

Interbasin Compact Committee
Southwest Basins Roundtable Meeting
Hybrid Meeting from Durango Public Library, Durango, Colorado
April 28, 2022

Members Present:

Ken Beegles	At Large Industrial	Al Pfister	San Juan WCD
Jarrold Biggs	La Plata County Municipalities	Mike Preston*	Ute Mountain Ute Tribe
Peter Butler	La Plata County	Gretchen Rank*	At Large Member
Randy Carver	Montezuma County	Gigi Richard	At Large Member
Ken Curtis	At Large Member	Buck Skillen	At Large Member
Carolyn Dunmire	At Large Recreation	Charlie Smith*	San Juan County
Glen Fish	Dolores WCD	Aimee Tooker*	Montrose County
Karen Guglielmone*	San Miguel Municipalities	Ed Tolen	At Large Domestic Water
Steve Harris	Legislative Appointee	Jim Wells*	San Miguel WCD
Celene Hawkins	CWCB Representative	Bruce Whitehead	Animas La Plata WCD
Brandon Johnson*	At Large Member	Mely Whiting	At Large Environmental
Rich Landreth*	Montezuma Municipalities	Steve Wolff	SW Water Conservation District
April Montgomery*	San Miguel County		

Public:

Adrian Bergere (San Miguel Watershed Coalition)*, Elaine Chick (Water Information Program, PEPO Liaison), Mandy Eskelson (Mountain Studies Institute)*, Haley Farwell (Public)*, George Gavrielides (Southern Ute Indian Tribe)*, Kelli Henry (Harris Water Engineering), Jake Kurzweil (Mountain Studies Institute)*, Chole Lewis (SWCA)*, Bonnie Loving (Montezuma County), Blake Mamich (Colorado Water Trust), Megan O'Grady (Colorado Water Conservation Board "CWCB")*, Carrie Padgett (BIP Update Local Expert Team)*, Chris Pitcher (Public)*, Laura Spann (SW Water Conservation District, Roundtable Recorder), Sam Stein (CWCB)*, Ryan Unterreiner (Colorado Parks & Wildlife), Kat Weismiller (CWCB)*, Sensa Wolcott (Mancos Conservation District)

Fort Lewis College Students:

Savannah Bell*, Clara Bertany*, Spencer Busick*, Sage Cramer*, Katie Dunbabin*, Bailey Fogel*, Brae Farquhar*, Darion Fredericks*, Sydney Halford*, Lauren Haupt*, Ana Henry*, Jaclyn Jack*, Malori Johnson*, Becca Kiyokawa*, Carter MacKenzie*, Hayden Mennella*, Joshua Mike*, Camile Uentillie*

**Indicates attendance via Zoom.*

1. Introductions & Review Agenda

Roundtable Chair Ed Tolen called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

2. Public Comments

There were no comments from the public.

3. Administrative Reports

Review and Approval of Minutes

Al Pfister moved to approve the January 20th Roundtable minutes. Jarrold Biggs seconded. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

Officer Reports

Roundtable Chair Ed Tolen reported that the CWCB staff, in coordination with the Roundtables, may develop a Roundtable member handbook.

CWCB board member Celene Hawkins reported that the May CWCB board meeting will focus on development of the state's "drought resiliency toolkit," the CWCB's term for a slew of strategies and tactics to mitigate drought impacts on the state in the short term. At the meeting, there will also be discussion of the Colorado Water Plan update, which the CWCB staff is working diligently to complete. She also solicited southwest Colorado projects to highlight for her upcoming interview on the CWCB's podcast.

WSRF Basin Account Balance

The WSRF Basin Account balance is \$603,093, of which \$191,400 is federal relief that must be appropriated by March 2023. Per the 2022 WSRF Criteria and Guidelines, there is a \$750,000 cap on the WSRF Basin Account balances, funds in excess of which will be redistributed to the other Basin Accounts.

4. Recorder Report

Laura Spann directed Roundtable members to the draft Recorder duties opportunity announcement and solicited feedback. She recommended the Roundtable set a deadline of May 20th to receive cover letters and resumes, authorize Roundtable leadership to conduct any necessary follow up (such as interviews or reference checks) and make a recommendation at the July meeting. Should a recorder be selected, that person would then be trained at the October meeting and then officially take over in January 2023. There was Roundtable consensus to support the recorder recruitment process as proposed.

Laura also suggested setting up a small committee to do bylaws revisions to recommend to the full Roundtable for adoption at the July meeting. This bylaws revision may be necessary so that the Roundtable can select a recorder. The following Roundtable members volunteered for the Bylaws Subcommittee: Mely Whiting, Steve Wolff, Steve Harris, Bruce Whitehead, April Montgomery, Al Pfister, Ed Tolen, and CWCB staff.

5. Public Education, Participation & Outreach (PEPO) Liaison Report

Elaine Chick, PEPO Liaison, presented the proposed Southwest Basins Roundtable website design, which was approved by unanimous Roundtable consent. The next step is to populate the website with relevant content.

Elaine also will prepare a grant application for PEPO activities in the July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023 fiscal year. The deadline for submission is June 1st. There was Roundtable consensus that the PEPO subcommittee would provide input on Elaine's proposal for a scope of work and the draft PEPO grant application, after which the application would be provided to the full Roundtable via email for comment prior to submission.

6. Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) Update

Sam Stein, CWCB, reported that the final draft Colorado Water Plan will be released for public comment by June 30th. Due to a platform transition and ongoing maintenance, reporting access for the municipal water use and conservation database is not available until July 1st; as a result, the reporting deadline has been delayed to September 1st. The deadline to submit PEPO and WSRF grant applications is June 1st with the Colorado Water Plan grant deadline to follow on July 1st. At the July CWCB board meeting in Steamboat, there may be an opportunity to celebrate Roundtable contributions to the Basin Implementation Plans.

7. Interbasin Compact Committee (IBCC) Update

Mely Whiting and Al Pfister summarized the February IBCC meeting, at which Colorado Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Dan Gibbs introduced himself as the new IBCC director and discussed ideas for the group's role. The IBCC formed a subcommittee to propose topics as part of a draft IBCC work plan. The work plan will be considered at the June 30th meeting in Frisco. Mely Whiting also noted that DNR presented passionately on the need for Colorado to act fast to utilize federal money on water-related projects; otherwise, the funds will be used by other states.

8. Water Supply Reserve Fund (WSRF) Subcommittee

Jarrod Biggs summarized the WSRF subcommittee's discussion and recommendations in response to the CWCB's revised WSRF criteria and guidelines effective January 2022. Because the WSRF Statewide Account is

no longer available for matching funding, the WSRF subcommittee recommended that the Roundtable raise the per grant threshold from the current \$25,000 to \$100,000. It was discussed that this would be a soft cap, and if a high priority project came in with needs above that cap, a proposer could make their case to the Roundtable.

As any grant is still required to be approved by the CWCB based on their calendar, the WSRF subcommittee recommended grants be considered on a rolling basis at every Roundtable meeting. This will allow projects to proceed through the funding timeline in the most flexible way. To the best of any applicant's ability, applications for funding must be received one month prior to any scheduled Roundtable meeting to be considered at such meeting.

Ed Tolen clarified several questions from the WSRF subcommittee regarding the amended process and funding: 1) committed funds (funds committed via PO or contract but not drawn down) count against the basin account for purposes of calculating the \$750,000 cap; 2) stimulus dollars do not count against the \$750,000 cap for the basin accounts; and 3) the measurement period for the cap and deposits of annual contributions is July 1st of each year.

There was Roundtable consensus to make the following changes to WSRF criteria:

- Increase the cap on WSRF Basin Account requests from \$25,000 to \$100,000; requests over \$100,000 may be considered by the Roundtable with justification from an applicant; and
- Consider WSRF applications at every quarterly meeting instead of twice a year, with applications due to the Roundtable Chair one month prior to each meeting.

There was Roundtable consensus to direct the current WSRF subcommittee to 1) develop a proposed "Scope of Responsibilities" for a standing WSRF application review subcommittee and 2) explore how the Roundtable might anticipate upcoming grant requests to best utilize the Basin Account considering the new annual contribution of \$300,000, for the next three years, and a cap of \$750,000 in the account. Both concepts will be brought to the Roundtable for consideration and feedback at the July meeting.

9. Colorado River Issues Subcommittee

Ken Curtis summarized the morning Colorado River subcommittee. Dr. Perry Cabot, Colorado State University, presented the 2020 and 2021 results of the ongoing study, "Evaluating Conserved Consumptive Use in the Upper Colorado," which was funded by the CWCB with support from the Colorado River Basin Roundtable, The Nature Conservancy, Trout Unlimited, and American Rivers. Michelle Garrison, CWCB, summarized current Colorado River basin conditions, including reservoir operations. In 2022, 500,000 acre-feet will not be released from Lake Powell and 500,000 acre-feet will be released from Flaming Gorge to Lake Powell. Amy Ost diek reported on the CWCB board's recent decision to take a "hard pause" on the demand management feasibility investigation and instead focus on developing Colorado's "drought resiliency toolkit" for immediate use. Celene Hawkins, CWCB board member, added that staff and representatives for the Upper Basin states have been incredibly busy in responding to the Colorado River crisis, including providing input to the 2022 Drought Reservoir Operations Plan and other strategies.

10. Water Plan Grants – Letters of Support

Town of Pagosa - Pagosa Gateway Project

Town of Pagosa Springs requested a Roundtable letter of support for their Colorado Water Plan Grant request of \$944,079 to support the Pagosa Gateway Project, which proposes to improve approximately 2.5 miles of the San Juan River immediately upstream of the Town of Pagosa Springs to preserve aquatic habitat and recreation opportunities in the face of declining flows and warming temperatures. The Pagosa Gateway Project, an opportunity identified by the Upper San Juan Watershed Enhancement Partnership, will implement a series of interventions, including creation of low flow channels; promotion of bank stabilization, riparian vegetation, and fish passage; as well as removal of hazardous streambank materials to increase the resiliency of the San Juan River and its ability to support aquatic life and diverse water users. The total estimated project cost is \$1,888,158. Funding partners include Reclamation (pending), Town of Pagosa Springs, Archuleta County (pending), Trout Unlimited, Friends of the Upper San Juan, The Nature Conservancy and the Weminuche Audobon (pending).

There was Roundtable consensus to provide a letter of support for the Pagosa Gateway Project's Colorado Water Plan grant request.

San Miguel Watershed Coalition – San Miguel River Hydrologic Modeling

Adrian Bergere and Jake Kurzweil presented the San Miguel Watershed Coalitions request for a Roundtable letter of support for their Colorado Water Plan grant request of \$150,000 to support development of a San Miguel watershed-scale, integrated hydrologic model with a focus on simulated changes to stream-aquifer flow and hydrologic responses to post-wildfire and wildfire mitigation. The findings will be presented to local stakeholders for feedback and provide training on using this publicly available tool. The total estimated project cost is \$230,000. Funding requests will go to the Southwestern Water Conservation District, the Town of Telluride, San Miguel County, Montrose County, the Town of Mountain Village, Colorado State University, Fort Lewis College, Colorado School of Mines, and Western Colorado University. There was Roundtable consensus to provide a letter of support for the San Miguel Watershed Coalition's Colorado Water Plan grant request.

Montezuma County – Phreatophyte Removal Project

Bonnie Loving presented Montezuma County's request for a Roundtable letter of support for their Colorado Water Plan grant request of \$295,293.25 to support the Montezuma County Non-Native Phreatophyte Removal Project, which would support the hiring of a four-person crew to remove phreatophytes from 500 acres within the priority area by 2026. Bonnie estimated that the potential water savings of this action is 4,775 acre-feet. The total estimated project cost is \$997,253.25. Funding partners include the Colorado Department of Agriculture, Montezuma County, Reclamation (Water SMART), and Great Outdoors Colorado. There was Roundtable consensus to provide a letter of support for Montezuma County's Colorado Water Plan grant request.

11. WSRF Grant Requests

Town of Pagosa - Pagosa Gateway Project

At the Town of Pagosa Springs' request, consideration of this request was tabled until the July Roundtable meeting.

Lone Cone Ditch & Reservoir Company (LCDRC)

While no one was available to present the WSRF Grant Request for LCDRC, the Roundtable had previously heard a request from them at the January 20, 2022 meeting. Chairman Tolen informed the Roundtable that the previous request had been approved with the requirement that LCDRC submit a revised application. LCDRC's current WSRF Basin Account request is for \$25,988 to support engineering and outlet repairs for Lone Cone Reservoir, which is currently under a storage restriction, leaving many producers without water for the growing season. Specifically, the Company will hire Short, Elliott Hendrickson, Inc. (SEH) to update an existing engineering study performed in 2019 and complete the design of a new intake structure, outlet conduit, valve vault and outlet structures to replace the existing outlet. Further, SEH was awarded the project to manage meetings and coordination, field investigations, design and specifications, construction management services and permitting assistance. The outlet shall be raised higher on the dam embankment in preparation for deepening the reservoir to increase the storage capacity. The total estimated project cost is \$73,752. Bruce Whitehead moved to approve the Lone Cone Ditch and Reservoir Company's WSRF Basin Account request for \$25,000 to support the engineering and outlet repairs for Lone Cone Reservoir. Gigi Richard seconded. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

Mancos Conservation District

Sensa Wolcott and Gretchen Rank presented the WSRF Basin Account request from the Mancos Conservation District for \$403,391 to support diversion improvements for fish and irrigators in the Mancos watershed. Specifically, funding will support design and construction of in-stream structures to enable warm-water fish passage through the Field and Sheek diversions, which are critical to providing water for crops and livestock. Funds will also be used for pre- and post-monitoring strategies to assess the efficacy of this project. The total estimated project cost is \$600,698. Funding partners include the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Mountain Studies Institute, Colorado Healthy Rivers Fund, and the Sheek and Field Ditch Companies. At the applicant's request,

consideration was tabled until the July Roundtable meeting to allow time to coordinate with CWCB staff on how best to address their funding needs within the new WSRF grant guidelines and the Colorado Water Plan grant funding.

There was Roundtable consensus to provide a letter of support for Mancos Conservation District’s Colorado Water Plan grant request if needed.

Fall Creek Fish Migration Barrier

Buck Skillen presented the WSRF Basin Account request from Colorado Trout Unlimited for \$20,000 to support the installation of a fish barrier on Fall Creek. Specifically, funding would support installation of a stacked block waterfall-type fish barrier upstream of the Wolf Creek confluence that will add approximately 1000 feet of higher quality lower-gradient habitat for San Juan lineage Colorado River Cutthroat Trout population, approximately doubling its occupied reach. The total estimated project cost is \$162,235. Funding partners included the San Juan National Forest, Colorado Trout Unlimited, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife. Steve Harris moved to approve Colorado Trout Unlimited’s WSRF Basin Account request for \$20,000 to support installation of a fish barrier on Fall Creek. Bruce Whitehead seconded. Buck Skillen recused himself. The motion passed by unanimous consensus.

12. Upcoming Events

Regular Roundtable Meeting (hybrid from Cortez)	July 28, 2022
Regular Roundtable Meeting and WSRF Consideration (hybrid from Durango)	October 27, 2022

13. Adjournment

Chair Ed Tolen adjourned the meeting at 5:10 p.m.