



Arkansas Basin Roundtable

PLANNING OUR
WATER FUTURE

ARKANSAS BASIN ROUNDTABLE MEETING SUMMARY MINUTES AND RECORD OF DECISIONS

March 9, 2022

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

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

Roundtable Business

The Roundtable is planning to continue hybrid meetings if possible.

Approval of Agenda

The March agenda has been circulated for review. *Agenda was approved by consensus.*

Approval of Prior Meeting Notes

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

Public Comment - none

REPORTS:

Executive Committee – Mark Shea

Mark attended the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) All Chairs meeting. CWCB has made progress on the State Water Plan with hopes to finish drafts by the end of the summer.

There was discussion about the projects database, how it can be more useful for project proponents and how CWCB and the Roundtables can use the database for project review.

There was also discussion about the loan portal's efficiency.

Mark noted the importance of staying aware of projects within the Basin that are applying for grants and having the opportunity to provide feedback and support for those projects.

The All Chairs meeting also discussed the authority of the Roundtables to add membership and create seats. This was based on the interest South Platte Roundtable had in creating a Watershed Health seat. The recommendation was to establish workgroups, and the Attorney General advised that Roundtables do not have the ability to create new seats.

The executive committee discussed programs and presentations and is asking for input from the Roundtable members on what they might like to see.

Mark addressed the membership of Amber Shanklin and Sarah Mudge on the Executive Committee, who stepped into the role to serve as officers on the board of the Arkansas River Watershed Collaborative (ARWC). The history of ARWC led to their Board of Directors being the same as the Roundtables' Executive Committee members.

There is a need to distinguish between the two, and there is a need for subject matter expertise on ARWC's board that may extend beyond the Executive Committee. The bylaws have been adjusted for ARWC so that there can be board members who are not Executive Committee members of the Roundtable. It is time review the bylaws for the Roundtable, and make sure that current practices are reflected in the bylaws. Abby Ortega can also look at the needs assessment committee and examine how it functions with the Roundtable.

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

Sam Stein reminded the board that the BIP survey is up for comment.



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The Department of Natural Resources dropped guidance for covid meetings but are still asking Roundtables to provide hybrid options.

There will be an update on demand management and infrastructure funding at the next CWCB meeting.

The July meeting for CWCB will be after the draft of the Water Plan is released, so this may be a good meeting to attend.

Sam introduced Megan O'Grady as CWCB's new Senior Climate Change Adaptations Specialist.

There was discussion about whether project proponent contact information should be available to the public.

There were concerns about proponents not being available for feedback, and the Basin's responsibility in protecting water rights. Sam suggested that there was the possibility of giving limited access to chairs or having a designated person responsible for connecting interested people to project proponents, but that the contact information should not be completely available to the public.

IBCC- Jeris Danielson

Jeris provided a funding update. There will be no severance fund monies for the Water Supply Reserve Fund (WSRF). The Department of Natural Resources has located funds, allocations will be \$3,000 to each Roundtable for three years, and \$300,000 to Public Education Public Outreach. If a basin has unused funds, the state will reallocate it to other basins.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is beginning a Statewide Sustainability Plan and there will be funding for pre-fire activities.

There is some discussion about when to make releases to Powell. Environmental groups advocate for dry season releases that would help sustain fisheries, but less water would get to Powell due to evaporative and transit losses, so there is consideration for winter releases.

The State will get \$3.8 billion from the American Rescue Plan, which will allocate \$50 million to look at groundwater sustainability in the Republican Basin and the Rio Grande Basin.

IBCC discussed a path forward. IBCC has been less proactive so the meeting took a look at where they can make an impact. Sub committees were formed to develop a path forward, and there is an effort to put together an agenda that is actively driven by IBCC. Jeris called for the Roundtable to reach out with interests that they would like him to bring to IBCC.

Mark brought up the ongoing risk of catastrophic wildfire to water supplies as a potential issue IBCC could work on.

Terry mentioned that demand management could only move forward if upper basin states worked together to create a program.

Mark brought up the importance of measurement, and the measurement rules that are being developed for Division Six. This way if the Roundtable must comply with an interstate compact, we can do it in an effective way.

Needs Assessment Committee – Abby Ortega

All grant applications moved forward at the November Roundtable meeting should be heard at CWCB meeting in March. There is interest in hearing from projects which received funding in the past and are now approaching completion, so they can provide a follow up to their project status.

Ag/Muni Committee – Kent Ricken

There have been productive conversations about phreatophyte removal. There was a successful removal project on the Apishapa, and the committee discussed how to bring that to the rest of the Basin.

Mark mentioned that a page for the Ag/Muni Committee has been added to the Arkansas Basin Roundtable website.



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

Bob reported that the Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) team presented funding opportunities to the committee. They are watching the progress of the Zephyr mine application under the division of Reclamation Mining and Safety.

Terry provided an update on the DeWeese Lake Enlargement. They have finished a feasibility study.

The first Voluntary Flow Management meeting of the year has been held, and it is predicted that 50,000 acre feet will be imported from the Fryingpan-Arkansas to the Arkansas Basin.

Meetings will occur quarterly on Zoom.

There is interest in the BIP list and looking at people and projects related to Enviro/Rec interests.

The Water Forum will be April 28-29th in Salida.

Program- Nicole Seltzer- Stream Management Planning.

Nicole Seltzer presented on Stream Management Plans (SMP). Nicole works for River Network and has been working with the State of Colorado and CWCB's Watershed Protection Section to get better SMPs done in Colorado. SMPs use assessments to analyze holistic river health (flows, fishery, sediment, transport, bank stability, riparian corridors, etc.) and recreation goals. Assessments are combined with stakeholder input to identify strategies and actions to protect/enhance priority objectives.

26 SMPs have been initiated or completed in Colorado.

\$8 million has been invested in stream management.

Buffy Lenth presented two areas of focus for the Upper Arkansas Basin in watershed planning: conservation and restoration of healthy river corridors, and agricultural resilience. Buffy focused on healthy floodplains and wetlands as part of healthy river corridors. Healthy floodplains build resilience in fires. Wetlands and rivers make up less than 2% of Colorado landcover in Chaffee County, but benefit 75% of wildlife species, and Colorado has lost 50 % of its wetlands. Agriculture plays a big role in river corridor projects, controlling 80% of water and owning 40% of the land in Colorado, and it is important to balance agriculture and the rise of residential development.

Julie Knudson presented on Purgatoire Watershed Partnership's SMP efforts. The Purgatoire Watershed is historically agriculturally dominant with agricultural, industrial and municipal demands on the water. With the influx of non-ag residents and visitors there is a need to add ecological and recreational interests to water use. Knudson emphasized the importance of pre-SMP planning which helped dial in the projects and find key partners. She also pointed out the difference between an SMP which primarily attends to ecological river health, and an Integrated Water Management Plan (IWMP), which adds in agricultural, industrial, municipal and economic priorities.

Jeris asked about what sort of analysis went into determining if there was an effect on water rights. Julie explained that stakeholders are made aware of every step and if there is concern about whether a water right will be affected, the process is halted entirely.

ARWC – Jonathan Paklaian

Jonathan met this week with some partners to discuss water technology with real-time data alerts on multiple types of information like ph., turbidity, etc. This technology costs money but provides valuable information.

Roundtable members who are interested supporting this project can contact Jonathan.

The COSWA request for inmate and youth crews has been approved for fuels mitigation efforts.

Jonathan provided an update on the Natural Resources Damages program application for California Gulch.

Mark spoke about the ARWC board meeting, during which they looked at the bylaws, how ARWC is supported, and what kind of funding structure is feasible.



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

Paul reported that confusion about the new funds for PEPO had been clarified. The funds are intended to support existing structures. The workgroup will work on applying for those funds.

The Water 22 celebration is happening now. This program depends on local efforts to raise awareness, appreciation, and inspire everyone to take a role in protecting those resources. Water 22 was kicked off in January and there are celebrity PSA's coming.

Alli plugged the Ag/Muni subcommittee webpage and reminded everyone that any website corrections can be sent to her.

We are one of the smaller members of the Colorado Water Wise Program, so for the Live Like You Love It program, the co-branded materials will be created for us to avoid unnecessary graphic design costs. Paul and Alli revisited some 2012 articles, and will work on revising and updating these, and may run them in *The Chieftain* again.

There is another Network meeting this month. Scott from Water Education Colorado (WECO) will present on what WECO is, and Water 22.

Terry Scanga was featured on Facebook as one of the Faces of the Watershed.

Alli met with Beth from the Colorado State Extension who has diverse connections and can include Basin activities in a newsletter.

Alli is working on connecting to local colleges to develop short videos and other opportunities for students.

Alli also attended a meeting for the Basin Brews program, doing the work of connecting with breweries and developing a menu of opportunities for the breweries to participate in. Breweries that wish to brew a special "Basin Beer," can participate in an East Slope vs. West Slope tasting event later this year.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00.

Admin Email: ARKBASINRT@GMAIL.COM

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://cwcb.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://cwcb.colorado.gov/instream-flow-rules-revisions-hb-20-1157>
- DARCA - <https://www.darca.org/>