



Arkansas Basin Roundtable

PLANNING OUR WATER FUTURE

ARKANSAS BASIN ROUNDTABLE MEETING SUMMARY MINUTES AND RECORD OF DECISIONS

July 13, 2022

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83339826655?pwd=YzY0eWhmb3Bsc1VFNDhjYWWh0T1JHZz09>

More information and presentations may be found at: www.arkansasbasin.com

Voting Members In Attendance: (15 in-person, 10 by zoom, 3 excused)

Spike Ausmus	Seth Clayton	Jeris Danielson	Paul Fanning	Greg Felt
Shiloh Freed	Gracy Goodwin	Tom Grasmick	Matt Heimerich	Toby Johnson
Steve Kastner	Rick Kienitz	Amy Mitchell	Sarah Mudge	Abby Ortega
Gil Ramirez	Kent Ricken	Terry Scanga	Mark Shea	Greg Teter
Al Tucker	Tom Verquer	Amber Weber	Sandy White	Chris Wiseman

Approval of Agenda

The July agenda has been circulated for review. *Agenda was approved by consensus.*

Approval of Prior Meeting Notes

The June meeting notes have been circulated for review. *Meeting notes were approved by consensus.*

Public Comment – none

PRESENTATION: Wildfire Ready Watersheds – Chris Sturm, CWCB

Presentation may be found at: <https://www.wildfirereadywatersheds.com/educationresources>

Chris Sturm presented an update regarding the CWCB effort to respond to the legislative directive from SB21-240.

Mission: The CWCB will assess the susceptibility of Colorado’s water resources, communities and critical infrastructure to post-wildfire impacts and advance a framework for communities to plan and implement mitigation strategies to minimize these impacts – before wildfires occur.

Components:

- Statewide Susceptibility
- Framework for Communities

Conceptual Approach:

- Values at Risk
 - Water infrastructure
 - Public infrastructure
 - Property
 - Life Safety
- Post-Fire Hazards
 - Floods After Fire
 - Fluvial Hazards: Channel migration, erosion and deposition
 - Mud and debris flows
 - Water quality impairments
 - Hillslope erosion
- Susceptibility
 - Statewide level – relative risk by watershed



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- Framework – direct intersects

Please access the presentation online – a lot of detailed map layers were shown and described, with valuable information: <https://www.wildfirereadywatersheds.com/educationresources>

Needs Assessment Committee – Abby Ortega – Letters of Support Requests

1. Donala/Tri-View Metropolitan District – Water Plan Grant – Brett Gracely, Decision Support Model for Reusable Return Flows

\$460,000 total project cost. Donala will be covering 25% of the cost. Asking for 75% in CO Water Plan grant funding.

2. Huerfano County Water Conservancy District – Water Plan Grant - Sandy White, Engineering Cost for Bruce Canyon Reservoir

\$345,000 total project cost. Request is for \$172,500. The applicant is providing a 50% match. This project will be at 90% of design with this engineering work.

3. Bessemer Ditch Company –NRCS PL83-566 Grant Application for a ditch lining/piping project - Letter of Support Request

This is a request for Federal NRCS funding.

4. Mile High Youth Corp - CJ Runge

This is a request for CWCB funding specific to MHYC projects. This one is in Fremont County, John Griffin Park in Canon City, and is a fire mitigation project.

All four requests for letters of support were approved by consensus.

BREAK

PRESENTATION: Center for Snow and Avalanche Studies – Jeff Derry

Colorado Dust-On-Snow Program – WY 2022 Update

Jeff went over last winter's data for the Arkansas Basin. He pointed out a hot and dry November, some good snowfall in December and January, April flat-lined and had record snow melt, but there was a big, productive storm on May 18th that helped push snow melt back towards the median a bit.

It was a severe dust year, with several dust events which really impacted the snow melt. All of the dust came from the southwest this year. Dust speeds up snow melt, and dust combined with a warm spring, really speeds it up. June precip was up all over the state, and especially for the southeast part of the state. April-May were windier than usual this year, kicking up dust and also speeding up snowmelt. Jeff talked about sublimation, which is snow evaporating directly into the atmosphere, another impact to snowmelt and water in the system. Jeff talked about the 'new normal', the measurable changes in "atmospheric thirst" between 1980 and 2020.

If you'd like to receive updates in real time, please let Jeff know:

www.snowstudies.org

www.codos.org

jderry@snowstudies.org

970-231-6595



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Also, the Colorado Sun is working on an article about the micro-plastics that we have found in our dust-on-snow samples from around the state. This has created a new line of inquiry for the organization.

CWCB Report – Elizabeth Schoder, Greg Felt, Amy Ostdiek – engagecwcb.org – gfelt@chaffeeconomy.org; 719-530-1118

Colorado River Update – Amy Ostdiek

About a week ago the BOR testified to the need to find an additional 2-4 million acre feet of conservation, for the protection of Lake Powell and Lake Mead. This will primarily come from the lower basin states, because they use a lot more water than the upper basin. We're already really limited due to hydrologic abilities. In dry years, we use much less water. Over the course of the last four years, the lower basin states have really used about the same amount of water. We're already really cut to the minimum. Those are the facts as far as consumptive uses go. We will still attempt to respond to the call for 2-4 million acre feet, and have discussed what that looks like. We will continue to live within our means. We will adjust our uses based on hydrologic conditions, and according to how the prior appropriations act works. In Colorado we already strictly administer water rights, and that results in lower use in dry years. Another thing is the Drought Response Operations Agreement. We are currently releasing 500,000 acre-feet from Flaming Gorge Reservoir. Extra releases will continue through April 2023. That's on top of 161,000 acre-feet of releases that were made previously from Blue Mesa and Flaming Gorge Reservoirs. These releases are pursuant to the 2022 agreement. There probably will be another plan next year, contemplating additional releases. In addition, ongoing voluntary water conservation efforts will be part of this discussion. Investments in measuring and monitoring are being made – tracking the water as it makes its way to Lake Powell is really important.

Elizabeth Schoder, CWCB: Sam is taking a new position within CWCB focusing on conservation work. We have just hired his replacement, who will be at our August meeting.

Our updated project database will be updated by our next CWCB board meeting. It will have the ability for one or two roundtable members to have deeper access to the information, including project proponents, etc.

The new grant portal is live, and will be used for PEPO, Water Plan and WSRF grant applications. There will be a training in July.

The next CWCB Board meeting will be held on July 20-21.

2023 Water Plan is out for a 90-day public comment period. Elizabeth thanked roundtable members and on-the-ground partners for their work.

You'll see a lot of the same Values and Actions as the original water plan had.

The water plan vision is focused into four major areas: Vibrant Communities, Robust Agriculture, Thriving Watersheds, and Resilient Planning.

Online listening sessions: July 22, August 10, September 1 and 28.

Greg Felt: our agenda next week is mostly updates, not a lot of big decision items.

IBCC- Terry Scanga

The IBCC met on June 30th in Summit County. There was an update from Dan Gibbs, then basin updates regarding the BIPs, PEPO and watershed health. He also talked about the grant capacity. Most of the basins don't have what we have in the Arkansas Basin. The South Platte basin update, talked about the Republican River – they will have to dry up 2,500 acres to meet their compact.

The federal infrastructure bill will bring some funds for water projects. There is a technical tool to assist with that, called the Water Fund Opportunity Navigator.



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The state is looking to hire seven regional managers to assist basins to apply for funds and put together projects. The federal funds won't be affected by TABOR.

Becky Mitchell gave us an update very similar to the information that Amy just gave us.

Ag/Muni Committee – Matt Heimerich

Matt's plan is to get everyone back together in November.

Enviro/Rec Committee – Bob Hamel, Amber Shanklin, Rena Griggs

The Salida Lowhead dam application has been submitted to CWCB for Colorado Water Plan grant funding under the category of watershed health and recreation. Requested \$800,000. Rena would like to request a letter of support for that from the roundtable. She will send the information to Abby, and we can get that on next month's agenda.

The VFMP started yesterday.

ARWC – Jonathan Paklaian

Funding updates: We were successful in a grant applied for from the Colorado Watershed Assembly, Healthy Rivers Fund. Funds will be spread through a few different areas.

Also applied for a grant through the Bureau of Land Management for fuels mitigation, for almost a million dollars. ARWC is still raising administrative dollars. Expect to hear from Jonathon, who is looking for monetary support from the members.

We have a COSWAP grant and will be using SWIFT crews that start next week in Lake County.

Julie Knutson: They kicked off a 32 acre project in the Purgatoire watershed.

PEPO – Paul Fanning, Jonathan Paklaian (meets on the 3rd Wednesday each month, at 1:30 pm)

PEPO transition from Alli Schuch to ARWC is underway. Scrambled to get our application submitted on time.

Request for change of current contractor next month.

August 26 basin tour will be a collaboration between ARWC and PEPO. That will be an upper basin tour.

Paul pointed out that the four online listening sessions are topically oriented. He encouraged folks to check out the topics, attend meetings of interest, and inform constituents of the opportunity to do so as well.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:24.

Roundtable Email: ARKBASINRT@GMAIL.COM

MEETINGS/LINKS:

- Arkansas Basin Roundtable, August 10, 12:30 pm www.arkansasbasin.com
- PEPOW: 3rd Wednesday monthly, 1:30 pm www.pepoarkbasin.com
- Enviro/Rec: August 29, 10:00 am
- Ag/Muni: November TBD
- IBCC:
- CWCB: July 20-21 <http://cwcb.state.co.us/Pages/CWCBHome.aspx>
- PEPO Statewide: TBD
- Arkansas River Basin Water Forum: April 2023, Colorado Springs <http://www.arbwf.org/>
- Colorado Water Plan: <http://coloradowaterplan.com/>
- Colorado Flood Threat Bulletin: www.coloradofloodthreat.com



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- Stream Management Plan Resource Library: <https://coloradosmp.org/>
- In-Stream Flow Rule Revisions: <https://cwb.colorado.gov/instream-flow-rules-revisions-hb-20-1157>
- DARCA - <https://www.darca.org/>

Basins will need to increase their efforts in reducing consumptive uses. Greg also pointed out the upper basin water rights holders have been doing incredible jobs with consumptive reductions. Questions to Amy and Greg started with Al Tucker's question regarding a reported article in the LA Times stating the Colorado River supplies were sufficient and conservation efforts weren't required currently. It appears the Lower Basin States still weren't reducing usage? Amy responded there is a misconception that California as well as Arizona have senior water rights on the Colorado River which requires further discussions. Sandy White asked if this matter goes to the Secretary of Interior, how will she enforce her directions. Amy responded that the Secretary of Interior has very clear authority over the Lower Basins to use the water more efficiently. Sandy clarified the question of enforce decisions vs authority. Is this the role of the US Marshals or who? Amy answered that this then would go the Bureau of Reclamation. At this Amy responded that the Bureau has clear authority to reduce water from Lake Mead, if necessary. Terry Scanga inquired regarding how much water has been delivered in the last ten years and how has our 75 over going in the last several years. Amy responded we are well over the 75 and closer to 88 over. As well as we are well within our Compact requirements. Jeris Danielson inquired about the Upper Basin States and how they're doing on consumptive uses. Amy replied that the upper basin states are working together. We as upper basin states are working together.

- Mark asked for other reports from Executive Members; Terry Scanga responded with the last update from the IBCC meeting on June 30th which discussed the BIP plans. Many basins don't have access to grant writer which we're fortunate to have. HB 1379 will appropriate \$5 million for funding. Bill 215 will extend another 5 million federal dollars without Tabor restrictions. Jeris discussed the need for grant writers to pursue these projects enabling water usage.
- Mark concluded with asking members to familiarize with all our projects listed.

4. Roundtable Business;

- AWRC/PEPO WSRF grant contract amendment Paul Fanning discussed the grant process being made available. The PEPO grant has been turned in and still waiting on confirmation. They're currently waiting to transition from previous contract work to the new ARWC workgroup which may require a supporting letter from the Roundtable. Mark asked for questions or comments. Jonathan Pakliaian inquired about the work going forward with ARWC. They're waiting on the funding to wrap up according to Mark.

5. Upcoming Meetings

- Arkansas Basin Roundtable – August 10, 2022
 - Executive Committee – 10:30 AM
 - Roundtable – 12:30 PM
- Committees
 - PEPO – TBD
 - Environmental/Recreation August 29, 10:00AM
 - Agriculture/Municipal Committee – TBD Likely in November
 - ARWC – TBD
 - IBCC – TBD
 - CWCB Board Meeting – July 20-21, Denver

6. Adjourn

- Meeting adjourned at 11:50 AM

Committee membership: Mark Shea (Ch), Bob Hamel (VCh-NonC), Steve Kastner (VCh-Cons), Al Tucker (Rec), Sandy White (Past-Ch), Greg Felt (CWCB), Jeris Danielson (IBCC), Terry Scanga (IBCC), Tim Canterbury (IBCC Alternate), Abby Ortega (Needs Assessment), Paul Fanning (Legislative Rep), Amber Shanklin (ARWC Board Member), Sara Mudge (ARWC Board Member) **Additional distribution:** Sam Stein (CWCB Staff), Elise Bergsten (Secretary), Jonathan Palkiaian (ARWC Director)