

Interbasin Compact Committee
Southwest Basins Roundtable Meeting
Via Zoom Videoconferencing
April 23, 2020

Members Present:

Ken Beegles	At Large Member	Frank Kugel	SW Water Conservation District
Jarrold Biggs	La Plata County Muni	April Montgomery	San Miguel County
John Currier	Colorado River WCD	Ed Millard	Montezuma County
Ken Curtis	At Large Member	Al Pfister	San Juan WCD
John Ey	Florida WCD	Mike Preston	At Large Member
Glen Fish	Dolores WCD	Kathy Rall	Southern Ute Indian Tribe
Karen Gugliemone	San Miguel County Muni	Guy Stees	La Plata WCD
Tom Hartnett	Animas La Plata WCD	Ed Tolen	At Large Member
Celene Hawkins	CWCB Representative	Mely Whiting	At Large Environmental
Kenny Heldman	Montrose Municipalities	Jim Wells	San Miguel WCD
Brandon Johnson	At Large Member	Val Valentine	At Large Member
Gary Kennedy	Mancos WCD		

Public:

Steve Anders (U.S. Geological Survey), Peter Barkmann (Colorado Geological Survey), Stacey Beagh (Strategic by Nature), Elaine Chick (Water Information Program, PEPO Liaison), Al Davis (Public), Carolyn Dunmire (Montezuma Land Conservancy), Alex Ekey (Fort Lewis College Student), Michael Fiebig (American Rivers), Steve Garchar (Dolores County Commissioner), Steve Harris (Harris Water Engineering), Shannon Hatch (U.S. Bureau of Reclamation), Dave Henry (Harris Water Engineering), Jordan Lasik (Fort Lewis College Student), Matt Lindburg (Brown and Caldwell), Blake Mamich (Southern Ute Indian Tribe), Colleen Mergeles (Fort Lewis College Student), Monika Okula (Fort Lewis College Student), Carrie Padgett (Harris Water Engineering), Gigi Richard (Fort Lewis College Water Resources Center), Charlotte Roehm (Western Resources Advocates), Russ Sands (Colorado Water Conservation Board), Don Schwindt (SW Water Conservation District), Kara Sobieski (Wilson Water Group), Laura Spann (SW Water Conservation District, Roundtable Recorder), Sam Stein (Colorado Water Conservation Board), Andrew Straub-Heidke (Southern Ute Indian Tribe), Ryan Unterreiner (Colorado Parks & Wildlife), Danny Wilkin (Dolores WCD)

1. Introductions, Zoom Participation Protocol & Review Agenda

Roundtable Chair Mike Preston called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and summarized guidelines for meeting participation via Zoom.

2. Coronavirus Response Update, Roundtable, and Other Water Organizations

Celene Hawkins, CWCB Board President, directed Roundtable members to www.helpcoloradonow.org, which has resources for those who need help or want to help others during the COVID-19 crisis. The Southern Ute Indian Tribe will continue the stay-at-home order to a date uncertain.

3. Administrative Reports

Review and Approval of Minutes

Ed Tolen moved to approve the SW Basin Roundtable minutes from January 15, 2020. Jarrold Biggs seconded. The motion passed by unanimous consent. 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 March CWCB board meeting was very somber, with a lot of discussion about the State of Colorado's response to the coronavirus. Celene is now CWCB board chair, Jessica Brody (Denver) is

the vice-chair, and Greg Felt (Arkansas) just joined the board. The CWCB board also discussed the River District's demand management work, which will be funded in part by a Reclamation WaterSmart grant, the Colorado River compact compliance study, CWCB's requirements for the Alternative Transfer Methods program, the use of conservation easements, and Reclamation's 7d review of the 2007 Interim Guidelines. DNR employees are essential employees, and many continue to work from home. Celene also pointed out the unique challenges we are all facing during the COVID-19 pandemic, including how internet access issues that may preclude some Roundtable members from participating. She encouraged Roundtable members to continue with its long-standing culture of kindness and support for one another.

IBCC Report

At the requirement of the State of Colorado Carrie Padgett and Steve Harris are recusing themselves from participation on Southwest Basin Roundtable and IBCC during the period that Harris Water Engineering is under contract with the Brown and Caldwell to update the Southwest Basin Implementation Plan (BIP). Roundtable elections will be held at the July meeting, during which time Steve's vacancy on the IBCC will need to be filled.

IBCC Representative Ed Millard updated the Roundtable on water supply augmentation strategies. The potential role that water formerly used by decommissioned coal-fired plants might play for the Upper Basin's Lake Powell storage bank has yet to be resolved. Ed met with RiversEdge West and Mountain Studies Institute to discuss phreatophyte removal. He has also started to participate in the regional forest health collaborative and funding meetings.

PEPO Liaison

Elaine Chick, PEPO Liaison, reported that the Southwest Basin Education Action Plan was submitted to the CWCB in January and approved. Elaine Chick has coordinated with Christi Bode, Moxiecran Media, who will produce a short video focused on water priorities in southwestern Colorado. In coordination with a subcommittee of the Roundtable, the video outline and shot list has been developed. While interviews and filming have been on hold during the stay-at-home order, the goal is to have a final video to share by fall 2020.

Basin WSRF Fund Balance

The current WSRF Basin balance was \$394,511. Russ Sands, CWCB, commented that lean times are likely ahead from sharp declines in severance tax revenues and economic impacts from the coronavirus.

4. Consider Motion to Maintain Basin Fund WSRF Proposal Limit to \$25,000

Al Pfister moved to maintain the current \$25,000 limit on requests to the WSRF Basin Fund and accept requests to waive the limit in exceptional circumstances. Kathy Rall seconded. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

5. Report on Joint IBCC Demand Management Work Group Meeting

Mely Whiting, IBCC representative, reported on the joint IBCC and Demand Management Workgroups meeting held on March 4-5, 2020 and highlighted the need for specific scenarios to dissect in order to evaluate how equity could be achieved in any proposed demand management program. One exercise asked participants to select priority values for a proposed demand management program, and among those selected were: simplicity and accuracy in measurements, resiliency, agricultural viability, and environmental benefits.

Ed Millard, IBCC representative, reported that the group is not engaging in substantive conversation on equity, proportionality and the voluntary nature of any program. The meetings are too infrequent. Ed now participates in all demand management workgroup meetings and develops summaries that he can email to anyone who is interested. He expressed concern with the often-used phrase "shared burden" for demand management. He added that any demand management program may be voluntary on the individual level, but mandatory on the basin or Division level, and questioned how that might work. If some basins do not have participation, it's possible that participation may be replaced by financial contribution, and some basins may not be able to afford it. He

recommended support for individual accounts in the Lake Powell storage pool like the Lower Basin “Intentionally Created Surplus” accounts. Finally, Ed suggested that since the COVID-19 outbreak, fundamental priorities have shifted toward the need for stable food production, state budgetary concerns, and supporting producers, and away from more distant Big River concerns and the demand management program feasibility investigation.

Ed also recommended that the Roundtable weigh in on SWCD’s board position to support efforts by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Trout Unlimited (TU) to amend C.R.S. 37-92-305(3)(c) to protect water conservation program participants in Water Division 7.

Al Pfister highlighted State Engineer Kevin Rein’s presentation on Colorado River compact administration and measurement. Polling of the audience showed support for the demand management feasibility investigation. He directed Roundtable members to the CWCB’s meeting summary. He asked that meeting presentations should be made available.

There was discussion around and a request for Roundtable guidance regarding the appropriate timing, format (written or verbal), content and civility of IBCC reports.

6. Demand Management Subcommittee Webinar

Carrie Padgett announced the next DCP-DM subcommittee meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 28th from 10:00am-12:00pm, during which John Currier (River District) will present on the Long Range Operating Criteria Retrospective vs. 2007 Interim Guidelines and there will be discussion of Reclamation’s 7.D. Review of the 2007 Interim Guidelines and DM workgroup meeting updates. Another subcommittee meeting will be held by videoconference to hear State Engineer Kevin Rein’s presentation on Colorado River compact administration. Cleave Simpson, Rio Grande Water Conservation District, might also present to the subcommittee in July.

7. Basin Implementation Plan (BIP) – Contractor Selection Update

Ed Tolen reported that the BIP Local Expert Selection Committee met several times in late February and March to review RFPs and interview applicants wishing to serve as the southwest basin’s local expert during the upcoming BIP update. Harris Water Engineering was recommended by the committee, and after hearing no objections from the Roundtable, this recommendation was relayed to the State by the March 30th deadline to allow their subcontracting process to begin.

Matt Lindburg of Brown and Caldwell (general contractor) reported on the upcoming Colorado Water Plan update. The original water plan was completed in December 2015. In 2017, the CWCB released “Ripple Effects,” which was a report card on how the state was progressing towards the goals outlined in the water plan. In 2019, CWCB formed an Implementation Working Group to identify several opportunities for improving data, prioritization tools, and efficiencies in the BIPs. Their recommendations are codified in Chapter 5 of the water plan’s Technical Update, which was completed in 2019. BIP updates will continue through 2021, with the goal of updating the Colorado Water Plan by 2022.

The BIP update will focus on improving project data, unpacking the technical update as it might apply to the BIP, revisiting goals and objectives, and invest in process efficiencies through the general contractor. There will also be efforts to improve the assumptions in the technical update (e.g. municipal water usage), use of a prioritization tool, and development of an IPP database, among other opportunities.

Matt also detailed the general contractor and local expert subcontractor responsibilities. The total Southwest Basin BIP budget is \$290,000, with \$140,000 for the general contractor, \$140,000 for the local expert subcontractor, and \$10,000 for workshops and outreach. The general contractor team, which includes Brown and Caldwell, Wilson Water Group, Element Water Consulting, Lynker Technologies, CDM Smith, and will also be developing

the Colorado Water Plan update based on the BIP updates. Harris Water Engineering’s BIP local expert subcontractor team consists of Carrie Padgett, Stacy Beaug, David Henry, Karmen King and Erin Wilson.

Matt outlined the BIP update timeline, the first step in which is the local expert workplan, due on July 10th. Carrie recommended formation of a BIP workplan subcommittee, which would meet several times before the deadline to form the workplan. Ed Tolen, Mely Whiting, Frank Kugel, Kathy Rall, Al Pfister, Celene Hawkins and Ken Curtis volunteered for the workplan subcommittee.

There was discussion regarding the interplay between the state’s goal, implementation workgroup input, and Roundtable feedback for the BIP update. There was also discussion regarding the flexibility and adaptability of the BIPs and the state water plan going forward.

8. Public Comment

There were no comments by the public.

9. Review of WSRF Applications and Concept Proposals

WSRF App – Upper Road 42 Water Association, System Extension

Mike Preston explained the request for an additional \$11,130 above the \$11,130 approved at the January meeting for a total \$22,260 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. Frank Kugel moved to approve the increased WSRF funding request from the Upper Road 42 Water Association for \$22,260 from the Basin Account. Celene Hawkins seconded. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

10. Upcoming Events

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

11. Adjournment

Chair Mike Preston adjourned the meeting at 5:10 p.m.