

Arkansas Basin Roundtable
September 9, 2015 – CSU, Pueblo; Occhiato Center
Meeting Notes

Roundtable Business

Sandy White called the meeting to order at 12:30 pm. Members and visitors introduced themselves. Twenty two (22) members were present. There are 40 active roundtable members at this time – 20 is a quorum.

Approval of Minutes of August 12th

A motion to approve the minutes of August 12, 2015 was made, seconded, and passed unanimously.

Public Comment - none

Creek Week will be held from September 26th – October 4th. It's a watershed-wide clean up along waterways from Monument to Pueblo, including clean-ups along the entire Fountain Creek Watershed.

IBCC Report – Jay Winner and Jeris Danielson

Jeris – The IBCC met on August 25th. There was a lot of discussion about conservation goals. All the basins agreed to accept the Conceptual Framework.

There was also discussion regarding funding options for water projects going forward. There were six suggestions discussed:

1. A \$125 million payback that the General Assembly took from the CWCB project fund in 2008/2009.
2. Severance Tax increase
3. Container fee initiative
4. Water fixture/appliance fee
5. Sales tax
6. Restore borrowed Severance Tax Funds – approximately \$430 million has been borrowed by the General Assembly over the last 10 years.

No conclusions were reached, but members felt that initiatives that require voter approval would be less likely to succeed.

CWCB Report – Alan Hamel

The CWCB meets next week in Montrose. On Wednesday, the Colorado Water Plan will be discussed. On Thursday morning, WSRA grants and CWCB loans will be presented for approval. The Arkansas Basin has interests in seven of the grants and grant/loan projects.

Arkansas River Watershed Collaborative – Mark Shea and Deb Phenicie

There was a good showing of applicants that were interviewed, and a recommendation was made to the Executive Committee on September 2nd. Mark introduced and welcomed Deb Phenicie, the selected applicant.

Deb is a civil engineer with a wide array of work experience, including working directly with ranchers, land reclamation, and managing contractors and consultants doing environmental restoration projects for Colorado Brownfields Foundation. She has worked a lot in rural Colorado, looking at abandoned and under-used sites, using community engagement processes to look at opportunities for economic development and improving land use in small communities.

Regarding the Collaborative, the next step will be to get the collaborative together again, create a work plan for Deb, and put her to work.

Executive Committee - Sandy

Sandy welcomed Deb.

Regarding the BIP Coordination grant, the Executive Committee is circulating a job description for a coordinator to assist us in implementing the Basin Implementation Plan, with the aim to have a candidate selected by the end of October.

PRESENTATION: Colorado Water: Live Like You Love It Toolkit – Amy Conklin (see www.arkansasbasin.com)

Water Messaging In Colorado

- Only one statewide water awareness campaign
- Colorado Watershed Protection Project
- 1999-2001
- League of Women Voters

Water 2012

- Statewide celebration of water – not a campaign
- Planned to become Value of Water campaign, led by Colorado Water Wise

GBSM Communications Roadmap

- CO – only western state without a statewide campaign
- Recommendations for a scalable water awareness campaign
- Spoiler alert – it's expensive

Other Efforts

- CDPHE and CWA – Corona Insights survey and focus groups
- CWCB – statewide survey
- BMW survey and focus groups
- Greenway Foundation – metro area survey and FGs

All say the same thing:

- People really care about water
- People want to know more, especially about what they can do

Stop Hugging Water

- We have the knowledge
- We have the will
- We need to get off second base with water

Colorado Water Plan

- No/Low Regrets Action Plan
 - Develop statewide messaging
 - Pursue coordinated media campaign
- Colorado Water Plan (second draft, pg 379)
 - Assists education and outreach efforts

Arkansas BIP

- Describes extensive outreach activities of Ark Basin RT

Branding the Program

Lovecoloradowater.org

This group was advised of grant application process and invited to return.

PUBLIC EDUCATION/PUBLIC OUTREACH WORK PLAN – Paul Fanning

PEPO Committee has teamed with the Arkansas River Basin Water Forum as a way forward. The Forum is now a 501c3. The group will return to the RT with a Scope of Work that will include some of the following:

- More outreach in terms of other publics.
- Outreach committee has been defining what other publics are.
- Expand water festival efforts
- Documentary film specific to the Arkansas Basin
- Statewide water documentary – The Great Divide, will be shown in Pueblo on September 18th.
- Next Water Forum will be in April 2016, in Salida
- Newspaper articles
- Engaging and enlisting 4H groups throughout the basin
- CS Utilities summer library activity – great interactive materials

DISCUSSION: COLORADO WATER PLAN – Gary Barber

Gary presented comments that he recommends be submitted by the Roundtable to CWCB regarding the second draft of the Colorado Water Plan.

Basin Challenges currently remain unchanged from the December, 2014 draft of the CWP. Gary suggests the following changes to the Basin Challenges list:

- All new uses require augmentation. Increased irrigation efficiency, i.e. conversion from flood to center-pivot irrigation for labor and cost savings, will require 30,000-50,000 acre-feet of augmentation water in the coming years.
- Replacement of municipal water supplies that depend on the non-renewing Denver Basin aquifer is becoming critical, exacerbated by continued growth in groundwater-dependent urban areas.
- Collaborative solutions, as demonstrated in Alternative Transfer Methods pilot projects, are needed to forestall or avoid loss of irrigated acreage in agriculture.
- As the most rafted river in the world, the Arkansas River Voluntary Flow Agreement provides a bench mark for cooperative integration of municipal, agricultural and recreational solutions in support of a robust fishery.
- Concerns over water quality include drinking water in the Lower Valley and the impact of fires and floods in the Fountain Creek watershed.
- Rural areas within the Arkansas Basin have identified water needs, but face challenges in marshalling resources to identify and implement solutions. Support from the Roundtable and CWCB is needed.
- The great majority of surface storage reservoirs in the Arkansas Basin were constructed between 1890 and 1930. Many of these facilities are in need of repair or restoration.
- Regional solutions are emerging, like the SECWCD Regional Water Conservation Plan, which can serve as a model for future regional initiatives to address the needs of the Arkansas Basin.

In addition, other small edits to Chapter 6 and 9 were recommended, correcting and filling out content regarding the Arkansas Basin.

After discussion, and an additional comment added (re: Ark River Voluntary Flow Agreement), Gary's recommended comments were approved by consensus. They will be forwarded to the CWCB.

OTHER BUSINESS

- Next Meeting – October 14th, 12:30 pm, CSU-Pueblo: Annual Meeting and Election of Officers.
- Current slate: Jim Broderick, Chair (will not stand again for this position)
 - SeEtta Moss, Vice-Chair
 - Sandy White, Vice-Chair (willing to stand for Chair position)
 - Terry Scanga, Secretary
 - Terry Book, PEPO Rep (willing to stand for Vice-Chair position)
 - Jeris Danielson, IBCC Rep (up for re-election)
 - Jay Winner, IBCC Rep
 - Alan Hamel, CWCB Rep
 - Jim Broderick, IBCC Alternate
- Let Jim Broderick know if you are interested in serving. FYI, to become an IBCC Rep, you must own an adjudicated water right personally.
- Adjourn

Links:

- Information regarding the Arkansas Basin, including meeting agendas, minutes and presentations may be found on our website, at: www.arkansasbasin.com .
- Information regarding water in Colorado may be found at: <http://cwcb.state.co.us/Pages/CWCBHome.aspx>
- Information regarding Colorado's Water Plan may be found at: <http://coloradowaterplan.com/>