



Arkansas Basin Roundtable

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WATER FUTURE

Arkansas Basin Roundtable Meeting
August 13, 2014
CSU-Pueblo, CO: Occhiato Center

Introductions and Roundtable Business

Betty Konarski called the group to order at 12:30 pm, and roundtable members and visitors introduced themselves. Betty pointed out that a focus for the day's meeting would be working to assess input forms. The assistance of roundtable members in ranking projects from these forms and identifying projects that have not yet been submitted will be valuable in moving forward with additional identified projects and processes (IPPs).

Minutes from the July meeting will be approved along with minutes from the August meeting at the September meeting.

Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) and Interbasin Compact Committee (IBCC) Reports

Alan Hamel provided an overview of the July, 2014 CWCB Board meeting in Rangely, Colorado, touching on the following points:

- A full day of the meeting was focused on review of basin implementation plans (BIPs). There were many common themes across the BIPs, as well as uniqueness to each basin.
- The Board also reviewed the IBCC Draft Conceptual Agreement, and it was well-received. The Board was impressed with the work and the progress of the IBCC. The Draft Conceptual Agreement is currently being reviewed by basin roundtables and may be included in Colorado's Water Plan.

Becky Mitchell, CWCB, also provided updates from the July, 2014 CWCB Board meeting in Rangely, Colorado, highlighting the following points:

- The Board was impressed with the work performed to date on the development of the Arkansas Basin Roundtable BIP, and the involvement of the Basin Roundtable in creating the BIP is appreciated.
- Each basin roundtable mentioned the importance of agriculture in their BIP. The Arkansas Basin Roundtable BIP stressed the importance of alternative transfer methods (ATMs) and that the state needs to focus on making them easier – this message was heard.
- Other common themes in BIPs across the state included the importance of water conservation and a high success rate for IPPs. There is a great deal of consensus across the state to find ways to move forward with project permitting in an efficient way.

Jeris Danielson and Jay Winner stated that the IBCC was making good progress and that the August meeting had been cancelled after the completion of the Draft Conceptual Agreement at the July meeting. The IBCC is tentatively scheduled to meet again in October.



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Fountain Creek Bank Restoration at the Frost Ranch: Presentation

Larry Small, Fountain Creek Watershed Flood Control and Greenway District, gave a presentation outlining a Water Supply Reserve Account (WSRA) “success story” project: the Fountain Creek Bank Restoration at the Frost Ranch. A copy of the presentation is available at www.arkansasbasin.com; highlights of his presentation are presented below:

- The goal of the project was to restore the long-term stability of Fountain Creek and to demonstrate effective river restoration techniques. Specifically, the project set out to restore 400 feet of rapidly eroding bank along Fountain Creek, create improved terrestrial and aquatic habitat, reduce sediment, and improve water quality. A total of 480 feet of eroding bank along Fountain Creek was ultimately treated through this project after flooding in September, 2013 created additional damage.
- The restoration project focused on natural channel design methods and native vegetation. The project set out to mimic the natural form of the creek and to use native trees and shrubs to create root mass along the bank and foliage to reduce flood velocity.
- The project has been a success: the channel structure has been restored, native vegetation is becoming established, and Fountain Creek is returning to natural conditions.
- The Fountain Creek Watershed Flood Control and Greenway District is thankful to the Arkansas Basin Roundtable and CWCB for their support of this project. The final report is available on CD and can serve as a resource for parties looking to replicate the project’s techniques.

Discussion

- A group member commended the work of the Fountain Creek Watershed Flood Control and Greenway District, as well as the support they received from the Arkansas Basin Roundtable and CWCB. The damage on this portion of Fountain Creek was extensive, and having effective restoration techniques successfully tested through this project will be a great resource for future projects.
- A group member asked whether willows were the best vegetation for bank restoration. Larry responded that willows are native to Fountain Creek and that they do a great job of establishing near water and establishing a root mass. If the project had had a little more money and time, they may also have planted cottonwoods as well.

Emerging Water Issue of Concern

Tom Verquer, Arkansas Basin Roundtable member, provided an overview of a proposed new definition of the term “Waters of the U.S.” by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Army Corps of Engineers, touching on the following points:

- The EPA through the Clean Water Act has performed important work to clean up and restore impaired rivers and streams. However, the proposed redefinition of term “Waters of the U.S.” would expand the authority of EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers to



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bring additional bodies of water into their jurisdiction, potentially resulting in increased bureaucratic hurdles and permitting costs.

- There is some concern that the proposed redefinition could result in unacceptable changes to water rights and impair the ability of individuals or organizations to perform simple tasks (e.g., cleaning an irrigation ditch) without a permit.
- The EPA is accepting comments until late October.

Proposed Grant: Hydrology Planning Model

Mark McCluskey, CDM Smith, provided an overview of a proposed grant to support a hydrology model to inform selection of IPPs and Phase II of the Arkansas Basin Roundtable BIP. Key components of this proposed grant are summarized below:

- CDM-Smith worked with the Executive Committee of the Arkansas Basin Roundtable to develop a model to support planning decisions for the Arkansas Basin; this work is documented in Section 3.3 of the Draft Arkansas Basin Roundtable BIP.
- An important next step in the development of this model is to establish a technical committee to work with the modeling team and coordinate needs, assumptions, and priorities.
- The proposed grant would support further development of the model and consists of two components: 1) coordinated work with the modeling team and the technical committee to go through assumptions and parameters of the model, and 2) shortage analysis with the model, examining varying hydrologies, demands, and IPPs to assess what impacts and benefits would be.

Alan Hamel, CWCB Board and Arkansas Basin Roundtable member, pointed out that other basins have either developed or are in the process of developing a CWCB Decision Support System (DSS) model, and that the Arkansas Basin is getting a late start in this matter. The model under discussion will ultimately feed into a DSS model that is compatible with the CWCB system.

After discussion, Arkansas Basin Roundtable members agreed by consensus to move forward with this proposed grant.

Proposed Grant: Phase II of Arkansas Basin Roundtable BIP

Gary Barber, Kyle Hamilton; CH2M Hill, and Mark McCluskey; CDM Smith, provided an overview of the proposed next phase of the Arkansas Basin Roundtable BIP. Key points are highlighted below.

- Phase II of the Arkansas Basin Roundtable BIP will build on the work of Phase I and the July deliverable. The team has received great feedback and will continue to develop the plan to meet the needs of the Basin Roundtable. Sections 4 and 5 of the Draft BIP need further refinement and quantitative work.



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- A large outreach effort was made through Phase I of the BIP and additional work in this area will continue with Phase II. CH2M Hill will continue to support nonconsumptive components of the BIP and GIS mapping. CDM Smith will conduct further work on identifying and describing consumptive needs.
- The timeline for Phase II of the BIP is short. Some issues are complex and require a great deal of dialogue. Extensive outreach has been planned into Phase II of the process for this reason. Although every issue may not have been completely resolved by the end of Phase II of the BIP, important components of the plan will have been discussed and dealt with openly.

After discussion, this grant proposal moved forward by consensus.

Processing Input for the Arkansas Basin Roundtable BIP: Presentation

Gary Barber provided an overview of a strategy for processing input to the Arkansas Basin Roundtable BIP. The presentation is available at www.arkansasbasin.com; highlights are presented below.

- Section 5.0 of the Arkansas Basin Roundtable BIP will be revised to incorporate feedback from CWCB and the Arkansas Basin Roundtable.
- The following subregions have been identified in the Arkansas Basin: Central, Huerfano-Purgatoire, Lower, Northeast Plains, Southeast Plains, Upper, and Urban. Projects will be evaluated to determine their status and to evaluate how well they meet the following needs for each subregion in the Basin: storage, municipal and industrial (M&I), agriculture, environment, recreation, and other.
- Tiers will also be established to determine how feasible projects are and how well they meet Basin goals.

Evaluation of Input Forms

Following Gary's presentation, the group was asked to separate into small groups based on subregion to evaluate input forms. Group members were asked to read through all input forms for their subregion, conduct a basic assessment about which proposed projects had merit, and fill out project summary forms to further evaluate how well the project could meet the needs of the subregion. Group members were also asked to identify projects that they were aware of that did not have submitted input forms and to provide contact information of potential project proponents to the Basin Roundtable.

Input forms are available for further review at www.arkansasbasin.com. Feedback from Arkansas Basin Roundtable members will be aggregated by staff and incorporated into Phase II of the Arkansas Basin Roundtable BIP.