



Inter Basin Compact Committee Basin Roundtables
Rio Grande Basin Roundtable

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 at 2:00 pm
GoTo Meeting Online

Meeting Minutes

Chairman called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm.

Attendance: Nathan Coombs, Emma Reesor, Daniel Boyes, Connor Born, Bethany Howell. Heather Dutton, Judy Lopez, Rio de la Vista, Cindy Medina Charles Spielman, Cleave Simpson, Cathy Garcia, Keith Holland, Lindsay Griffith, Steven Romero, Megan Colwell, Adam Moore, Emily Chavez, Kyle Balint, Peter Clark, Dwight Martin, Craig Cotten, Cary Aloia, Darin Schepp, Kristine Borchers, Chuck Finnegan, Abbey Warner, Mike Gibson, Ronda Lobato, Jim Ehrlich, Donald Valdez, Ann Bunting, Cathy Morin, Russ Sands, Eugene Farish, Kevin Terry, Laura Quattrini, Matt Nadel, Nikita Christensen, Peter Barkmann, Sam Stein, Christopher Arlington Shaffer, Virginia Sargent, Willow Cozzens, Christi Bode, Conor May, Daryl Kohut, Kathryn Weismiller, Ryan Unterreiner, Heather Greenwolf, Don Thompson.

Agenda

As the meeting is virtual, the agenda is approved by general consent unless otherwise indicated. There being no opposition, the agenda for July was approved.

Minutes

Chairman moved for general consent of the June 9, 2020 minutes as mailed out. There being no opposition, the minutes were approved.

Public Comment

Cleave Simpson highlighted the recent activity of Renewable Water Resources on Facebook and on their website. Simpson pointed out that the ads are misleading and that on the website renewablewaterresources.com, the statements being produced are also misleading and, in some cases, false. The RGWCD is working with a communications firm to create a plan with messaging for stakeholders. The website being created will serve as a factual point of reference.

Rio de la Vista discussed the virtual State of the Basin symposium taking place on July 28th. Ken Salazar and Craig Cotten will participate as well as others. Kevin Rein, Colorado state engineer will also be present. It will be recorded and available for those who aren't able to attend.

Coombs noted that the Basin account is currently at \$176,347 and the statewide account is at \$5,777,683.

WSRF Funding Request

Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project Executive Director, Emma Reesor, gave an overview of the funding request for the Conejos River Partnership Project. Following up on the initial project presentation, Reesor reiterated that the project came out the Conejos River Stream Management Plan and the priorities for improving the Conejos River, particularly concerning the diversion structures. There is an opportunity for multiple benefits to be addressed by this project, which furthers the goals and priorities of the SMPs developed through stakeholder engagement and data collection. The project replaces diversion structures and headgates for 5 different ditches, which will improve diversion efficiency, streambank stability, fish habitat and other environmental benefits. The RGHRP is working with the Conejos Water Conservancy District, as well as the private ditch owners, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and Division of Water Resources on the project. All of the ditches have extremely low ratings according to the SMP's measurements and therefore have much room for improvement. Reesor gave an overview of each ditch's issues and the components associated with improving each ditch and river condition.

The project meets multiple Water Plan goals and Basin Implementation Goals and will provide agriculture, environmental, recreational, and water administration benefits. It also involves many partners and collaborations. The total project cost is \$627,000, request from basin and state accounts is \$250,000. Other matching contributions from grants and partners will make up the remainder through cash and in kind.

Heather Dutton commented that this was a great example of a project with many benefits and appreciated Emma and Daniel's hard work in identifying the need for this project. The project is a textbook example of how the CWP and the SMP complement each other. Reesor acknowledged that many partners put time and effort into helping identify and understand the diverse on the ground needs. Craig Cotten commented that he wanted to thank the RGHRP for getting the project organized and that the DWR is looking forward to it. Cindy Medina asked who would be in charge of the project. Nathan Coombs responded on behalf of the Conejos Water Conservancy District that they asked Emma and the RGHRP to act as grant writers and project managers. The CWCD will be onsite to provide assistance as needed.

Coombs as chairman asked for a motion to approve, Rio de la Vista made a motion to approve the project as presented and Judy Lopez seconded the motion. The chairman asked for an acclimation and it was made with no opposition.

Basin Implementation Plan Update

Daniel Boyes from the RGHRP gave an update of the work plans and noted that they would send the draft document to the Roundtable at the end of the week for approval via email. Main items included in the work plan are a scope of work with the methodology of the local BIP process, reviewing technical update results, and using the tiering process for projects. It also describes the role of the Local Expert and the general contractor, as well as the Subject Matter Experts (SME). Additional studies and analysis are also included in the work plan, as well as, a timeline and budget. Developing the work plan has been the primary focus of the Local Expert as well as reviewing projects outlined in the 2015 process and identifying new projects. Updates to the projects list and their incorporation should be completed by the time the work plan is submitted with the idea that additional projects may come in because of additional analysis. Boyes described additional studies and analyses such as reservoir capacity, RGDSS model calibration, economics of recreation, cross basin forest health assessment, and tech update by incorporating new municipal water use data. Analyses are slated for completion by the end of 2020. BIP Update documents include two volumes, strategy (action-oriented), and evergreen (basin information). Boyes finished his presentation by discussing timeline into 2021 and the budget for the BIP.

2019 Forest Health Report

Adam Moore from the Colorado State University Forest Service gave an update on forest health observed around the state. Moore discussed the summary of the report, particularly with emphasis on the southwest and the San Luis Valley. Main factors discussed were impacts of insects and diseases on tree health, increase in avalanche issues, and mitigation. The updated Forest Action Plan will be ready in 2020. Projects particular to the San Luis Valley includes partnerships with the Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project for assessment, and other agencies for presentations, technical advice, and fuel reduction projects. Questions from audience members included spruce budworm food sources and if spruce beetle populations affected by Spring Fire. Moore noted that some trees were not affected by the fire and now are areas of concern for beetle issues. He concluded by saying the number of stressed trees has increased and most importantly, we don't have the organic matter levels present to help hold moisture, a key component to forest health and fire prevention.

CU Boulder Student Presentation

Judy Lopez from Colorado Open Lands introduced a presentation by students from the CU Boulder Law School who been working with acequias in the southern part of the Valley for the past 7years. The presentation provided the history of water export projects here in the SLV. Conor May and Virginia Sargent from CU-Boulder Law School walked the Roundtable through the AWDI proposal and measures put into place to thwart these threats. They ended the presentation discussing the recent framework for the RWR proposal. The students thanked both Craig Cotton and Cleave Simpson for their input while researching the project.

IBCC Report

Cleave Simpson has stepped down from being one of the basins IBCC representatives. Ann Bunting, the IBCC alternate, and Keith Holland will continue to represent the Rio Grande Basin. Nathan Coombs requested that he be allowed to act as the alternate. No one opposed the idea and so Nathan will be able to attend IBCC meetings on behalf of the Rio Grande Basin as well. Cleave noted that the IBCC is looking for direction from the roundtables and as a result a survey will be sent to the Roundtable members regarding what they want to see the IBCC pursue as the continue to move forward.

Colorado Division of Water Resources Report

Craig Cotten, Division 3 Engineer, gave a brief report on the state of water in the Rio Grande Basin. There is 2% curtailment on the Rio Grande. He listed the following flows for Rivers/streams across the basin:

<u>Reach</u>	<u>Current</u>	<u>Average</u>
Rio Grande	300 cfs	1200 cfs
Conejos	160 cfs	430 cfs
Culebra	49 cfs	112 cfs
Saguache	40 cfs	83 cfs
Alamosa	30 cfs	130 cfs
La Garita	4.5 cfs	14 cfs
Trinchera	9.5 cfs	26 cfs

Very bad numbers overall on all the streams. Cotten also noted that the unconfined aquifer lost 100,000 AF since January and is expected to lose up to an additional 100,000 acre feet. Weather service forecast is hot and dry throughout remainder of the year, so not much possibility of precipitation.

No subdistrict report as Cleave Simpson was no longer present.

CWCB Report

Sam Stein from the CWCB updated the Roundtable that the Board of Directors meeting will take place online this month. The main topic of discussion will be demand management, and Dan Gibbs from DNR will also discuss the important goals from the Governor's office. Some goals include Colorado Water and Basin Implementation Plans. Stein discussed the budget approved by the legislature and appreciated those who attended the listening sessions on the CWP. Water plan grants held up in May are moving forward at the July meeting, and there is approval for a spending plan that will help spread dollars into the future.

Heather Dutton thanked the CWCB staff for continuing to keep conversations moving forward. Dutton expressed the board's excitement at seeing the reports from the BIP's. She reminded the Roundtable to continue supporting each other's projects and CWCB staff through tough times.

There will be an email sent out to the Roundtable regarding whether to hold an August meeting or wait until September. There being no further business, the chairman adjourned the meeting at 3:44 pm.