



# Arkansas Basin Roundtable

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## ROUNDTABLE MEETING NOTES

February 8, 2017 – Pueblo Community College, Fortino Ballroom B

### **Roundtable Business**

Sandy White called the meeting to order at 12:30 pm. Members and visitors introduced themselves. Thirty three (33) members were present. There are 39 active roundtable members at this time.

### **Approval of Minutes of January**

*A motion to approve the minutes of January 2017 was made, seconded, and passed unanimously.*

### **Public Comment - none**

Valda Terauds asked for volunteer presenters for the Pueblo Water Festival, which will be held on May 9<sup>th</sup>, at CSU-Pueblo.

SeEtta Moss welcomed Greg Felt, who was involved in the first SWSI stakeholder group that led to the roundtable process. Greg will be taking the Chaffee County roundtable seat.

### **PRESENTATION: FUNDING SERIES #1 – Elizabeth With, NRCS, Gunnison office**

Financial Assistance through 2014 Farm Bill Programs

The Natural Resources Conservation Service was formed in the 1930s, when we started having trouble growing enough food for ourselves. It was originally a soil conservation service originally, but morphed into the NRCS, for preservation of our nation's food. The NRCS has field offices in nearly every county in Colorado, plus three regional offices.

The Farm Bill allowed NRCS to offer increased technical and financial assistance. They can help with resource inventories and figure out what is needed. Then they pair money with the best projects. For example:

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP): \$70 million spent last year, to help people adapt infrastructure projects. This can fund diversions, irrigation structures, fencing, the adoption of new practices to help conserve natural resources. EQIP can fund 50-75% of a project.

Conservation Stewardship Program: Higher level of stewardship, sustainable farming & ranching. This is for producers that are already using Best Management Practices. It enters 5-year contracts, to assist the adoption of more BMPs, plus new practices like pollinator and wildlife habitat. This program can fund 100% of the implementation cost of new practices.

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

- Agricultural Lands Easement (ALE)
- Wetlands Reserve Easement (WRE)
- Mineral rights, grazing rights, farming rights,, development rights
- <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/co/home/>
- Find your local service center and contact NRCS for help.



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Q&A and Discussion re:

- Environmental Reviews and Archeology Reviews
- Large diversion projects
- Emergency Watershed Protection program
- Who can be an applicant? Individual contracts on a per-landowner basis. Can set up a funding pool, but individuals each still have to apply. Can work on public lands, can install infrastructure on public lands.

## Executive Committee – Sandy White

- Conflict of Interest Policy – for Adoption
  - CWCB requires a bylaws amendment. The revision is a direct quote from WSRF Criteria and Guidelines: “In the WSRF application process, any Roundtable member who has a direct or indirect financial interest in the funding request shall disclose the interest to the Roundtable, abstain from voting on the application, and refrain from attempting to influence the decisions of other members of the Roundtable in voting on the application.”

*A motion was made by Mannie Colon to approve the Conflict of Interest Policy as presented. It was seconded by Tom Verquer and approved unanimously.*

- Colorado River Risk Study Phase II Scope of Work Update – Brett Gracely
  - There has been a lot of email conversation and another webinar to discuss the scope and east slope involvement.
  - The east slope technical committee would like to see this study being run by the state rather than by a roundtable or group of roundtables. If there is a call on the river, that affects the state, not just a group of roundtables.
  - The Front Range Water Council, which includes a lot of the same folks as the east slope committee, would like to provide comments on the Phase 2 SOW for review by the committee.
  - Comments thus far: limitation due to hydrologic period used and how it was run through the model. It represented a limited hydrology, ran only the worst 20 year period, not an average.
  - Demand assumptions put in the model – whether those assumptions represent what is really happening in the state.
  - The model being used is the BOR model, not the roundtables or their consultant.
  - Ability to have input into the process. Teams that represent the entire state.
  - Checks and balances needed. Want to be sure that the data that comes out of it is representative of the entire state.
  - Becky Mitchell gave a CWCB staff perspective. This project came out of west slope roundtables. The CWCB wanted to make sure there weren't duplicative studies, and also to avoid interstate issues. They would like to ensure that the study would represent the entire state and create a more collaborative focus.
  - Get comments to Brett, Jim or Seth as soon as possible.

*A motion to delegate Brett Gracely, Jim Broderick and Seth Clayton; with the help of the Front Range Water Council consultant, to develop comments on behalf of the roundtable was made by Terry Scanga, seconded by Al Tucker, and carried unanimously.*



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- The April meeting may need to be moved in terms of location AND date. If we cannot find an alternative location in Pueblo, it has been suggested that the meeting be moved to April 25<sup>th</sup>, at Hotel Elegante in Colorado Springs, the day prior to the Arkansas River Basin Water Forum.

## **IBCC Report – Jeris Danielson, Terry Scanga**

The IBCC has not met since December, and there is no meeting scheduled at this time.

## **CWCB Report – Alan Hamel, Becky Mitchell, Ben Wade**

Alan's appointment to the CWCB runs out this month. He is also a legislative appointee to the roundtable.

Alan welcomed CWCB staff members: Becky Mitchell, Section Chief; Ben Wade, our new basin representative; and new staff member Megan Holcomb.

At the last CWCB meeting, the Huerfano County project's change in Scope of Work was approved. They also approved a loan for the Chilcott Ditch siphon project. They worked on 13 new instream flows throughout the state. The Arkansas River Decision Support System's next phase has entered the contracting stage. This phase has been broken into three parts, with three different vendors working on the ArkDSS.

There are three CWCB board members whose terms ended after the January CWCB meeting: April Montgomery, Travis Smith and Alan Hamel. Alan will continue to serve until the governor has made new appointments.

**Ben Wade** – There will be a SWSI meeting on Friday to discuss new methodologies. This SWSI will be built on prior efforts, and expanded to include things like climate change and non-consumptive gaps. CWCB will reach out several times for roundtable input. This SWSI update is expected to be complete in December 2017. Greg Johnson will bring a presentation on SWSI to the next roundtable meeting.

## **Nonconsumptive Committee – SeEtta Moss**

The next meeting will be held March 10<sup>th</sup>, 10-12, at the Canon City BLM office. The meeting's purpose is to update priority projects.

## **PEPO/ARBWF – Jean Van Pelt/Chelsey Nutter**

- Funding resource page is now available on the PEPO website: [www.pepoarkbasin.com](http://www.pepoarkbasin.com)
- Next month, we'll have three presenters:
  - Bradley Monson, CDPHE
  - Jim Griffiths, CWRPDA
  - Barry Cress, DOLA
- CWCB is sponsoring two Financing Sustainable Water Workshops
  - Focus is on developing rate structure that successfully balance revenue management, resource efficiency, and fiscal sustainability. Register on CWCB's website.
  - Glenwood Springs on February 28<sup>th</sup>, Lakewood on March 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- Water Quality Workshop
  - Assisting the Watershed Health Collaborative with planning and implementation of the Lower Ark Valley Water Quality Workshop, to be held on February 21, 2017.
- CFWE Citizen's Guides are available to any roundtable member by request
- Voluntary Flow Management Program



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- Developing an informational brochure, white paper and video clip
- Upper Ark Multi-Use Project Tour in May – contact Chelsey if you are interested in attending – projects@uawcd.com
- Documentary is progressing
- Water Festival Planning in El Paso County
  - Working with SD11, and will serve 530 5<sup>th</sup> grade students
  - May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at Pikes Peak Community College

## **Needs Assessment Committee – Chelsey Nutter, Jack Goble**

A draft Schedule and Grant Process was disseminated last month. Some comments were received and changes made. If you have any other comments, please get them to Chelsey right away.

## **Arkansas River Watershed Collaborative – Mark Shea, Carol Ekarius (handout)**

2017 Annual Operating Plan Review

Designed to provide a road map. Not all items are currently funded.

- Stream Management Plans
- Lower Ark Water Quality Working Group
  - We have \$800,000 in grant apps in front of CDPHE.
  - February workshop
- Project Reviews
- BMP Designs Document
- Post-Fire:
  - Assessment and project recommendation/prioritization
  - Implementation
- Pre-Fire/Forest Health:
  - Close out final acres from 2015 grant.
  - Continue working in Lake County
  - WFDSS: Continue work to get water values-at-risk date included
- Identify all Partnerships:
  - Develop a report back to the roundtable regarding local collaborative partnerships
- Nonconsumptive Committee
  - Participate in meetings, assist with projects as requested by the committee
- Governance Structure:
  - Finalize decisions with Roundtable Exec Comm and membership on future governance

A motion to approve the plan was made by Mannie Colon, seconded by SeEtta Moss, and unanimously approved.

## **BIP Coordinator – Gary Barber**

- WaterSmart Grant opportunity for a Drought Resiliency Grant has come up: Application is due February 14<sup>th</sup>, so we need to act quickly. Mentioned above, this project responds to the three recent fires.
  - Gages that provide a rapid response to possible flood/debris flow events.
  - Monitoring of water quality as it flows into Pueblo Reservoir
  - Letter of support email is in your inbox. Please provide letters of support by Monday.
  - The funding strategy is shifting for the local/state match, but there are several grant sources possible, and the match does not have to be secured by time of application. Carol is willing to commit COCO to the match.



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- Baca-Picketwire Headgate in Trinidad, CO. Gary is working with stakeholders that wish to develop a plan for restoration of this reach of the stream.
- Fremont County Flood Impacts
  - Ark River just south of Canon City. Briefed Fremont County Commissioners January 24<sup>th</sup>.
  - Coordinating with NRCS and Fremont County
- Other activities include:
  - ARBWF
  - Project List
  - Holbrook 2 State Weir Construction Update by Nick Koch

## **BREAK**

**PROGRAM (see [www.arkansasbasin.com](http://www.arkansasbasin.com) for full presentations with graphics)**

**Upper Black Squirrel Groundwater Quality Study – Sean Chambers, Bill Banks**

**Groundwater Quality, Age, and Susceptibility and Vulnerability to Nitrate Contamination with Linkages to Land Use and Groundwater Flow, Upper Black Squirrel Creek Basin, Colorado, 2013**

- Upper Black Squirrel Creek is experiencing rapid population growth.
- El Paso County and local water providers need information to make informed land-use decisions that protect water quality.
- Stakeholders desired to secure a baseline of water quality information in order to track future changes to water quality.
- This study follows a recharge study of the Upper Black Squirrel Basin.

**Objective: Evaluate water quality in the surficial aquifer of the Black Squirrel basin  
Determine the susceptibility and vulnerability to nitrate and its relationship to land use and other site characteristics**

### **Analytes**

- Major ions
- Dissolved gases, tritium (3H), and chlorofluorocarbons (CFC-11, CFC-12, and CFC-113)
- Fuel products (BTEX, benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, and xylenes)
- Nutrients

### **Take Away Messages**

#### **Major Ions**

- No samples exceeded the USEPAs MCL for major ions
- Secondary MCLs (odor/taste/color) were exceeded for:
  - pH – 2 samples
  - Chloride – 1 sample
  - Iron – 3 samples
  - Manganese – 8 samples
  - Total dissolved solids – 2 samples

#### **Groundwater Age**

- Groundwater is ‘young’ (post 1950s) median age of 30 yrs.
- Travel times are on a decadal scale.

#### **Fuel Products**

- 49 of 50 wells analyzed for 12 common fuel products
- 7 of 49 samples had detectable quantities of one or more compounds
- No MCLs were exceeded for any detection



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## Nutrients

- Nitrate concentrations varied with land use
- The MCL (10 mg/L) was exceeded in 10% of the samples
- 54% of the samples had values that were 5 mg/L or greater

## Future Needs

- Groundwater flow and solute-transport modeling to better predict well-head protection zones
- Periodic water-quality monitoring to understand trends such as Ag v. Residential influence

## **Year Two Update: Catlin Lease-Fallow Pilot Project – Jack Goble, Leah Martinson**

### Background

- Attempted use of SWSP approval for a lease-fallowing project in 2012
  - Conditional approval with excessive terms and conditions
    - Opposing parties sued SEO, Lower Ark District and Super Ditch
    - Not able to operate because water was not available
- Lower Ark District & Super Ditch realized that an alternative administrative approval mechanism was needed
- Legislature recognized critical need to pursue leasing-fallowing as an alternative to permanent buy-and-dry and passed HB13-1248

### HB 13-1248

- CWCB pilot program to test fallowing-leasing as an alternative to permanent agricultural dry-up.
  - Municipal, Environmental, Recreational, Industrial, and Agricultural end uses
  - Through December 31, 2018
- 10 projects of up to 10 years
  - Up to 3 per basin
  - No transfers over the Continental Divide
  - No transfers out of the Rio Grande basin
- Extent of fallow limited
  - 3 years in 10-year period
  - no more than 30% for 10 consecutive years

### Criteria and Guidelines

- Developed by CWCB in collaboration with SEO & broad-based technical committee
- Set forth application and approval process
- Adopt accepted methodologies, modeling, and accounting practices
- Includes standard terms and conditions for dry-up, accounting and recharge

### Lease-Fallow Tool

- Developed by SEO with technical committee input
- Streamline evaluation of HCU and return flows as part of lease-fallowing
- Conservative Assumptions in HCU analysis
- Intended to simplify analysis and lessen concerns over injury
- Results only applicable for pilot projects

### Financial Information

- Lease Payments
  - 2015: \$204,000
  - 2016: \$202,000
- Payment per Acre (includes option payment)
  - 2015: \$1,030





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- 2016: \$1,004

## Looking Ahead

- Municipal Participants and Farmers pleased with project
  - All have continued full participation
- Encourage additional pilot projects in other basins
- Lower Ark District & Super Ditch pursuing other possible pilot projects
  - Colorado Springs, City of Fountain, Lake Isabel
- Extend and expand HB 13-1248
  - Extend CWCB authority to approve pilot projects past 2018
  - Allow for additional pilot projects in Arkansas River Basin

## Catlin Pilot Project

- Just completed year two of the ten year CWCB approval:
  - ✓ 6 Catlin Canal farms totaling 902 acres and 1,047 shares
  - ✓ Fallow up to 30% of the land each year
  - ✓ Deliver up to 500 AF per year to municipalities
  - ✓ Municipalities: Fowler, Fountain and Security

## Details

- 2016:
  - Acres: 238 fallow / 902 total (26% fallowed)
  - Shares: 255 fallow / 1,047 total
- Shares associated with dry-up delivered to three locations:
  - Schweizer Recharge Pond
  - Hanagan Recharge Pond
  - Timpas Creek Augmentation Station

(See website for complete presentation with graphics)

Discussion: Mike Fink described City of Fountain's experience as a participant. Wet water was delivered much faster than through a buy/dry scenario. Re: viability. Scaling up won't be difficult. It was a lot to set up in the first place. CO Water Plan stated goal of 50,000 acre feet by 2030. They've got lots of farmers interested-looking for partners on the demand side. Exchanges are necessary for water to be moved north. Infrastructure to store and move the water is necessary, and would be a next hurdle for ATMs to be used for larger amounts of water. LAVWCD has excess storage in Pueblo, plus future room in John Martin Reservoir.

## NEXT STEPS/LINKS

- Next Meeting – March 8 , 12:30 pm, Pueblo Community College, Ballroom
- Arkansas Basin Roundtable: [www.arkansasbasin.com](http://www.arkansasbasin.com)
- PEPO: [www.pepoarkbasin.com](http://www.pepoarkbasin.com)
- Arkansas River Basin Water Forum: <http://www.arbwf.org/>
- CWCB: <http://cwcb.state.co.us/Pages/CWCBHome.aspx>
- Colorado Water Plan: <http://coloradowaterplan.com/>