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

**Monthly MEETING SUMMARY**

**Monday, Feb 22, 2021**

**10:00am – 12 noon**

**via Zoom**

**Attendees:** Bob Hamel, (Ark Basin RT Recreation Rep, AROA),Rena Griggs (CPW – Water Specialist – SE Region), Amber Shanklin (Ark Basin Envi Rep, Palmer Land Trust), Carol Ekarius, (ARWC), Tyler Benton (CoSpgsUtil), Misty DeSalvo (USFS), Drew Kramer (Tri-State), Lisa Walters (Co Springs Util), Dan Omasta (Trout Unlimited), Natalie Allio (Upper Ark Watershed Partnership), Ryan Bouton (PhD Graduate), Blake Osborn (CSU Water Center), Buffy Lenth (Central Colorado Conservancy), Julie Knudsen (Purgatoire Watershed Partnership), Mannie Colon (Farmer, Colon Orchards, Canon City), Lucy Harrington (Westervelt Ecological Services), Dwane McFall (Fremont County), Alli Schuch (Ark PEPO Coordinator).

**Environmental & Recreation Committee Purpose and Goals: (see end of document).**

**February Meeting Summary:**

1. Basin Implementation Plan (BIP) Project Tiering discussed at last Ark Basin Roundtable – related to the update of the Colorado Water Plan, contractors are currently in a phase of tiering the projects entered on the Ark Basin BIP list last year. This is based on weighted factors. It’s not a measure of importance, but is meant to characterize objective qualities of the project. Storage projects were discussed.
2. Ark River Watershed Collaborative (ARWC) strategic planning meeting (Carol) – a Feb 17 meeting was held among key Ark Basin Roundtable board members to discuss the future of ARWC with respect to mission, goals, scale, & responsibilities. In short, it was determined to select a dedicated board (with some non-roundtable members) and have more regular meetings to shape the organization (rather than short updates).
3. Upper Ark Watershed Partnership update (Dan) – The CWCB grant request for South Ark River Stream Management Planning was officially approved. Next UAWP meeting Feb 25, 9-11. Over the next 18 months, goals include alluvial hazard mapping & connectivity of floodplain reviews. Buffy reminded of the River Health Assessment study of a 1.2 miles reach of the South Arkansas River near Salida. She’ll share that report to this email list.
4. EPA Water Quality credits – (Buffy) – It was asked about the status of this program we talked about months ago. Carol reported it’s a pilot program, and Lower Ark Valley Water Conservation District had some demo projects going where establishment of riparian buffers could offset non point source pollution, with the experiment being the improvement project would be downstream of the impact (instead of upstream as usually required). We’ll look forward to future updates on how that’s going.
5. US Forest Service update (Misty) – Forest is preparing for another high-traffic camping season this summer; also waiting for direction from the new administration.
6. Black Hills Energy Site at Canon City (Dwayne) – The rafting community and Canon City have been interested in a long time to turn this site into a park & official take-in take-out location. Black Hills has been slow to move on the effort with respect to environmental clean-up.
7. Reynolds bridge – Canon City - debris cleanup (Dwayne) – The Reynolds bridge has a debris catchment problem and there’s reviews underway to remedy the situation.
8. Use of Tennessee Rail Line through Browns Canyon (Bob) – concerns of what is being transported and how frequently, as spills into the Ark river are possible. Last month, this appeared to be on a fast track to move forward without any environmental assessments or reviews, but now it’s realized that it’s on a slow track. We will follow it.
9. Purgatoire update (Julie) – Recent focus is the Picketwire diversion improvement project.
10. Great Plains Reservoirs – lakes in Kiowa county (north of Lamar, CO) are popular with fishing and recreation when full, but hard to keep these Ag storage vessels full. Rena is attending monthly meetings hosted by Kiowa Co Economic Development team. It was agreed, 2021 will be a phase of learning about water storage, movement, costs, etc.
11. Fish ladders incorporated into headgate or diversion improvements (Rena) – CPW Aquatic biologists would really like to assist with the design of these improvements whenever and wherever they happen. If there’s an opportunity to design it well for fish passage, they’d like to encourage this. Spread the word!
12. Water Rights Abandonment Review every 10 years by Division of Water Resources (Rena) – For everyone’s awareness, Div of Water Resources reviews a list of abandoned diversion structures. If they haven’t been used, the water right is lost. Check out this year’s list here <https://dwr.colorado.gov/news-article/water-rights-abandonment-2020>.

**Mark your Calendar:**

**Next Ark Basin Roundtable – March 10, 12:30-3:00pm, GoTo meeting.**

**Next Envi-Rec Committee Meeting, Monday, March 29, 10am – Noon.**

**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) Vic or Co-chair

-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.