**Ark Basin Roundtable - Environmental & Recreation Committee**

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**Monday, Oct 26, 2020**

**10:00am – 12 noon**

**via Zoom**

**Attendees:** Bob Hamel, (Ark Basin RT Recreation Rep, AROA),Rena Griggs (CPW – Water Specialist – SE Region), Amber Shanklin (Ark Basin Envi Rep, Palmer Land Trust), Mark Shea (ARWC / Roundtable), Tyler Benton (CoSpgsUtil), Misty DeSalvo (USFS), John Smeins (BLM), Wil Koger (Forsgren Engineering), Brett Gracely, (LRE), Chris Reichard (Tri-State), Dwayne McFall (Fremont County), Lisa Walters (Co Springs Util), Dan Omasta (Trout Unlimited), Natalie Allio (Upper Ark Watershed Partnership), Julie Knudson (Purgatoire Watershed Partnership); Kyle Horne (Canon City Rec), Josh Nehring (CPW – Sr Aquatic Bio), Mannie Colon (Ark Basin RT).

**Environmental & Recreation Committee Purpose and Goals: (see end of document).**

**October Meeting Summary:**

1. Ark Basin Roundtable recap – October was the annual meeting with elections. Most are the same, with one change…Mike Weber (LAVWCD) stepped down as Vice Chair; Matt Heimrich (Palmer Land Trust / Otero County Farmer) took his place as Vice Chair.
2. Ark Basin BIP Virtual Workshops in October – Upper and Lower
   1. Virtual workshops were held to invite stakeholders to better understand the BIP update effort. Mike and Amber Weber have been working hard in the Lower basin to inform Ag and others about the effort. Greg Felt has been a champion in the Upper Ark to inform. The workshops had productive discussions and were well received.
3. Continued BIP update discussions
   1. Will Koger (Forsgren Engineering) and Brett Gracely (Leonard Rice Engineering) have been facilitating the BIP update and describing the “smartsheet” tool, encouraging those with projects to enter their projects.
   2. Goal is to have everything entered in December.
   3. Brett and Mark encouraged to enter programmatic projects as one item. For example, perhaps enter a single Instream Flow entry to cover that program.
4. Wildhorse Reservoir proposed by City of Aurora
   1. Aurora is proposing a new reservoir to be located in Park County (near Antero / Spinny Reservoirs) known as [Wildhorse Reservoir](https://www.auroragov.org/residents/water/wild_horse_reservoir). It’s described as proposed storage using existing water rights from the Ark Basin and west slope. The project is in early stages of planning and permitting.
   2. CPW plans to encourage Aurora to study hydrology effects in all basins.
5. ARWC update
   1. Currently reflecting on the role of ARWC and focus areas.
6. Past Ark River Studies from era 2000 – Revisit? - Bob
   1. Brett G has offered to have a look at the Water Needs study, develop an outline, and help folks decide if the recommendations are still valid and if targets should be updated.
   2. Ark River Water Needs Assessment by Roy Smith (BLM) – Developed by BLM, BOR, Forest Service and Colorado Dept of Natural Resources, July 2000. Does it need updating? Find it here <https://cpw.state.co.us/placestogo/parks/ArkansasHeadwatersRecreationArea/Documents/Admin/Publications/WaterNeedsAssessment.pdf>
   3. Fisheries Study (around 2000 by CPW Aquatic Biologist Greg Policky). Does it need updating? Josh Nehring shared that the current Aquatic Bio for the upper Ark (Mike Atwood) has recently resigned. There is currently no plan to update the broader fish study beyond the usual every-other-year data update reports.
7. Great Plains Reservoirs kickoff meeting hosted by Kiowa County
   1. Rena announced that Kiowa County recently held a meeting to discuss how to get water into the GPR’s, located north of Lamar. Storage rights are owned by Amity Canal, but they don’t always choose to store their water to GPRs in dry years, which leaves the lakes very low. Maintenance of the ditches and delivery system is in need of repair to work efficiently. The fishery is able to survive, but tourism draw in dry years is low.
   2. The GPR’s are a great draw for recreation (fishing, camping, bird watching, and hunting) to encourage regular tourism to the area.
   3. Subcommittees are now exploring ways to get water to GPR’s more frequently. Also exploring alternative recreation (dirt bike park?) in low water years. Exploring whether cities might be interested in storing water there. Exploring lease/fallow options for Amity farmers in some years.
8. Oil Creek Diversion & rafting safety improvements (Canon City)
   1. Manny asked if Oil Creek was still “on the table” for discussion, especially as the ditch company board changes from year to year, leading to an openness to improve the diversion for rafting safety. Yes, the effort is still valid and will remain a goal which we will revisit whenever we learn of updates.
9. Black Hills Energy (Canon City) update
   1. Background: this site has been of interest to the Rafting community for a long time as a potential take-in / take – out site with parking, camping, etc. Bob shared that the Black Hills property near the Ark River recently sold their water rights to Canon City ($800K) for the city to perform mitigation on land and soil.
10. Upper Ark Watershed Partnership update
    1. Dan Omasta and Natalie Allio shared that the group met recently to get stakeholders on board with South Arkansas River stream management planning. They described that they are ready to apply for a WSRF grant from the Ark Roundtabled, and wanted to see about getting a letter of approval from the Envi-Rec Committee.
    2. We advised Dan and Natalie to provide the E-R committee with a write up of the effort.
    3. It was also advised that this effort be added to the BIP update list.
11. Purgatoire update
    1. Julie Knudson shared that the Baca/Picketwire Complex project (habitat improvement, fish ladder, etc) ,received a first round of grant funding from a Reclamation Water Smart grant. They plan to apply for a similar grant for Phase II this fall. If they decide to proceed soon, she is also asking for a letter of support from the Envi-Rec Committee.
    2. We advised Julie to provide the E-R committee with a write up of the effort.
12. Further BIP update news
    1. Mark shared that the BIP update has two pieces for us to consider…1) Water supply needs and 2) Strategic objectives on how to meet water supply needs.
13. BLM & Forest Service Updates
    1. No specific updates. Misty (USFS) has been working to update Forest Service items in the BIP list.
14. Next E-R Meeting on Nov 30 – yes, we will have it.

**Mark your Calendar:**

Next Ark Basin Roundtable – Nov 11, 12:30-noon, GoTo meeting.

Next Envi-Rec Committee Meeting, Nov 30, 2020, 10am, virtual.

**About us:**

**Arkansas Basin Roundtable – Environmental & Recreation Committee Purpose and Goals**

**The Environmental - Recreation Committee's purpose**

- Ark Basin RT legislative directive...to propose projects or methods, structural and non-structural, to meet environmental and recreational needs.

-Constantly review Basin Implementation Plan, evaluate goals and priorities.

-Consider sustainability values (economic, social, environmental) as we evaluate environmental & recreation issues, projects, and priorities.

-Work with Needs Assessment Committee to advise on environmental and recreation priorities (but do not infringe on Needs Assessment Committee).

-Encourage environmental & recreation groups to come to this committee before approaching Needs Assessment Committee or Roundtable. This committee can aid by providing letters of support of certain projects.

-Outreach and education. Continually strive to bring awareness of past, present, and future envi & rec projects.

**Environmental - Recreation Committee structure**

-Bob Hamel (AROA), Ark Basin Roundtable At Large Recreation Rep, Chair

-Rena Griggs (CPW) Vice-chair

-Amber Shanklin (Palmer Land Trust) Ark Basin Roundtable At Large Environmental Rep

-Mark Shea (CSU)(ARWC) Ark Basin Roundtable Chair

-Matt Heimrich (Palmer Land Trust / Otero Farmer) and Ark Basin Roundtable Vice Chair

**Difference between Non-Consumptive Committee and the Ark River Watershed Collaborative (ARWC)?**

-Discussion: ARWC is like the "operating body" or "fiscal agent" of the NC committee...

...whereas the NC committee itself is the group of experts offering advisement on projects and priorities.

**Envi-Rec Committee Meeting Goals**

-strive for a purpose for every meeting; provide an agenda prior to each meeting.

-set a regular schedule - last Monday of every month in Canon City (and occasional other locations).

-send out a meaningful agenda, ahead of meeting.

-emphasize all folks are welcome; grow the invite list; invite special guests for specific planned topics.

-for each month's agenda, expect agency updates from USFS, BLM, CPW, and ARWC.