

Ark Basin Roundtable - Environmental & Recreation Committee

August Meeting Notes

Monday, August 28, 2023

10:00am – 11:00am

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, Envi-Rec Committee Chair.

Attendees:

Roundtable Members: Mark Shea (Roundtable Chair); Bob Hamel (Rec Chair); Blake Osborn (Envi Chair)

Agency Liaisons: Rena Griggs (CPW – Water Specialist – SE Region),

Stakeholders & Frequent Guests: Kyle Horne (Canon City Recreation & Park District), Jonathan Paklaian (ARWC), Lisa Walters (CO Springs Utilities), Tyler Benton (CO Springs Util), Lucy Harrington (GEI Consultants)

Aug 28, 2023 Envi-Rec Committee Meeting Notes:

1. **Voluntary Flow Management Program 2023 Updates (Bob)** – Never needed the 10K VFMP water this year; native flows and other releases were sufficient to meet 700 cfs target flow at Salida from July 1-Aug 15. The boating community has been doing well this season.
2. **CWCB Grant Opportunities and other (Bob & Rena)** – Check the [CWCB Grants website](#) for detailed info on grant and loan opportunities, due dates, and the online portal to apply. Mark and Lucy also shared about funding through the **NRCS PL-566 Watershed Program** (info attached).
3. **CPW Updates (Rena):** (1) CPW's Ark Temperature proposal below Pueblo Dam – proposing to raise the temperature standard slightly from June-Dec. [Check the press release for details](#). Public Meeting will be held Sep 6, 6pm, Pueblo State Park Visitor's Center. (2) Salida Low Head Dam Removal – the project was fully funded, but when CPW requested bids, the sole bidder went over. We were able to negotiate cost and cover the remainder needed. Work still scheduled for fall 2023. (3) CPW did a spot market purchase for approx. 1700 acre feet of water to go towards John Martin permanent pool. (4) New SE Region Manager is Frank McGee. SE Region Deputy Managers are April Estep and Mitch Martin.
4. **City of Canon City Water Committee (Blake)** – Blake shared that a new water committee is forming to help area ditches coordinate more effectively and network to seek funding opportunities.
5. **Ark River Watershed Collaborative Update (Jonathan):** ARWC is seeking a BOR Water Smart grant for cooperative watershed management efforts, and support for basin mitigation groups. ARWC also seeking input of watershed health needs below Pueblo Res...what opportunities exist (WQ, Aq Life, Tamarisk). Coordinate with Ag/Muni Committee on Ark Basin RT. Mark encouraged ARWC to look at NRCS PL-566 funding opportunity. Also, ARWC will be looking for a Watershed Health Coordinator soon.
6. **Black Hills Energy Property (Canon City) Update: (Kyle)** No major updates on this. Ryan Stevens is a good contact.
7. **Canon City Recreation & Park District (Kyle)** – Reactivate Ark River channels in John Griffin Regional Park: Still in early stages of planning. Pathfinder Park – working with Dept of Corrections.
8. **BLM** – Wild Horse Reservoir (proposed by City of Aurora) will start an EIS soon (BLM is lead Federal agency). [See details on proposed project here](#). Aurora will use existing water rights to divert to the new reservoir in Park County, but how will this change flows in the Ark down toward Pueblo Res?

9. **Co Springs Util (Mark)** – Mark shared that he recently participated in a Wildfire Ready Watershed meeting with USFS. What can groups do to anticipate the next wildfire?

Mark your Calendar:

Next Ark Basin Roundtable Meeting – Sep 13, 12:30-3:00pm, In person & Hybrid (This meeting always held 2nd Wed of the month).

Next Envi-Rec Committee Meeting, Oct 30, 2023. Stay tuned for emails.

See below for more info on the Ark Basin Roundtable Environmental – Recreation Committee.

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).
- Blake Osborne (LAVWCD) 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)?

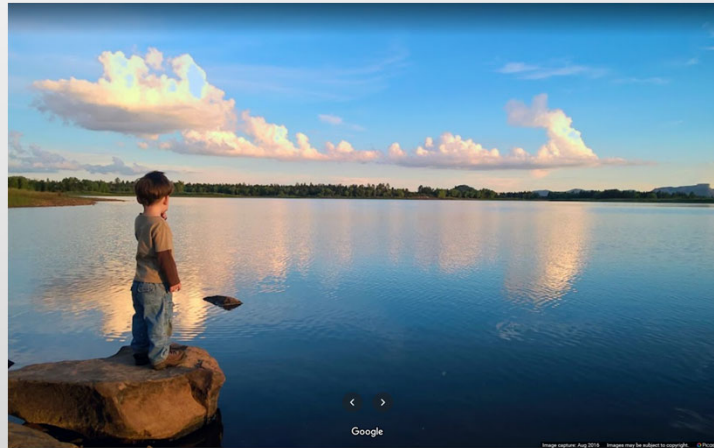
- Discussion: ARWC is like the "operating body" or "fiscal agent" of the NC committee...
...whereas the NC committee itself is the group of experts offering advisement on projects and priorities.

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.

The NRCS Watershed Program

Is it the right tool for US?



1

NRCS Watershed Programs

Discussion Objectives

- To be aware of some features & benefits of the “Watershed” Program, and
- To know how to request NRCS assistance

2

NRCS has 4 Watershed Programs

provide technical and financial assistance for:



Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations (WFPO)

- Addresses natural resource concerns on a watershed scale



Watershed "Dam" Rehabilitation (WHRB)

- Rehabilitates NRCS watershed project dams

Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP)

- Protects lives and property after a natural disaster

Watershed Surveys and Planning (WSP)

- Protects watersheds from damage



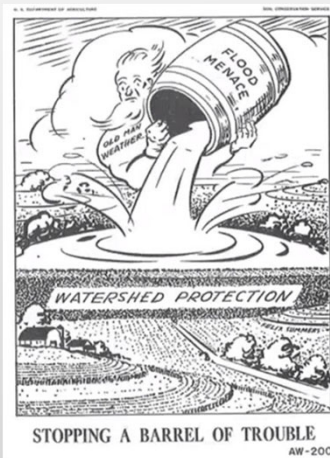
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3

3

Watershed Operations Program

(PL-566 Background)



Flood Prevention Operations Program authorized by the Flood Control Act of 1944 (P.L. 78-534)

Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (P.L.-83-566)

a.k.a. the "PL-566" Program



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4

4

Watershed Operations Program

General Purposes

- Preventing Erosion, Flood & Sediment Damage
- Water Conservation, Development & Utilization
- Land Conservation & Utilization

5

Watershed Operations Program

General PL-566 Requirements

- Must have a project “*SPONSOR*”
- Project needs to fit at least one of the 8 authorized uses
- > 20% of Benefits are Agricultural or for Rural Community
- No structure with
 - > 12,500 acre-feet of flood storage
 - > 25,000 acre-feet of total capacity
- Typically, there’s no other USDA programs available

6

Watershed Operations Program

8 Purposes Authorized by PL-566

- *Agricultural Water Management*
- *Watershed Protection*
- *Flood Prevention (Flood Damage Reduction)*
- *Municipal and Industrial Water Supply*
- *Public Recreation*
- *Public Fish and Wildlife*
- *Water Quality Management*
- *Watershed Structure Rehabilitation*

7

PL-566 Authorized Purposes

Agricultural Water Management

- Irrigation
- Water Conservation
- Water Quality Improvement
- Ground Water Recharge
- Agricultural Water Supply (including rural communities)
- Drainage

8

PL-566 Authorized Purposes

Watershed Protection

- “Upland” treatments to cure “Downstream” problems
 - Flooding / Erosion / Sedimentation
 - Pollutants
- Ecosystem Restoration type activities
 - Dam Removal
 - Fish Passage
- Land treatment practices to conserve/develop:
 - Soil / Water quality and quantity
 - Woodland
 - Fish and wildlife habitats



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9

9

PL-566 Authorized Purposes

Flood Prevention

- Prevent/reduce flooding, erosion, & sediment damage
 - Floodproofing structures in the floodplain
 - Removing property from the floodplain
 - **Reducing the frequency, depth, or velocity of flooding.**
- Prevent encroachment into the floodplain



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10

10

PL-566 Authorized Purposes

Public Recreation

- Local Sponsor will provide an area for public recreation
- Basic facilities needed for public health and safety
- Provide needed access, water, and power
- Recreation Facilities

picnic areas	sanitary facilities	fishing piers
shelters	cooking grills	parking areas
access roads	trails	swimming beaches

11

PL-566 Authorized Purposes

Public Fish and Wildlife

- Local Sponsor provides an area for fish and wildlife access
- Habitat Improvements
- Fish and Wildlife development

12

PL-566 Authorized Purposes

Municipal & Industrial (M&I) Water Supply

- Provide storage capacity in reservoirs for M&I use
- Outlet works and pipelines to the distribution system

** Does not include municipal/industrial wells, water treatment plants, or water distribution systems.*



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13

13

PL-566 Authorized Purposes

Water Quality Management

- Provide water storage capacity in reservoirs for regulation of stream flow to improve water quality.



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14

14

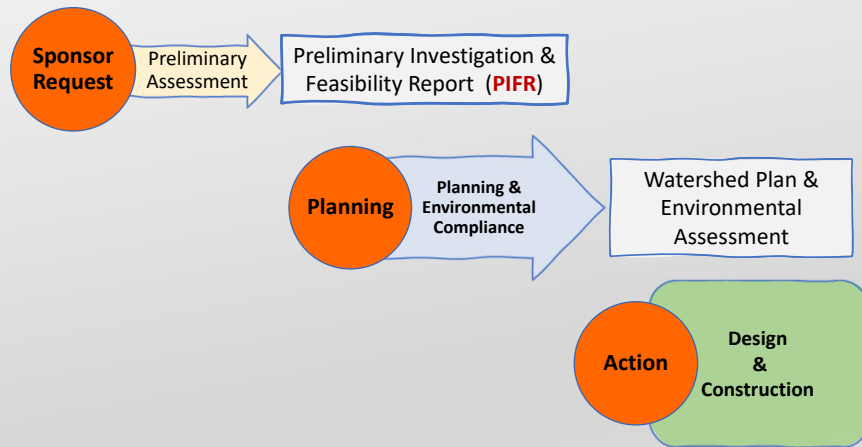
PL-566 Authorized Purposes

Watershed Structure Rehabilitation

- Rehabilitate dams originally constructed as part of a SCS/NRCS Watershed Project
 - PL-534
 - Pilot Project
 - PL-566
 - RC&D Program

15

Watershed Program Phases



16

Watershed Operations Program Financial Assistance

The Federal Share of Project Costs

Purpose	Planning & Engineering	Construction	Land Rights
Agricultural Water Management	up to 100%	up to 75%	0%
Watershed Protection	100%	variable	0%
Flood Prevention	100%	100%	0%
Fish & Wildlife or Recreation	100%	up to 50%	up to 50%
Municipal/Industrial Water Supply	0%	up to 50%	0%

"Variable" = must not exceed the rate for other NRCS/USDA programs

17

Sponsor Requirements

The Sponsoring Local Organization (**SLO**),
a.k.a. the **"Sponsor"** must have:

- The **Power of Eminent Domain**
- The Ability to **Acquire Permits & Licenses**
- The **Authority to Levy Taxes**
- The **Ability to Enter Into Agreements**

18

Sponsor Responsibilities

- Encourage/Obtain Public Participation
- Provide the Local Share of Project Costs
- Obtain Permits & Land Rights *(and water rights)*
- Perform Construction Contracting
- Provide for Operation and Maintenance (O&M)



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19

19

How to Request PL-566 Assistance

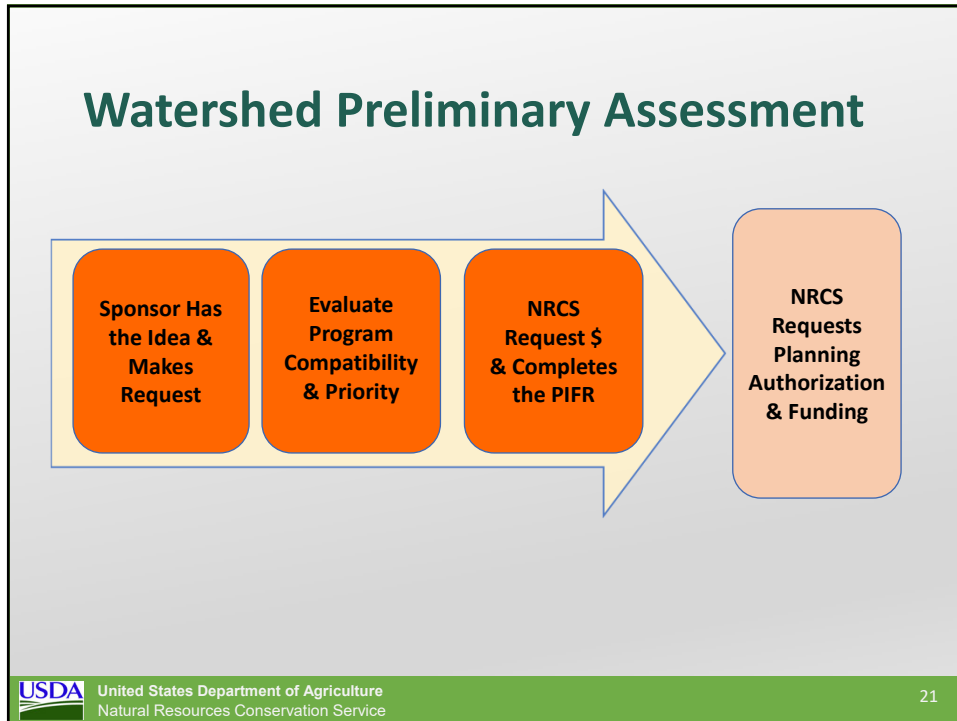
- Talk to us, let's see if the program fits your needs
- Identify one or more potential Sponsors
- ***A Sponsor(s) sends NRCS a formal request letter***
(we'll give you the template)



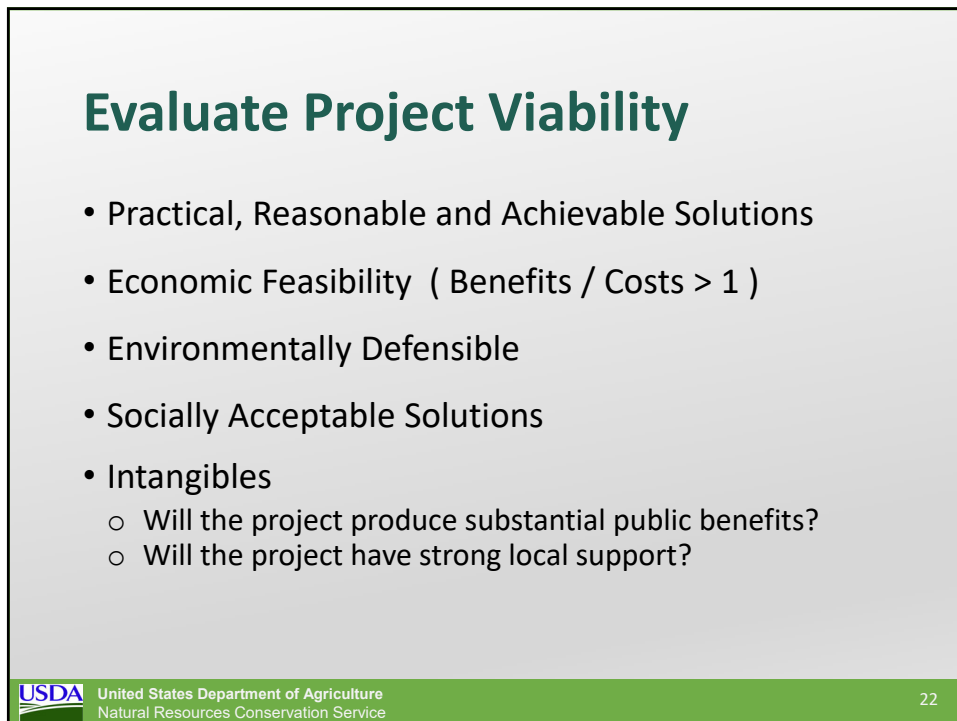
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20

20



21



22

For More Information

NRCS Watershed Program Website

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/landscape/wfpo/>

National Watershed Coalition Website

<https://watershedcoalition.org/>

Contact your local NRCS Office

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/co/home/>

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23

Questions?



24