He added a Colorado Forest and Water Alliance presentation by Mark Shea after the Colorado Open Lands presentation (item 5). Kirk Vincent made a motion to accept the October 2021 meeting agenda with the aforementioned change and Sean Chambers seconded. The motion passed unanimously without discussion or contest.

4. Public Comment (5 min)

Garrett Varra invited members of the public to comment on water-related topics by speaking up or using the chat throughout the meeting.

5. Presentation from Colorado Open Lands: New Tax Benefits for Districts, Ditches, and Reservoirs (Carmen Farmer – 30 min)

Carmen Farmer of Colorado Open Lands and Mike Strugar of The Conservation Resource Center presented recent legislative updates that increased the tax credit value of various conservation easements. After their presentation, Casey Davenport asked whether the Ditch & Reservoir Company

Alliance (DARCA) was involved with the legislative changes and if Farmer and Strugar were familiar with Agriburbia LLC. Strugar commented that DARCA was involved in the legislative process as a stakeholder; he contacted the DARCA Board to follow up but hadn't heard back. Matt Cook, a DARCA Board member, commented that DARCA's next conference is in February and that the organization is updating their member handbook; the new tax credit guidance could be included in the handbook. Cook offered to connect Strugar with other DARCA Board members. Strugar commented that it will take time for wider adoption of the new tax credit system.

6. Colorado Forest and Water Alliance

Garrett Varra reminded everyone that the Colorado Forest and Water Alliance (COFWA) previously shared a policy principles document with the SPBRT; those materials were discussed at the August 10, 2021 SPBRT meeting. Varra invited Mark Shea of COFWA (and Chair of the Arkansas Basin Roundtable) to present.

Shea introduced himself and gave a background on COFWA's history, members, and mission. COFWA members recognize the need to protect water supplies from forest health risk, primarily risk of catastrophic wildfire. Shea went over the documents (included in the October meeting materials folder) in detail. He noted that it is important for the Roundtables to recognize forest health and the risk of wildfire to water supplies in their BIPs. Shea and various SPBRT members discussed the lack of water integration in the 2020 Colorado Forest Action Plan. Shea explained challenges of special land use designations (e.g., wilderness areas, inventoried roadless areas, etc.) that make it difficult to do active forest management work necessary to protect critical water supplies from risk of catastrophic wildfire. Shea and multiple SPBRT members talked about how other Roundtables have reacted to COFWA's policy principles and how these policy discussions can inform various planning processes and management decisions. The Colorado State Forest Service's structure (within Colorado State University) was also discussed. A couple SPBRT members gave general support for COFWA's principles. Garrett Varra thanked Shea for the presentation and decided to let SPBRT members think about the concepts more.

7. Basin Implementation Plan (BIP) Update (Garrett Varra and Matt Cook – 60 min)

Matt Cook and Matt Lindburg presented the latest BIP update. The draft BIP can be reviewed on engagecwcb.org and comments can be submitted through an online form. Each draft BIP will utilize the same online comment form. The public can also comment on the draft online project database. The consultant team has received and responded to comments from SPBRT and Metro RT members based on the Roundtable members' review period; all those responses are available upon request. Matt Lindburg also commented on forest health related content in the updated BIP, based on the previous agenda item. The consultant team will work on resolving public comments and preparing the final version throughout November and December.

8. SPBRT Committee Updates

- a. South Platte Basin and Statewide Account Balances / Water Supply Reserve Fund (WSRF) (Garrett Varra and Sam Stein – 10 min)**

Sam Stein reported \$505,865 for the South Platte Basin WSRF balance. This does not include the recent stimulus funding. There is over \$8 Million in the statewide WSRF account.

Garrett Varra noted that he received six WSRF applications by the deadline of October 1. WSRF Needs Committee members will meet to review the applications and make recommendations in advance of having applicants present at the November SPBRT meeting. The November SPBRT meeting will be lengthy due to WSRF applications as well as requests for support for Water Plan Grants.

b. Public Education, Participation, and Outreach (PEPO) (Casey Davenhill – 15 min)

Casey Davenhill presented the PEPO report. She highlighted the 23rd Annual Cherry Creek Watershed Conference and the Sustaining Colorado Watersheds Conference. She also asked for feedback on the idea of doing public outreach at the Colorado Farm Show, to which SPBRT members gave approval.

c. Demand Management Committee Update (Sean Chambers – 5 min)

Sean Chambers gave an update on the Demand Management Committee's progress. After the presentation, Kirk Vincent commented that he has attended all of the meetings and been impressed with the work. Chambers echoed Vincent's sentiment; attendees have devoted a lot of time and shared technical insight. Casey Davenhill asked a clarifying question about a graphic showing transmountain diversions on one of Chambers' slides. Garrett Varra commented that the SPBRT is taking a leadership role and setting a standard for collaboration.

9. Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) Update (Sam Stein and Robert Sakata – 10 min)

Robert Sakata gave a CWCB Board update. A written report was included in the October meeting materials folder. After Sakata's report, Sam Stein noted that the public comment period for the BIP updates starts October 13 and goes until November 15. CWCB staff will test the updated projects database as well. Each Roundtables' updated BIP will feed into the overall Water Plan update. Stein then went over upcoming CWCB meetings and thanked everyone who attended the Equity in Water Workshop in late September.

Garrett Varra also went over upcoming meetings. The November SPBRT meeting will be lengthy due to several grant applications. The December SPBRT meeting will be a joint meeting with the Metro RT at the South Platte Forum on December 9; there should be both an in-person and remote option. The January meeting will serve as the SPBRT's annual meeting with elections; that will be Varra's last meeting as Chair. The meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

After the meeting formally ended, David Riordon with the Colorado River Surfing Association asked Varra how to get involved with the SPBRT.