

**Interbasin Compact Committee Basin Roundtables  
Rio Grande Basin Roundtable**

**MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday January 11, 2022 at 2:00pm  
Via Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85104307142?pwd=QUFac1cyKytGK01LYINLS3hvbDVwZz09>

Meeting ID: 851 0430 7142

Passcode: 449716

Call in Option

+13462487799 US (Houston)

**Call to Order**

Chairman Nathan Coombs called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m.

Those in attendance virtually included Nathan Coombs (CWCD/chairman of the Roundtable), Judy Lopez(Acting Vice Chair/Trinchera Foundation), Kevin Terry(Trout Unlimited, Recreation Rep), Heather Dutton(CWCB,SLVWCD), Emma Reesor(RGHRP), Nikita Cooper(Rio Grande County), Daniel Boyes(RGHRP), Connor Born(RGHRP), Erin McWilliams(RGHRP), Dale Pizel(Wildlife), Sarah and Charlie(COL), Keith Holland, Peyton Valentine(CWCD), Amber Pacheco(RGWCD), Cary Aloia(), Cindy Medina(ARK), Steven Romero (Costilla County Commissioner), Tricia Snyder (WildEarth Guardians), Danielle Snyder (Brown & Caldwell), Anna Greenberg (Bird Conservancy of the Rockies and NRCS), Sam Stein (CWCB), Sally Wier (Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust), Valentina Valdez (Rio Grande Farm Park), Rio de La Vista (Director, Salazar Rio Grande Del Norte Center, ASU), Chris Shaffer (USFWS), Bethany Howell (Colorado Department of Ag), Jim Ehrlich (Alamosa County), JoAnn Slivka (Baca Grande Water and Sanitation District), Chuck Finnegan (Conejos County), Sarah Parmar (Colorado Open Lands), Charlied Goodson (Colorado Open Lands), Adam Moore (Colorado State Forest Service), Darin Schepp (DWR), Daryl Kohut (Rio Grande National Forest), Judy Jolly (Agriculture at Large), Keith Holland (Water User at Large), Erin Minks (Senator Michael Bennet), Peter Clark (Water User at Large), Virginia Christensen (Water User at Large)

***Note:*** *To streamline the meeting, agenda topics were voted on through acclimation*

Chairman Coombs asked for flexibility in the meeting's agenda to accommodate the schedules of IBCC Director Dan Gibbs, as well as Alex Funk with the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Foundation. There was no opposition.

**The minutes of the November 9, 2021 meeting were reviewed.** There were no additions or corrections to the November minutes. The minutes were approved with no opposition.

**Public Comment**

- **Rio de la Vista - The Rio Grande State of the Basin Symposium will be held Saturday, February 26, 2022. The Symposium will be for the general public and will be honoring Greg Hobbs.**
- **Judy Lopez - Roundtable Education Committee - Check out the media released by the education committee on Facebook and the Roundtable Website. The roundtable will be releasing content every month under a different topic.**
- **Daniel Boyes/Nathan Coombs - Daniel wanted to thank those that participated in the BIP Update, which is almost complete. There will be one final opportunity to provide input before being published at the end of January. Nathan explained that there is one more week for roundtable members to make comments (the document will be sent out shortly after the meeting). This review is mostly for grammar and typos, as the content has been reviewed extensively. There is also a story map presentation of the BIP Update which can be found here: <https://arcg.is/014DvX>**

The election for **Chair, Vice-chair, Secretary, and Recording Secretary** was opened. As **current acting Vice-Chair** Judy Lopez led the process of nominating and appointing positions, including chairman, vice-chair, and secretary.

Nathan Coombs was nominated by Keith Holland for the position of Chair. The nomination was seconded by Travis Smith. There was no further nomination. Nathan Coombs was elected chairman with no opposition. Emma Reesor was nominated by Nathan Coombs for the position of Vice Chair. Nikita Cooper seconded the nomination. Emma Reesor was elected with no opposition. Nikita Cooper was nominated by Rio de la Vista for the position of Secretary and Recording Secretary. Judy Jolly seconded the nomination. Nikita was elected with no opposition.

**Anna Greenburg presented a framework for the San Luis Valley which would be a “Phone Book” resource for Conservation on Private Lands.** The purpose of this resource is to increase cross-entity and partner communication, resulting in a streamlined collaboration process. This sheet would include contact information for different conservation organizations with overviews of their focus. This tool would require buy-in from organizations to be successful, but presents a great opportunity to increase collaboration. Anna asked information and questions be sent to her at [anna.greenberg@usda.gov](mailto:anna.greenberg@usda.gov).

**David Chelf presented on Windomes with possible opportunities for the Valley. David is new to the valley, with a background in greenhouse agriculture. He presented to the roundtable with the intent of demonstrating the opportunities for year-round agriculture via greenhouse production. Much like photovoltaic cells, greenhouses have the potential to take advantage of the large amount of solar energy that the climate of the San Luis Valley provides. If properly taken advantage of, David believes that high-value perennial crops such as tomatoes and strawberries could be economically viable. He can be contacted at [David@WinDomes.com](mailto:David@WinDomes.com)**

Dale Pizel volunteered that he will be building a greenhouse in Creede with David to explore the viability of strawberries.

**Heather Dutton gave an update on Renewable Water Resources. There has been a lot happening with the Douglas County Proposal, which asks for \$20 Million in support to move forward with the RWR plan. The Douglas County Commissioners will be reaching**

out to municipalities and stakeholders in the valley to help verify/disprove facts presented by RWR. Heather encouraged members of the Roundtable to write to the commissioners respectfully opposing this plan. Consider visiting [protectsanluisvalleywater.com](http://protectsanluisvalleywater.com) for more information and help drafting a letter.

**Dan Gibbs, Colorado DNR Director and IBCC Chairman** gave an overview of the different programs the DNR is responsible for, as well as his professional experience in Colorado. He then talked about IBCC roles and responsibilities within Colorado's current climate situation. Funding opportunities regarding forest health were discussed, including senate bill 220, which provides \$30 Million in funding to the CWCB for watershed/forest health projects. He then took time for questions. Several people expressed appreciation for Dan's leadership and willingness to connect with the Roundtable.

**Alex Funk, Director of Water Resources, TRCP** spoke about funding opportunities. Alex, who is a former CWCB employee, presented several potential funding opportunities through federal legislation, including the IIJA and BBB bill. The Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership will serve as a resource for taking advantage of these opportunities.

#### **IIJA (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act)**

- Directs federal agencies to develop spending priorities
- Funds distributed largely through existing federal programs
- Careful alignment with state and local match resources
- Funding available NOW

Alex gave a breakdown of funding for this Act

There was a discussion about ideal project timelines given these funding windows. Alex clarified that getting projects lined up and starting discussions with federal and state partners is a great idea, but the window for this funding is 5 years. While existing programs will continue to be large sources of funding, new opportunities are likely to present themselves.

**Amber Pacheco** updated the group on the Sub-districts in the valley. Amber noted that she will be helping Cleave with Subdistrict business while he is in Denver, so include her in any discussions. With the warm winter the subdistricts are preparing for the next irrigation season. The subdistricts received a WaterSMART grant, which utilizes an ATM to provide additional replacement water. Subdistrict 5 is still looking for a source of water on Saguache Creek, and also passed Groundwater Allocation Rules and set a 30% reduction for the 2022 irrigation season.

**Darin Schepp** gave an update for the Division of Water Resources. The Valley is currently in drought, but that status will likely change due to the latest precipitation. Snowpack levels are at an average of 94%, but will likely decline without additional snow. The forecast for the next 3 months is below average precipitation. Rio Grande Compact litigation is currently in mitigation, and there is a chance the case will be settled without being taken to court. Darin gave an update on the abandonment process as well.

**Sam Stein** gave an update for the Colorado Water Conservation Board. There is a [BIP Survey](#) to help the CWCB receive feedback. [WSRF guidelines have changed](#) in an effort to

include resiliency projects. Basin PEPO Grants are now funded up to \$25k a year. There will be information coming regarding the [Drought Leadership Course](#).

The meeting was adjourned at 4:22pm

The next:

Roundtable Meeting: February 8, 2022 at 2:00pm

Executive Committee Feb 8, 2022 at 1pm

Location TBD