

## Ark Basin Roundtable - Environmental & Recreation Committee

### June Meeting Notes

Monday, July 26, 2021

10:00am – 12 noon

via Zoom

A regular meeting of the Environmental – Recreation Committee of the Arkansas Basin Roundtable convened virtually. The meeting was called to order by Bob Hamel, Ark Basin Envi-Rec Chair.

#### Attendees:

**Roundtable Members:** Bob Hamel, (Ark Basin RT Recreation Rep, AROA), Mark Shea (Ark Basin RT Chair, ARWC), Dwayne McFall (Fremont County), Carol Ekarius (ARWC), Amber Shanklin (Ark Basin RT Environmental Rep, Palmer Land Trust), Bob Hartzman (City of Canon City)

**Agency Liaisons:** Rena Griggs (CPW – Water Specialist – SE Region), John Smeins (BLM), Tom Waters (CPW – AHRA Manager)

**Non-Roundtable Members:** Kyle Horne (Canon City Rec), Ryan Bouton (PhD, Canon City), Blake Osborn (CSU Water Center), Wil Koger (Forsgren Engineering), Kevin Warner (TU), Randy Case (El Paso County Ground Water Quality Committee).

#### July Meeting Notes:

- Basin Implementation Plan (BIP) update & Individual Projects and Processes (IPP) project list dated 7-21-21 emailed to us from Brown & Caldwell (Lindsay) for review:** In a quick review of this list prior to the meeting, Rena noticed that some projects didn't seem updated as she remembers (ex. John Martin perm pool should be marked as "complete", but wasn't). This has us wondering if Lindsay (Brown & Caldwell) has the most recent smartsheet update from Brett Gracely (LRE water). Otherwise, a few projects on the list were discussed, for example Canon City Municipal Diversion was completed in 1993, so we want to investigate why the project is still on the list..is there more work to be done?; 0034 McKenzie Ave Bridge...is CPW working with the private landowner? Tom Waters confirmed - yes; 0559 Phantom Reservoir...this project died (John Smeins), why is it still on the list? **Overall, the purpose of updating this project list is CWCB's current effort underway to update the Colorado Water Plan, which hasn't been updated since 2015.**
- ARWC Update:** Carol is setting up interviews with candidates for the Exec Director position. Also, the monsoons are causing flooding of old burn scars such as Decker and Spring Creek. No concerns on the fishery as of yet.
- VFMP Update:** Pueblo Water exhausted their 6000 acre-feet on 7/25. The flow program will now convert to Reclamation's 10,000 acre-feet until Aug 15 (except this water is not needed today due to recent rains and high native flows). At [CPW's AHRA website](#), anyone can view the volume of water left in Reclamation's 10,000 acre-feet for the flow program (click the water flows tab)...it's updated regularly. [More info about the Voluntary Flow Management Program here](#). Someone asked how Reclamation

determines to reserve 10,000 ac-feet for VFMP given that the total Fry-Ark Project water brought over was below normal this year (35,000 to 38,000 acre-feet). The answer is that Reclamation, along with Southeastern starts making decisions in February based on snowpack, and makes a final decision of the amount of May 1. Despite below normal reservoir storage and drought conditions, the parties were able to offer the full 10,000 acre feet for the program this year.

4. **Black Hills Energy site update (Canon City):** Rumor is, Black Hills intends to put out an RFP (Regarding designs for rafting access put-in/take-out sites for public review on August 1, with a September 15 deadline for comment. Bob Hamel noted that it seems Black Hills needs to reach out to the right groups to get good feedback, in particular, reach out to CPW for rafting and fishery. Construction could happen as soon as 2022.
5. **CPW – Salida Low Head Dam removal project (Rena):** CPW leadership officially decided to move forward with this \$1.5 million project to remove the dam, improve rafting safety, and restore fish passage. This dam is on the Ark River upstream of Mt. Shavano fish hatchery. The diversion used to serve the hatchery until whirling disease was discovered in the 1990's and the water was no longer useable. The dam itself has also been a well known safety hazard for rafters. Since then, CPW established groundwater sources for the hatchery with reduced operations, but has recently been undergoing efforts to use wells and other groundwater sources to bring the hatchery back to full operation. This project to remove the dam is a part of that overall effort. CPW is currently looking for funding partners; plans to apply for the NRD grant, and wishes to inquire about available CWCB grants.
6. **Canon City – Fremont Sanitation District – Reynolds St Bridge – Bluff area erosion update:** Kyle Horne shared the Sanitation district is the lead on this project and is currently looking for grant opportunities. Construction would likely happen in 2022.
7. **Div of Water Resources Pond Management program:** Dwayne McFall brought to our attention DWR's recent effort with administering illegal ponds in the Ark Basin. Unless a pond falls under a livestock exemption or erosion control dam exemption, an augmentation plan (for evaporative loss) must be established, or else the pond must be breached. There's thousands of ponds in this situation, many are on private land. As for livestock ponds, it sounds like the pond must have an outlet installed on it as part of the requirements to be exempt (?). For more about this issue, see [DWR's Pond Management website](#).
8. **Ark Basin RT will hold on development of policy on Stream Restoration Projects:** Mark Shea shared that the Ark Basin RT will hold off on developing any policy statement on this issue and allow DWR and other State Agencies to come out with their own specific policy first, which is currently in development.
9. **Chaffee County Rec Plan:** Cindy Williams shared before this meeting that the Chaffee County Outdoor Recreation Management plan was approved by the planning commission. The plan will be distributed with these minutes. The plan will be distributed with these minutes. Some questions were asked about this plan by special interest groups and [an article responding to those questions was written by Commissioner Greg Felt, found here](#).
10. Bob Hamel asked for further updates, and with none heard, motioned to adjourn the meeting.

**Ark River Basin Water Forum Program Manager Position is currently posted [here](#), apply by Aug 12.**  
Spread the word.

**Mark your Calendar:**

**Next Ark Basin Roundtable – August 14, 12:30-3:00pm, Pueblo Community College (In-Person! But [please check website](#) for any possible changes to this plan).**

**Next Envi-Rec Committee Meeting, Monday, Aug 30, 10am – Noon. Zoom.**

## 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 or Co-chair (non-voting RT member).
- 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) Envi-Rec 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.