

Interbasin Compact Committee
Southwest Basins Roundtable Meeting
Durango Public Library
Durango, Colorado
October 10, 2018

Members Present:

Ken Beegles	At Large Member	James Lambert	Montezuma County
Greg Black	At Large Member	Carrie Padgett	Domestic Water Representative
John Ey	Florida WCD	Al Pfister	San Juan WCD
Glen Fish	Dolores WCD	Mike Preston	At Large Member
Sonny Frasier	Dolores Municipalities	Justin Ramsey	Archuleta Municipalities
Becky Guilliams	Hinsdale County	Doug Stowe	Dolores County
Karen Gugliemone	San Miguel Municipalities	Andrew Straub	Southern Ute Indian Tribe
Steve Harris	Legislative Appointee	Ed Tolen	At Large Member
Celene Hawkins	CWCB Representative (phone)	Val Valentine	At Large Member
Kenny Heldman	Montrose Municipalities	Jim Wells	San Miguel WCD
Tim Hunter	Recreational Representative	Bruce Whitehead	Animas-La Plata WCD
Brandon Johnson	At Large Member	Mely Whiting	At Large Member
Phil Johnson	Montezuma Municipalities	Bob Wolff	Southwestern WCD

Public:

Imogen Ainsworth (City of Durango), Kara Armano (Artemis), Stacy Beough (Strategic by Nature, Consultant), Jarrod Biggs (City of Durango), Jimbo Buickerood (San Juan Citizens Alliance), Floyd Cook (Dolores County Commissioner), Hilary Cooper (San Miguel County Commissioner), John Currier (Colorado River Water Conservation District), Ken Curtis (Dolores Water Conservancy District), Marcie Demmy Bidwell (Mountain Studies Institute), Kari Distefano (Town of Rico), Steve Garcher (Dolores County Commissioner), Rob Genualdi (Colorado Division of Water Resources), Kate Greenberg (National Young Farmers Coalition), Dave Henry (Harris Water Engineering), Megan Holcomb (CWCB), Lain Leoniak (Colorado Attorney General), Ann McCoy-Harold (Senator Gardner's Office), State Representative Barbara McLachlan, Steve Miles (High Desert Conservation District), Ed Millard (Public), Brent Newman (CWCB), Kelly Palmer (US Forest Service), Gigi Richard (Fort Lewis College), Jonathan Romeo (Durango Herald), Russ Sands (CWCB), Don Schwindt (Dolores Water Conservancy District), Buck Skillen (Five River Trout Unlimited), Laura Spann (SW Water Conservation District, Recorder), Andrew Straub (Southern Ute Indian Tribe), John Taylor (Roundtable Member Emeritus), Aracely Tellez (National Young Farmers Coalition), Ryan Unterreiner (Colorado Parks & Wildlife), Beth Van Vurst (Fairfield & Woods), Greg Vlaming (High Desert Conservation District), Chuck Wanner (Public), John Whitney (Senator Bennet's Office), Danny Wilkin (Montezuma Valley Irrigation Company)

Introductions & Review Agenda

Chairman Mike Preston called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. Introductions were made. John Taylor introduced Becky Guilliams, who has been appointed to take his place on the Roundtable representing Hinsdale County.

1. Administrative Reports

Minutes Review and Approval

Minutes from July 11, 2018 were approved. Roundtable meeting documents and other files for reference are housed online for public and Roundtable use at <https://waterinfo.org/resources/southwest-basin-roundtable/>.

Officer and IBCC Representative Reports

Steve Harris invited the public to the IBCC meeting, which is in southwestern Colorado for the first time on October 18 at 9am at Fort Lewis College. There will be an opportunity to provide input on the funding task group's concepts. The Gates and Walton Family Foundation are investing resources and conducting polling regarding options to raise revenue for water plan implementation. Brent Newman (CWCB) will also present at the IBCC meeting as a follow up to today's discussion on drought contingency planning.

Per the 2018 Water Development Act passed by the U.S. Senate today, the US Army Corps of Engineers will establish, operate, and maintain new or existing watercraft inspection stations to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species in the Upper Colorado River Basin, South Platte River Basin, and Arkansas River Basin. The provision also authorizes the Army Corps to assist states with rapid response efforts in the case of an infestation of quagga or zebra mussels. Should the bill be signed by the president, it will be a major victory for reservoir managers in southwestern Colorado in their efforts to keep the state free of mussels.

Mike also directed members to an educational call to action from the Forest Health Advisory Council. Carrie Padgett and Aracely Tellez summarized the educational bootcamps for young farmers that the National Young Farmers Coalition is hosting across the Colorado River Basin. A local bootcamp, held in coordination with the Roundtable, will take place at the Animas Grange on November 5.

Basin WSRF Fund Balance

The fund balance was approximately \$294,118.

2. Elections

At Large Roundtable Seats

A notice soliciting applications for the at large seat, at large environmental representative, and PEPO liaison was published in area newspapers and distributed to Roundtable members. Applications were due on September 26, and six letters of interest were received.

At Large Representative

Applicants Jimbo Buickerood, Kari Distefano, and Ed Tolen addressed the Roundtable. Ed Tolen was elected as the at-large representative by secret ballot.

At Large Environmental Representative

Jimbo Buickerood spoke on behalf of applicant Marcel Gatzambide, who could not be present due to a death in the family. Applicant Mely Whiting also presented to the Roundtable. Mely Whiting was elected as the at-large environmental representative by secret ballot.

PEPO Liaison

Ed Tolen described the responsibilities of the PEPO liaison. Elaine Chick was the only applicant for this volunteer position. Bob Wolff moved to appoint Elaine Chick as the PEPO liaison. Doug Stowe seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous consent.

3. SWSI Update – Megan Holcomb, Russ Sands

Russ Sands provided an update on the Statewide Water Supply Initiative (SWSI) - the technical backbone to the Water Plan. The analysis is well underway and includes more robust water modeling and a larger scope than ever before. The final report is planned to be completed in June 2019, with many of the key deliverables available beginning December 2018.

4. Colorado River Issues

West Slope Risk Assessment

John Currier (Colorado River District) summarized the three phases of the West Slope Risk Assessment. In Phase I, it was determined that there is significant risk of Lake Powell reaching critical elevation 3,525 feet, which can be reduced (not eliminated) by Lower Basin states implementing their drought contingency plan and Upper-Basin CRSPA Storage Reservoir reoperations. Phase I and II further explored the additional risk reduction that could potentially be achieved by reducing consumptive use voluntarily. It was clear that reducing consumptive use had to be significant in order to bend the risk curve, and such reductions may need to be weighed against their costs. Phase III delves deeper into what curtailment may look like on the Western Slope, using specific basin data and various administrative scenarios, with the goal of preparing stakeholders to discuss objectively these possible futures and plan accordingly. The Roundtables will be asked to provide technical review and support to inform Phase III of the Risk Assessment.

Roundtable members asked questions regarding Front Range water use from the Colorado River Basin and how it is considered in the Phase III.

Big Picture: Current Status Drought Contingency Planning, Demand Management

Brent Newman (CWCB) and Lain Leoniak (Colorado Attorney General) provided the legal, practical, and hydrologic background for the current basin-wide drought contingency planning (DCP) effort, which will serve as interim agreements until the 2007 Colorado River Interim Shortage Guidelines are renegotiated prior to their expiration in 2026. The goal of the Upper Basin DCP is twofold: avoid compact curtailment, and reduce the risk of reaching critical elevation 3,525' at Lake Powell that would impact power generation and crucial revenues for Colorado Upper Basin project operations. Relevant Upper Basin DCP agreements are now available at the [CWCB's website](#), along with a webinar describing them. The three main strategies of the Upper Basin DCP are CRSPA reservoir reoperations, supply augmentation via cloud seeding and phreatophyte removal, and exploration of a program to reduce consumptive use, a.k.a. demand management. State officials highlighted the outstanding questions around demand management, including how it could work within Colorado's prior appropriation system, how it might impact lifestyles and communities, and how it would be funded as a voluntary, temporary, and compensated program. They described the outreach effort the State has begun regarding demand management, including feedback at the CWCB's September meeting. At their November meeting, the CWCB will consider adopting a policy to guide investigation of the demand management program. State officials also provided the timeline for adoption of the DCP, as well as demand management outreach and encouraged reaching out to CWCB staff directly regarding any questions involving transparency, the DCP, or demand management.

Southwestern Water Conservation District Perspective

Bruce Whitehead and Beth Van Vurst expressed SWCD's support for Big River drought contingency planning (DCP), and highlighted concerns regarding the exploration of demand management as a part of the DCP, which were submitted to the CWCB in partnership with the Colorado River District. The two Conservation Districts also proposed a resolution for adoption by the CWCB board outlining the state's position on demand management, which Beth summarized. Specifically, the Conservation Districts propose a framework for exploring a voluntary, temporary, compensated demand management program in Colorado. Some Front Range water users have suggested that the demand management program be utilized by the State at a future time for mandatory anticipatory curtailment, and West Slope entities have asked the State to confirm that mandatory curtailment is not being contemplated. Modeling and review by SWCD has indicated that incremental mandatory curtailment may disproportionately impact Southwestern Colorado water users. Relatedly, one important sideboard would be proportionality among contributions of conserved consumptive use from the East and West Slopes. The broader intention of these sideboards is to protect West Slope economies and communities.

Roundtable members asked questions regarding the Front Range position on demand management and mandatory anticipatory curtailment. A demand management subcommittee was formed to digest developments on this program as they unfold, and was made up of Roundtable and members of the public.

5. Public Comment

State officials responded to questions regarding Colorado's entitlement under the Upper Basin compact and current depletions, the Lower Basin structural deficit, and renegotiation of the 2007 Interim Shortage Guidelines.

6. WSRF Concept Proposals, Water Plan Implementation Letters of Support Colorado Cattlemen's Ag Water Network, Watershed Planning & Outreach Proposal, Ag Implementation Grant Proposal, Request for Letter of Support

Mike Preston described the request for the letter of support from the Colorado Cattlemen's Ag Water Network for their application to the Water Plan Implementation Grant Program for watershed planning and outreach. There was Roundtable consensus to approve the letter of support for the Water Plan Implementation Grant Program application by the Colorado Cattlemen's Ag Water Network for watershed planning and outreach.

Concept Proposal – San Miguel Stakeholder Engagement Process

Kenny Heldman, Carrie Lile, and Stacy Beagh presented the concept proposal for a San Miguel Stakeholder Engagement process as a follow up to the San Miguel Environmental Needs Assessment. The process will involve stakeholders across diverse interests up and down the watershed. There will be one-on-one, small group, and public meetings to provide feedback on the Environmental Needs Assessment. The estimated project cost is \$27,330. Funding requests are planned for the Watershed Restoration Program (\$13,655), the Basin WSRF (\$6,832), along with project participation of \$6,832. There was Roundtable consensus to provide a Roundtable letter of support for the Watershed Restoration Program application, and encourage San Miguel Stakeholder Engagement process to submit a full WSRF application at the January 2019 meeting.

Concept Proposal – Drones in Agriculture, High Desert Conservation District

Steve Miles and Greg Vlaming presented the concept proposal to research the use of drones as a tool for helping agricultural producers conserve soil, water and time as well as assist the Conservation Districts and NRCS in observing, inspecting, and documenting field operations. The project will monitor and address such issues as irrigation water management in the form of pivot/side-roll performance and efficiency, soil erosion and runoff, plant stress due to irrigation issues, pests and disease, and crop damage from wildlife, among the myriad of possibilities. The total estimated project cost is \$15,000. There was Roundtable consensus to encourage High Desert Conservation District to submit a full WSRF application at the January 2019 meeting.

Concept Proposal – Sheek Ditch Diversion and Meter Repair

A representative of the Sheek Ditch presented the concept proposal for repair of the Sheek Ditch’s diversion at Chicken Creek, as well as the repair and installation of culvert housing for 12 personal meters. The Sheek Ditch irrigates 600 acres and is comprised of 19 ditch company members. The estimated total project cost is \$18,145, with a potential request to the Roundtable of \$13,609. There was Roundtable consensus to encourage Sheek Ditch Company to submit a full WSRF application at the January 2019 meeting.

7. Upcoming Events

SW Basin Roundtable Meeting	January 9, 2019	Cortez	Dolores WCD
SW Basin Roundtable Meeting	April 10, 2019	Durango	Durango Public Library
SW Basin Roundtable Meeting	July 10, 2019	Cortez	Dolores WCD
SW Basin Roundtable Meeting	October 9, 2019	Durango	Venue TBD

8. Adjournment

Chairman Mike Preston adjourned the meeting at 6:00 p.m.