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

**April Meeting Notes**

**Monday, April 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), Carol Ekarius, (ARWC).

**Agency Liaisons:** Rena Griggs (CPW – Water Specialist – SE Region), Alex Townsend (CPW Salida Fish Biologist) Jon Erickson (CPW Water Engineer), Travis Black (CPW SE Deputy Region Mgr).

**Non-Roundtable Members:** Blake Osborn (CSU CO Water Institute), Dwayne McFall (Fremont County), Dan Omasta (Trout Unlimited), Kyle Horne (Canon City Rec & Park Dist), Kevin Warner (Trout Unlimited), Tyler Benton (Co Spgs Util), Buffy Lenth (Central Colorado Conservancy), Julie Knudsen (Purgatoire Watershed Partnership), Chloe Lewis (Westervelt Consulting), Tyler Bell, Matt Nykiel, Randy Case, Bryan Long.

**April Meeting Notes:**

1. Bob asked for input for the agenda and suggested approval of the agenda. It was discussed that we’ll try to follow a more formal meeting format in the future to be more in-line with Ark Basin RT business meeting standards.
2. Rena researched CWCB’s [Focus Area Map](https://cwcb.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=880753ceb13d43e3bc89e2259247aafa) to understand the shown layers. There were 2 main groups of GIS layers …1) E-R focus areas (2015) and 2) E-R database items (Technical Update 2019) which can also be viewed in the [CWCB Map Viewer](https://maps.dnrgis.state.co.us/cwcb/Index.html?viewer=cwcbviewer).
   1. The **E-R focus areas (2015)** are the HUC12 watersheds showing 7 levels of pink for the number of E-R subcategories in that watershed. The 7 subcategories were Wetlands, T&E species, Riparian areas, ISF stream segments, Boating, Waterfowl Hunting, and Fishing. If a HUC12 has all 7 categories, it’s dark pink. If 1 category, light pink. For example, Clear Creek Reservoir and John Martin Reservoir were the darkest pink, both with 6 E-R subcategories. Williams Creek watershed, southeast of Co Springs, was light pink with 1 E-R subcategory. This is to generally help show watersheds with high E-R value. Remember, this is just a COUNT of subcategories…it was not more specific than that. There are also some point layers that showed E-R projects that had been awarded CWCB grant funding.
   2. The **E-R database items (2019 Technical Update)** are the HUC12 watersheds shown in green. The subcategory names were updated with added attributes to be more meaningful, so it’s more than just a count – there’s specific info listed within each subcategory. The new subcategories are Fish, Wildlife, Rec & Ecology, Water Rights, Important Wildlife Attributes, and Environmental & Physical Attributes. For example, Clear Creek Reservoir lists specific T&E Birds in that watershed (Southwestern Willow Flycatcher), Gold Medal Streams, In Stream Flow segments, RICD segments, wilderness areas, and national wetland inventory availability. This 2019 technical update also points to more specific data layers that can be viewed in the [CWCB Map Viewer](https://maps.dnrgis.state.co.us/cwcb/Index.html?viewer=cwcbviewer).
   3. Rena recommended a first step might be to gather Ark Basin Stream Management Plan segments, submit those to CWCB, and have them added to the CWCB Map Viewer. It’s possible that the [CWCB Map Viewer](https://maps.dnrgis.state.co.us/cwcb/Index.html?viewer=cwcbviewer) could be the “housing” for added GIS layers. The question is, who can create these layers? And where should they be housed and managed? Should we ask CWCB to provide funding for a GIS person to create or add layers?
   4. During this discussion, folks shared of known GIS data sources such as CDPHE Water Quality Point source discharge data (might have security restrictions), [Colorado State Forest Service Forest Atlas](https://coloradoforestatlas.org/) , [Colorado Natural Heritage Program Watershed Toolbox](https://csurams.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=0e2d5ffb9f1745fbbe4f92806a7048eb) , and the [Colorado Fluvial Hazard Mapping Program](https://www.coloradofhz.com/). It was emphasized that we should focus on where to find restoration opportunities and also focus on forest health.
3. CDPHE announced $7 Million available for upper Ark Restoration projects as part of a Natural Resource Damages claim. For details, go to the [official notice here](https://mcusercontent.com/30f0231e9e83e1d491fb461b2/files/70c4756d-780a-47c4-b8c7-ff1b983ab7d9/CDPHERM_HAZ_NRD_Restoration_Upper_Arkansas_River_California_Gulch_NRD_Solicitation_for_Project_Proposal.pdf). Application deadline is June 1.
4. [BLM is currently seeking input for the Chaffee County Camping and Travel Management Plan](https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2012291/510). Comments due by May 20, 2021.
5. Kyle Horne (Canon City Rec & Park Dist) - Canon City – Fremont Sanitation District – Reynolds St Bridge – Bluff area erosion update: Sewer line infrastructure is close to being exposed or currently exposed at this erosion site on the Ark River. Riverwalk trail would be impacted. No updates on plans to fix as of yet.
6. Upper Ark Watershed Partnership update (Dan) – TU plans to submit to CWCB for a WSRF grant application for funds to study bank erosion just downstream of Pueblo Dam (4 sites upstream of Valco Bridge). They’ll submit the application by the April 30 deadline.
7. Black Hills Energy Site at Canon City (Bob / Kyle) – Rafting community hopes to make this a take in/put out site someday. No update. Discussions have been stalled by Black Hills.
8. CPW updates (Rena): John Martin Reservoir permanent pool for the fishery is very low (4000 af…should be around 10,000 af). The best time to supply water to the pool is during wet years, but we’re currently in a dry period. Rena also shared that the [Winter Water Storage Program](https://www.secwcd.org/content/winter-water-storage) yielded very low levels this past winter. [See the March 2021 WWSP Report here](https://www.secwcd.org/sites/default/files/home3/secwcdco/public_html/private/uploads/70/Winter%20Water%2003%2014%202021x.pdf) – note that the storage system grand total in March 2021 is 83,667 acre feet, while the last 20 years average is 129,450 acre feet.
9. Carol reminded that CWCB Director Becky Mitchell had hinted at the March Ark Basin RT that stimulus dollars might be available in the future and this E-R committee should stating thinking about shovel ready projects.
10. Mark led a brief discussion on [Colorado River Demand Management](https://www.coloradobasinroundtable.org/water-planning/demand-management/) . As an E-R committee, we should start educating ourselves on the topic and think about how this might impact valuable Ark Basin E-R agreements such as the Voluntary Flow Management Program.
11. Mark also brought up the subject of [Aquatic Nuisance Species](https://cpw.state.co.us/thingstodo/Pages/BoatInspection.aspx) (boat inspection funding), its importance with respect to municipal water supplies and infrastructure, and what municipalities can do to promote support and funding from Reclamation. Municipalities would like to start a discussion with CPW and Reclamation on the issue.
12. Bob asked for further updates, and with none heard, motioned to adjourn the meeting.

**Mark your Calendar:**

**Next Ark Basin Roundtable – May 12, 12:30-3:00pm, (note they’ve switched to using zoom…link will be provided in email from the Ark Basin Roundtable).**

**Next Envi-Rec Committee Meeting, Monday, May 24, 10am – Noon. (Zoom link will be provided in an email from Rena).**

**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.