

Interbasin Compact Committee
Southwest Basins Roundtable Meeting
Dolores Water Conservancy District
Cortez, Colorado
January 15, 2020

Members Present:

Ken Beegles	At Large Member	Phil Johnson	Montezuma Municipalities
Jarrold Biggs	La Plata County Muni	Gary Kennedy	Mancos WCD
Greg Black	At Large Member	Frank Kugel	SW Water Conservation District
Keith Caddy	Montrose County	Ed Millard	Montezuma County
John Currier	Colorado River WCD	Peter Ortego	Ute Mountain Ute Tribe
Ken Curtis	At Large Member	Carrie Padgett	Domestic Water Representative
Sonny Frasier	Dolores County Muni	Al Pfister	San Juan WCD
Karen Gugliemone	San Miguel County Muni	Mike Preston	At Large Member
Becky Guilliams	Hinsdale County	Kathy Rall	Southern Ute Indian Tribe
Steve Harris	Legislative Appointee	Charlie Smith	San Juan County
Celene Hawkins	CWCB Representative	Ed Tolen	At Large Member
Kenny Heldman	Montrose Municipalities	Mely Whiting	At Large Environmental
Tim Hunter	At Large Member	Jim Wells	San Miguel WCD
Brandon Johnson	At Large Member		

Public:

Russ Anderson (Michael Baker International), Keith Caddy (Montrose County Commissioner), Elaine Chick (Water Information Program, PEPO Liaison), Travis Custer (Montezuma Land Conservancy), Jordan Dimick (SGM), Mandy Eskelson (Mountain Studies Institute), Michael Fiebig (American Rivers), Bill Frownfelter (SEH Engineering), Steve Garchar (Dolores County Commissioner), Mardi Gebhardt (Redmesa Reservoir & Ditch Company), Russell George (Interbasin Compact Committee), Shannon Hatch (U.S. Bureau of Reclamation), Megan Holcomb (Colorado Water Conservation Board), Chad Hill (City of Cortez), Eric James (Dolores Watershed Resilient Forest Collaborative), Helen Mary Johnson (US Bureau of Land Management), Jamie Johnson (Montezuma Land Conservancy), Emily Kasyon (Southwest Conservation Corps), Paul Kehmeier (Department of Agriculture), Aaron Kimple (Mountain Studies Institute), Amanda Kuenzi (Mountain Studies Institute), Rich Landreth (City of Cortez), Jay Loschert (Montezuma Land Conservancy), Danny Margoles (Dolores Resilient Forest Health Collaborative), Ann McCoy-Harold (U.S. Senator Cory Gardner's Office), Louis Meyer (SGM, Inc), Marissa Moore (Montezuma Land Conservancy), Jim Mimiaga (Cortez Journal), Godwin Oliver (Dolores Water Conservancy District), Doug Pickering (Colorado Division of Water Resources), Gretchen Rank (Mancos Conservation District), Gigi Richard (Fort Lewis College Water Resources Center), Scott Roberts (Mountain Studies Institute), Russ Sands (Colorado Water Conservation District), Don Schwindt (SW Water Conservation District), Bruce Smart (Dolores Water Conservancy District), Laura Spann (SW Water Conservation District, Roundtable Recorder), Andrew Straub-Heidke (Southern Ute Indian Tribe), Trent Taylor (Redmesa Reservoir & Ditch Company), Ryan Unterreiner (Colorado Parks & Wildlife), Greg Vlaming (High Desert Conservation District), Bob Wolff (SW Water Conservation District)

Introductions & Review Agenda

Roundtable Chair Mike Preston called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

1. Administrative Reports

2020 Meeting Schedule

There was consensus to meet quarterly on the fourth Thursday in 2020: April 23 (Durango), July 23 (Cortez), and October 22 (Durango).

Minutes Review and Approval

Minutes from October 9, 2019 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/>.

CWCB Board Report

Celene Hawkins reported that the Colorado Water Conservation Board is looking at the potential effects of climate change on significant rainfall induced events (100-year and larger floods). The largest potential change (and risk) is predicted for southwestern Colorado. One application from southwestern Colorado (from the Webber Ditch Company for salinity control) was submitted to the CWCB's Water Plan Implementation Grant Program. As a result of legislative changes, severance tax revenues for state FY2020 are known, and based on actual revenues received. Through July 2020, WRSF will be fully funded. Starting in August 2021, severance tax revenues forecasts are down and WRSF may expect half of the allocation received in 2020.

IBCC Report

Russell George, Director of the Interbasin Compact Committee, was welcomed to the meeting. Introductions were made.

Steve Harris is participating in an IBCC subcommittee to review WRSF criteria and guidelines. Celene Hawkins encouraged applications to the CWCB's Water Plan Implementation Grant Fund, specifically the Environmental and Recreational category, which did not receive many applications. While applications to this Fund do not require Roundtable approval, a Roundtable letter of support is encouraged. These letters are often approved by the Roundtable via email.

IBCC Representatives Ed Millard, Mely Whiting, and Russell George summarized highlights from the recent IBCC meeting, specifically West Slope perspectives on the demand management feasibility investigation and compact administration on the Colorado River. Time was spent at the IBCC meeting clarifying the distinction between these two topics. Russell George clarified that no decisions are being made "behind closed doors" regarding the implementation of a demand management program or Colorado River compact administration. He urged Roundtable members and the public to engage in the discussions regarding these topics without fear. It was suggested that the State Engineer be invited to a SW Basin Roundtable meeting.

Roundtable members we invited to review the IBCC meeting summary posted on CWCB's website, which summarizes views from across the state on proportionality and equity in the context of the proposed demand management program.

The River District is advocating for the West Slope to determine its contributions to any demand management program through a "robust collaborative discussion," and have West Slope perspectives collectively prepared in the case that the State decides to implement said program. The River District has offered to be a facilitator of this discussion.

PEPO Liaison

This report was postponed for the agenda item regarding the Education Action Plan.

Basin WSRF Fund Balance

As of January 2020, the fund balance was \$505,748.

2. Report Out/Build on Discussion of Drought Contingency Planning to Guide IBCC Reps and Technical Update to Colorado's Water Plan

Celene Hawkins summarized the DCP-DM subcommittee meeting held prior to the Roundtable meeting, at which more than a dozen participants in the CWCB Demand Management Workgroups reported out. Generally, the Workgroups have not gotten into the meat of the topic, which indicates a need for improved coordination by CWCB. There was also discussion of the need for maintaining balance between the pace of workgroup progress with adequate time to deliberate the complex issues related to demand management. It was also noted that a lot of issues that cut across different workgroups are holding up progress in discussion.

There was also discussion regarding how the State can adequately prepare for renegotiation of the 2007 Interim Guidelines at the rate it is currently dedicating time and resources toward the demand management feasibility investigation. A joint meeting of the IBCC and the CWCB Demand Management Workgroups is scheduled for March 4-5, 2020.

a. Demand Management – Russell George Perspective

Russell George explained that the IBCC is positioned to take up particularly thorny issues in the demand management feasibility investigation. Because the demand management feasibility investigation is now federal law (as part of the Colorado River DCP), the topic shall be discussed by each Upper Basin state. Colorado is endeavoring to investigate whether a demand management program can work for Colorado or will be abandoned. He was surprised to hear at the DCP-DM subcommittee meeting that the Workgroup process has not advanced very far. While important to give adequate time for consideration of complex topics, he wondered how long the window of tolerance is for a topic so ephemeral. CWCB needs to step up management of the process, including potentially reorganizing the Workgroup process to better address cross-cutting issues. CWCB will need to bear down to get to an answer regarding demand management before the good will is eroded among the many participating.

John Currier reported that the River District was awarded a \$315,000 Reclamation WaterSMART grant to support Colorado River modeling, the Phase III Risk Study, the Water Bank Work Group secondary impacts study, and activities related to the demand management feasibility investigation.

There was public comment requesting that the IBCC promote increased engagement with agricultural water users as the demand management feasibility investigation progresses.

b. Cloud Seeding

Ken Curtis and Frank Kugel briefly summarized the southwest Colorado cloud seeding programs and current efforts to modernize and improve program efficacy. SWCD has budgeted an additional \$27,000 in 2020 to support the acquisition and installation of a new remote generator in southwestern Colorado.

c. Phreatophyte Removal

Emily Kasyon, Southwest Conservation Corps, summarized efforts by the Dolores River Restoration Partnership over the past 10 years to remove tamarisk and other non-native species on reaches of the Lower Dolores. Amanda Kuenzi, Mountain Studies Institute, reported that Russian olive removal on the Animas River has been ongoing since 2015. In the future, the effort will shift to mapping vegetation in the Animas River basin. Steve Harris moved that the Roundtable submit a letter of support for a Water Plan Implementation Grant Fund application for ongoing non-native removal in the Animas River. Ed Millard seconded. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

d. Forest Health

Mike Preston reported that southwest Colorado has been chosen for \$50 million in additional funding for expanded forest health and wildlife mitigation efforts on public and private land as part of the Rocky Mountain Restorative Initiative (RMRI). RMRI is a partnership between the US Forest Service and the National Wild Turkey Federation, along with local 30 collaborative organizations, business, and government agencies, and will direct to our region \$5 million dollars in annual spending per year over a 10-year period. That funding will be

used to pay for prescribed burns, forest thinning, infrastructure protection including water and power, and programs that support affordable and practical defensible space projects for residents and towns within the wildland-urban interface (WUI) zone.

Russell George commented that various water supply augmentation efforts should continue in tandem with the demand management conversation, as they will help to increase the system water supply. He clarified that these efforts will not benefit the protected Lake Powell storage pool of 500,000 af, since that can only be from depletions the states have saved. That is why the demand management discussion must continue.

There was Roundtable discussion regarding several topics, including the tie between the health of southwest Colorado forests and municipal drinking water supplies, the need for funding to support research to clarify the forest management-water quantity connection, the impact of increasing temperatures due to climate change on evapotranspiration from the forests, and the pressing concerns that overly dense forests create for our communities.

e. Industrial Demand Management

There was Roundtable discussion about the idea that the water (172,000 af annually) which will be no longer utilized by the several coal-fired power plants that have recently closed could be used by the Upper Basin for its Lake Powell storage pool. Since its possible that such an arrangement might not fit exactly into the DCP parameters as written, and that is also the case for the tribal water rights, some of which are not currently in use, that these two opportunities be considered together. The River District will coordinate with SWCD regarding this opportunity.

Mely Whiting moved that the motion adopted by the Roundtable on October 9, 2019: “that the Roundtable direct its IBCC representatives to request that actions in the DCP to augment supply be pursued simultaneously with demand management evaluations, particularly weather modification phreatophyte control, and, though not in the DCP, forest health management” and carried by SWBRT representatives to the IBCC meeting on October 23rd 2019. Going forward these strategies will be developed via Roundtable engagement in the Technical Update and upcoming revisions of the Southwest Basin Implementation Plan and Colorado Water Plan.

And that future Roundtable meetings will include updates and discussion of higher level actions and Roundtable Subcommittee input on demand management evaluations, weather modification, phreatophyte control, and forest management progress, including engagement with the Southwest Colorado Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative (RMRI) and other emerging opportunities to advance forest health to reduce wildfire risks, protect water infrastructure, improve water quality and quantity, wildlife habitat, recreation and the capacity of emerging wood product businesses to play a vital role in forest health, while creating local jobs and economic opportunity. Steve Harris seconded. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

3. PEPO Education Action Plan

Elaine Chick, Water Information Program, reported that the Southwest Basin Education Action Plan is up for renewal. She provided background on the duties of the Public Education, Participation, and Outreach Liaison. Each Roundtable is allocated \$6,500 annually for PEPO activities. Some ideas for education projects have included short topical videos, create a PEPO page on WIP website, and create an informational piece on water plan-related topics. Elaine Chick solicited ideas and assistance with the Education Action Plan. Becky Guilliams volunteered to support PEPO material development.

4. BIP Update, Next Steps

Russ Sands, Colorado Water Conservation Board, reported that the Technical Update to Colorado’s Water Plan (formerly known as the Statewide Water Supply Initiative) was approved by the CWCB Board in September 2019 and released to the public. As part of that Technical Update, the CWCB is moving forward with updating the

Basin Implementation Plans. They released an RFP and have now contracted with Brown and Caldwell, who will lead this four-million-dollar effort statewide. Brown and Caldwell will work with local subcontractors and each Roundtable to update their BIP. One major effort will be to identify costs and other data associated with the Identified Projects and Processes. The CWCB has sent Roundtable leadership a packet regarding the process for hiring local subcontractors. An RFQ will be posted on January 28th, with a response deadline in February, and selection in March. Ed Tolen volunteered to chair a subcommittee to provide Roundtable input on sub-contractor selection. The subcommittee will be comprised of Mely Whiting, Celene Hawkins, Al Pfister, Ken Curtis and Frank Kugel.

5. Oral Histories

The Poudre Heritage Alliance and Colorado State University Water Resources Archive have received a Water Plan Implementation Grant to capture oral histories of Colorado water leaders and have invited each Roundtable to nominate two individuals from their region to be interviewed. Celene Hawkins moved to nominate John Porter, Steve Harris and Chuck Wanner for oral history interviews from southwestern Colorado. It was also suggested that this Roundtable recommend that the Water Resources Archive reach out directly to the Tribes for their participation in the oral histories project.

6. Public Comment

There were no comments by the public. Public input had been given as Roundtable discussions proceeded.

7. Review of WSRF Applications and Concept Proposals

WSRF App – Upper Road 42 Water Association, System Extension

Laura Rieck and a significant contingency of residents presented the application for \$11,130 from the Basin Account to support a preliminary feasibility study and cost estimate associated with the formation of a Special Improvement District. The proposed project would design, construct and install an extension of the Mancos Rural Water Company water system in order to provide domestic water to 24 residences from Road N north to the Forest Service boundary on County Road 42 in Mancos. The estimated total cost of the study is \$30,000. Mely Whiting moved to approve the WSRF application from the Upper Road 42 Water Association for \$11,130 from the Basin Account. Tim Hunter seconded. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

WSRF App – Dolores River Restoration Partnership, Revegetation & Outreach

Emily Kasyon, Southwest Conservation Corps, presented the application for \$25,000 from the Basin Account to support re-vegetation efforts on the Dolores Rivers to maintain the efficacy of tamarisk removal, and continue related outreach and education. The estimated total cost of the project is \$51,483. Steve Harris moved to approve the WSRF application from the Southwest Conservation Corps for \$25,000 from the Basin Account. Ken Curtis seconded. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

WSRF App – Upper San Juan Watershed Enhancement Partnership, Phase II

Aaron Kimple, Mountain Studies Institute, presented the application for \$42,957 from the Basin Account to support Phase II, which includes continued stakeholder engagement, development of an agricultural structure inventory, collection of environmental and recreational surveys, and technical mapping of the gaps and needs. The estimated total cost of Phase II is \$171,827. Mely Whiting moved to approve the WSRF application from the Upper San Juan Watershed Enhancement Partnership for \$42,957 from the Basin Account. Tim Hunter seconded. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

WSRF App – Post-416 Fire Aquatic Monitoring, Year 2

Scott Robert, Mountain Studies Institute, presented the application for \$19,088 from the Basin Account to support continued monitoring downstream of the 416-burn area to characterize further impacts to water quality and aquatic life. The estimated total cost is \$125,023. Frank Kugel moved to approve the WSRF application from

Mountain Studies Institute to support continued Post-416 Fire Aquatic Monitoring. Phil Johnson seconded. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

WSRF App – Montezuma Land Conservancy & Southwest Research Center, Fozzie Farm

Jay Loschert, Montezuma Land Conservancy, presented the application for \$24,192 from the Basin Account to support collaboration with Colorado State University and other community partners to pursue funding from the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) for an agricultural water efficiency study with the primary goals to 1) develop and research innovative agricultural techniques that conserve water and improve soil health, and 2) create an opportunity for broad community and partner engagement around water conservation strategies and education. The estimated total project cost is \$152,231. Charlie Smith moved to approve the WSRF application from Montezuma Land Conservancy & Southwest Research Center for \$24,192 from the Basin Account. Ed Millard seconded. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

WSRF App – Town of Sawpit, Water Supply & System Analysis

Jordan Dimick, SGM, presented the application for \$25,000 from the Basin Account to support the Town of Sawpit’s water supply and system analysis. The estimated total project cost is \$37,500. Gary Kennedy moved to approve the WSRF application from the Town of Sawpit for \$25,000 from the Basin Account. Steve Harris seconded. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

Letter of Support for Water Plan Implementation Grant Program – Animas River Community Forum

Amanda Kuenzi, Mountain Studies Institute, presented a request for a letter of support for the Animas River Community Forum’s upcoming application to the CWCB’s Water Plan Implementation Grant Program for \$15,000 to support meetings, communications, and subcommittee work for the next 2-3 years. Steve Harris moved that the Roundtable submit a letter of support for the Forum’s grant application. Ed Millard seconded. The motion passed by unanimous consent. There was also Roundtable consensus to recommend that the Forum present a WSRF application for \$10,000-\$15,000 at a future meeting to continue the progress of implementing the 416 Fire Recovery and Response Action Plan (Plan).

Concept Proposal – Redmesa Reservoir & Ditch Company

Jordan Dimick, Mardi Gebhardt and Trent Taylor presented the concept proposal for a WSRF application in 2020 to support the final engineering, geotechnical analysis, and permitting to comply with the State Engineer’s Office deadline. The Dam Safety Branch of the State Engineer’s Office has placed a zero-storage restriction on Redmesa Reservoir beginning March 1, 2021 if engineered plans and specifications are not submitted for review to rehabilitate Redmesa Dam. The total project cost is estimated at \$582,400. The Ditch Company commits to contribute \$50,000, has a pending application to SWCD for \$75,000, will request \$125,000 from the WSRF (Basin and State accounts), and seek a CWCB loan for \$332,400. There was Roundtable consensus to recommend that the Redmesa Reservoir and Ditch Company move forward in submitting a WSRF application.

8. Upcoming Events

Roundtable members and public were invited to a Water Happy Hour after the meeting hosted by the Four Corners Water Center at Fort Lewis College.

SW Basin Roundtable Meeting	Thursday, April 23, 2020	Durango Community Recreation Center
SW Basin Roundtable Meeting	Thursday, July 23, 2020	Cortez, Dolores WCD
SW Basin Roundtable Meeting	Thursday, October 22, 2020	Durango, Venue TBD

9. Adjournment

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