

## Ark Basin Roundtable - Environmental & Recreation Committee

### August Meeting Notes

Monday, Aug 30, 2021

10:00am – 12 noon

via Zoom

A regular 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 RT Recreation Rep, AROA), Mark Shea (Ark Basin RT Chair, ARWC)

**Agency Liaisons:** Rena Griggs (CPW – Water Specialist – SE Region), John Smeins (BLM), Misty DeSalvo (USFS)

**Non-Roundtable Members:** Kyle Horne (Canon City Rec), Ryan Bouton (PhD, Canon City), Blake Osborn (CSU Water Center), Kevin Warner (TU), Randy Case (El Paso County Ground Water Quality Committee), Lucy Harrington (GEI Consultants), Carrie Adair (Ark River Watershed Collaborative), Lisa Walters (CO Springs Utilities), Natalie Alio (Central CO Conservancy), Matt Nykiel.

#### August Meeting Notes:

1. **Voluntary Flow Management Program 2021 (July 1-Aug 15). (Bob)** It was a banner year for the program. Pueblo Water released 6000 acre feet early on, Reclamation released 8800 acre feet (of the 10,000 acre feet reserved in Turquoise Reservoir). Monsoon rains helped to boost native flows. The target flow at Wellsville stayed around 700 cfs for a great rafting season. We briefly discussed future refinements for the flow program to include more studies on fishery flows in fall and spring, and considerations of climate change and west slope demand management.
2. **Arkansas River Watershed Collaborative Update (Carrie A.)** New executive director starts end of September or early October. ARWC continues to do great work repairing burn scars, and watches storms carefully to alert landowners and others of potential sediment / debris flows.
3. **Arkansas River Basin Water Forum – Aug 16 Lower Ark Farm Tour (Rena).** The ARBWF hosted a day long in-person water education event near Rocky Ford. We learned about cantaloupe farming from the Hanagan Family, Land Conservation from Matt with Palmer Land Trust, a drone demonstration by Blake with the CSU Water Center, irrigation and soil health from Dr. Mike Bartolo, and farming innovations from Phil Chavez with Diamond A Farms. About 25 people attended and the information and networking was well received. [Next tour is September 23 in the Pueblo Reservoir area – more info and register here.](#)
4. **Black Hills Energy site update in Canon City:** A meeting in Canon City was held recently on this topic, but no details were available as of today's Envi-Rec meeting. Rumor is, Black Hills intends to put out an RFP (Regarding designs for rafting access put-in/take-out sites for public review on August 1, with a September 15 deadline for comment. Bob Hamel noted that it seems Black Hills needs to reach out to the right groups

to get good feedback, in particular, reach out to CPW for rafting and fishery. Construction could happen as soon as 2022.

5. **Upper Ark Watershed Partnership (Natalie):** UAWP recently held an Aug 26 informative meeting focused on wildlife and fishery management in the Ark Basin. They also recently joined with the River Network group on a field trip along the South Arkansas to examine and discuss challenges along this tributary. The next meeting in October will focus on water source and supply. UAWP is refining a scope of work on stream health assessments which might include Chalk Creek, Cottonwood Creek and the South Arkansas, and learning more about Fluvial Hazard Zone Mapping.
6. **CPW Update (Rena):** CPW plans to move forward with plans to remove the Salida Low Head dam, upstream of the Mt. Shavano fish hatchery. Rena announced that CPW needs more time to engage stakeholders and partners and will not apply for a Colorado Water Plan grant for this upcoming October-December cycle as first thought...aiming to apply during the March-May 2022 cycle. CPW is currently preparing an app for the NRD grant, which is due Sep 1. Rena also announced that Josh Nehring, Senior Aquatic biologist for the Southeast Region is taking a new position with CPW. The SE Region is working to hire his replacement. Rena also shared that John Martin Reservoir is very low right now at 6% full. This is the result of two drought years in a row among other factors.
7. **Colorado Water and Forest Alliance policy statement** – Matt N. asked Mark Shea some questions concerning the recent policy statement by COFWA, which was offered to the Roundtable for consideration and approved by the RT at the August 11 by consensus. The discussion involves the RT incorporating forest health principles into the BIP update.
8. **Basin Implementation Plan (BIP) update & Individual Projects and Processes (IPP) project list dated 7-21-21 emailed to us from Brown & Caldwell (Lindsay) for review:** Rena shared that the updated project list matter was resolved. BIP draft documents are now available for review. Email Rena if you'd like to receive access to the documents.

**Mark your Calendar:**

**Next Ark Basin Roundtable – Sep 8, 12:30-3:00pm, Pueblo Community College or Zoom – watch for emails on location of the meeting.**

**Next Envi-Rec Committee Meeting, Monday, Sep 27, 10am – Noon. Zoom.**

## 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.