

Ark Basin Roundtable - Environmental & Recreation Committee

September Meeting Notes

Monday, Sep 27, 2021

10:00am – 12 noon

Zoom

A regular monthly meeting of the Environmental – Recreation Committee of the Arkansas Basin Roundtable convened virtually. The meeting was called to order by Bob Hamel, Ark Basin Envi-Rec Chair.

Attendees:

Roundtable Members: Bob Hamel, (Ark Basin Envi-Rec Chair, AROA), Mark Shea (Ark Basin RT Chair, ARWC) Dwayne McFall (Fremont County)

Agency Liaisons: Rena Griggs (CPW – Water Specialist – SE Region)

Non-Roundtable Members: Elise Bergsten (Cross Creek Metro Dist), Gary Barber (Consultant for Cross Creek Metro Dist), Ryan Bouton (PhD, Canon City), Randy Case (El Paso County Ground Water Quality Committee), Lisa Walters (CO Springs Utilities), Buffy Lenth (Central CO Conservancy), Tyler Benton (CO Springs Utilities).

September Meeting Notes:

- CWCB Grant Applicant Presentation: Cross Creek Metro District – Cross Creek Park and Hale Reservoir Stormwater Improvement Project (El Paso County).** Elise Bergsten (Cross Creek Metro District) and Gary Barber (Consultant) presented a storm water management and parks & rec improvement project to the E-R Committee. They plan to apply for a Colorado Water Plan grant or Water Supply Reserve Fund grant. Application is due Oct 20 to Ark Basin Roundtable. [This project is located in El Paso County north of Fountain, CO, in the Jimmy Camp Creek drainage, east of I-25 and south of Big Johnson Reservoir.](#) Hale Reservoir needs a new outlet works and improved stormwater capacity. (Note: this is not a water supply project). Hale is currently 4 ac-ft, but needs to be 10-11 acre-feet for effective stormwater retention. Project would incorporate increased lake footprint, wetland restoration, and trails. No boating or swimming proposed, but wildlife viewing opportunities abound (170 bird species seen in the area). This project went through design and permitting in 2013. City of Fountain is a partner. Hale Reservoir has a 1949 water right; temporary aug plan has been in place, but permanent plan is needed. Project cost: \$5 Million. Grant funding ask: to be determined.
- Arkansas River Basin Water Forum (ARBWF) – Sep 23 Pueblo Tour (Bob).** The ARBWF hosted a day long in-person water education event at Lake Pueblo State Park. Attendees learned about the Broderick Hydropower plant, Co Springs Utilities Southern Delivery System Project, Bureau of Reclamation Pueblo Reservoir Operations, Pueblo State Park Operations, Goodnight Barn history, and Arkansas Groundwater and Reservoir Association's [new water supply reservoir \(the old Castle Concrete gravel pit\) just east of Valco ponds.](#)
- Ark River Watershed Collaborative (ARWC) update.** Carrie Adair shared in a Sep 13 email a “Monarch Pass Forest & Watershed Health Project” update. This email was widely distributed but if you’d like to see

it, please ask. More updates can be found on [ARWC's website](#), and also check out the [Monarch Pass timber removal video](#)!

4. **Black Hills Energy site update in Canon City:** Regarding rafting recreation improvements along the Ark River, expecting an RFP to be released in October? (not sure, there's been delays).
5. **Upper Ark Watershed Partnership (UAWP) (Buffy):** UAWP is gearing up to meet with Agriculture representatives in the upper basin to discuss water needs, operations, infrastructure improvement needs. The next meeting in October will focus on water source and supply. UAWP is refining a scope of work on stream health assessments which includes Chalk Creek, Cottonwood Creek and the South Arkansas River, and learning more about Fluvial Hazard Zone Mapping. [UAWP is also looking into establishing vegetation standards along riparian areas, and has partnered with groups who are developing vegetation guidelines for homeowners along river banks](#). UAWP is also looking into pre-fire mitigation ideas – where would sediment go?...let's pre-treat and be prepared.
6. **Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) Update (Rena):** CPW plans to move forward with plans to remove the Salida Low Head dam, 1.5 miles upstream of the Mt. Shavano fish hatchery in Salida. Rena announced that CPW is planning to pursue a CWCB Colorado Water Plan Envi-Rec grant or Water Supply Reserve Fund grant, and has a meeting with CWCB experts later this week to discuss which grant and funding availability.

Rena also shared about a [CPW Habitat Restoration and Forest Thinning project accomplished at Spanish Peaks State Wildlife Area – here's a video about it](#).

Also, in the news lately, check out this article about [Hayden Creek Cutthroat Trout \(rescued from 2016 Hayden Fire\) now being released by CPW to high mountain streams around Pikes Peak](#).

7. **Colorado Water Plan - Basin Implementation Plan (BIP) update** – public review to start Oct 13. BIP documents (Vol 1 and 2) are still available online to review. Request the link to adobe PDF documents if you'd still like to review.
8. **Ark River stream work story (Bob)** – Bob shared that several rows of rocks were recently placed in the Ark River near the town of Texas Creek (Approx $\frac{3}{4}$ mile below Sweetwater Ranch campground). This project was approved by the Army Corps with a 404 permit, but he wishes they would've reached out to CPW and/or the Outfitter community on design because the rock rows are not safe for rafting.
9. **Voluntary Flow Management Program (VFMP) beyond Aug 15? (Randy).** Randy asked if it might ever be possible for VFMP rafting flows to extend beyond Aug 15. Bob announced that there will be a review of VFMP in November, so that would be the time to explore the idea. Bob answered, however, that this time extension of flows is unlikely, given that each year, the amount of water allotted for VFMP flows is always in limbo depending on wet or dry conditions. Bob also shared that rafting tends to drop off anyway after Aug 15, so additional water might not be justified. There's also considerations of future [Colorado River Demand Management](#) and climate change.

Mark your Calendar:

Next Ark Basin Roundtable (Annual Membership Meeting with elections) – Oct 13, 12:30-3:00pm, Zoom (Always held 2nd Wed of the month).

Next Envi-Rec Committee Meeting, Monday, Oct 25, 10am – Noon. Zoom. (Always held the last Monday of the month).

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) Vice or Co-chair (non-voting RT member).
- 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.