

**Minutes of NPBRT Meeting: 9-25-18**  
**USFS Conf. Room (3-5 PM) 100 Main Street, Walden, CO**

**Members/Liaisons Present**

\*Mike Allnutt  
Deb Alpe  
\*Kent Crowder  
\*Blaine Evans  
David Graf (CPW)  
\*Randy Miller  
\*John Rich  
\*Carl Trick II  
Curtis Utley (CSU Ext.)  
\*Pat VanValkenberg  
\*Barbara Vasquez  
\*Ty Wattenberg  
Tara Wertz

**Members/Liaisons Absent**

\*Jim Baller  
Paula Belcher (BLM)  
\*Scott Fischer

Debbi Heeney (NRCS)  
\*Mike Honholz  
\*Douglas Waldron  
\*Rick Wyatt  
Jeremiah Zamora (USFS)

**Others Present**

Tiffany Rubacaba (BLM)  
Billy Gascoigne (DU)  
David Koons (CSU)  
Erin Light  
Coy Meyring  
Jason Roudebush (DU)  
Matt Sinclair (StateForest)  
Curran Trick (by phone)  
Kincaid Waldron

**I. Introductions/Agenda Review**

Agenda was accepted as proposed.

**II. Approval of Minutes for NPBRT 5-22-18 meetings**

The minutes of the 5-22-18 meetings were approved as written.

**III. Presentation on recent waterfowl research conducted in North Park and its relationship to North Park Irrigated Meadows Conservation Project, Phase II - Dr.**

David Koons, CSU Professor of Wetland and Waterfowl Conservation

Dr. Koons reviewed the current state of water fowl research in North Park, it's relationship to the North Park Irrigated Meadows II Conservation Project and it's importance in the State in face of the declining productivity of the San Luis Valley area. His powerpoint presentation was too large to attach with these minutes. Please contact B Vasquez if you would like to arrange for a copy. Because the presentation is not attached, much of the text is excerpted in these notes.

Dr. Koons collaborators include Casey Setash (potential Ph.D. student) plus Jim Gammonley and Adam Behney of CPW who would all work with Ducks Unlimited and private ranchers on the North Park Irrigated Meadows II Project if it is funded. North Park wetlands are among the best quality and least depleted in the State with 20% of NP surface classified as wetlands, 80% of which are privately owned. This underscores the importance of working with private landowners on wetlands and waterfowl conservation. The NP wetlands are important as stopover habitat for waterfowl migration and offer substantial waterfowl breeding habitat. The NP waterfowl production has historically been second only to the San Luis Valley in the State of Colorado. The ongoing dry-up of a substantial percentage of the irrigated agriculture in the San Luis Valley is having a big impact on waterfowl habitat, bringing NP habitat and waterfowl production increasingly into focus. Dr. Koons identified Ducks Unlimited as the #1 wetlands conservation organization

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in the world with a strong history of effective collaboration with private property owners. DU has executed projects previously in North Park to improve irrigation infrastructure for the benefit of waterfowl. The CPW Wetlands program has a goal of improving and increasing flood irrigated wetlands, with funding allocated for additional projects in 2017-2020. Casey Setash recently finished a master's degree at CSU studying waterfowl in the San Luis Valley. She ran CPW's North Park field operations in 2018 and would be responsible for leading the waterfowl monitoring aspects of the proposed project

One of the goals of this DU project is to not only improve irrigation infrastructure but to also increase acreage under irrigation in North Park. Four properties have been identified to date as potential collaborators.

Decreasing budgets drives collaborative projects such as this. It also means that targeted programs with measurable returns on management investments are more important than ever before. The link between irrigation infrastructure and waterfowl production depends on the assumption that irrigated hay meadows do indeed provide breeding habitat for waterfowl. More data is needed to substantiate that assumption.

CPW monitoring goals for this project will include collection of data on annual breeding populations, estimated annual duck production, estimated survival and harvest rates by banding ducks plus quantification of how wetland condition influences duck population growth rates.

CSU monitoring objectives include the assessment of waterfowl reproduction in irrigated hay fields before and after irrigation infrastructure improvements, measurement how much these enhancements benefit waterfowl via the provision of sheetwater wetland foods for hens to build their clutch of eggs as well as by providing safe nesting cover and safe brood habitat. CSU would also assess benefits of irrigation infrastructure improvements for landowners and downstream users in a variety of ways.

**IV. Discussion and Vote on WSRF Grant Application for \$148,698 in Basin Account Funds and \$301,902 in Statewide Account Funds for the North Park Irrigated Meadows Conservation Project –Phasell submitted by Ducks Unlimited, Inc. - Voting members of Roundtable will vote on Roundtable approval of this WSRF Grant Application** - Presented by Jason A. Roudebush and Billy Gascoinge

See powerpoint application attached with these minutes. Two of the four properties identified as partners for the project are private ranches, one is owned by the State Land Board and the fourth is on the Chandler unit of the Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge. There were a few questions for the presenters about the specifics of the projects on each property and about landowner contribution. Ty asked about the contract and it's restrictions. The NAWCA contract is a simple working contract. Although it runs for 30years, it has limited requirements which include that the owner continue to divert and irrigate to put the water to beneficial use and respect cutoff dates for haying. But it is only binding on the owner who engages in the contract and is not transferable at sale. David, a hydrologist with CPW, asked and received confirmation that there would be controls in the study for the outcomes in comparison to the improved irrigated meadows. Following the presentation and discussion, Kent called for a vote to recommend the project for funding. The votes were 7 for/ 2 against with the two dissenting members Mike Allnutt and Carl Trick. Kent will write a letter of recommendation with minority input to send to the CWCB.

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**V. North Platte Basin Roundtable Education Report Update** - Deb Alpe, outgoing Education and Outreach Liaison  
Deb Alpe provided presented the 2018 Education and Outreach budget (\$6500) versus actual expenditures (\$3532). She proposed similar 2019 budget (\$6500), which was approved unanimously by the voting members. The spreadsheet with the budget and expenditure details is attached with these minutes. She was roundly thanked and applauded by all present for her years of contribution as the Jackson County Extension Agent as well as our Education and Outreach Coordinator. She introduced Curtis Utley, our new Extension Agent, who is also taking on the task for the Roundtable as the E&O Coordinator. Curtis attended the recent PEPO meeting in that capacity and gave a brief report to the RT. He indicated there had been discussion about standardizing the budget format for all the basins. In addition, he handed around some very well designed information bifolds created by other basins. He said that our basins could use the same graphic designer. Costs for layout and printing could come from the EAP budget. Curtis said he'd find out the estimated costs.

**VI. CWCB/IBCC** – John Rich/Mike Allnutt and Curran Trick

**IBCC:**

No IBCC report.

**CWCB:**

Curran Trick, the new representative on the CWCB, gave a report over the phone. The meeting in Steamboat Springs last week focused on Colorado River issues and drought contingency planning. On Wednesday the Board heard over 2 hours of public comments. There was no Board action on the matter, but there has been intense interstate discussion between the Upper Basin and Lower Basin states. Curran drew our attention to two WSRA applications that were approved at the meeting. A watershed health project in the Arkansas Basin called Monarch Pass Fire & Water is the first of its kind to be funded by the CWCB. The Arkansas River Watershed Collaborative, which includes the USFS, TU, Chaffee County and the Arkansas Water District, was awarded \$366,739 in State funds and \$37,000 in Basin funds for what is actually a logging project. The argument is that by logging steep slopes, not only is the risk of fire reduced, but also the risk of erosion with concomitant delivery of rocks and silt to the river. The second WSRA application of interest was an education project also by the Arkansas Basin. A project to build a website for the Basin was awarded \$7k in State funds and \$5k in Basin funds. Curran will send both applications to Barbara for distribution with these minutes.

**VII. Old Business/New Business**

**Old:**

Ty said he's received a lot of positive feedback from the 6/7/18 public education event that our Roundtable held in Walden.

**New:**

None

**VIII. Date for the next meeting**

No next meeting date was set at this time. Watch your email for date/time.