



RIO GRANDE BASIN ROUNDTABLE NEWSLETTER

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UPCOMING EVENTS NEXT ROUNDTABLE MEETING:

Time & Place Change
Dec. 10, 2019 at 1:00 pm
Business Meeting & Lunch
Calvillo's, Alamosa

DIVISION 3 RULES & REGS

Reminder: Division 3 Well Rules & Regulations have been approved as of March 15, 2019.

Learn more at
<http://water.state.co.us/groundwater/GWAdmin/Use-AndMeasurement/Pages/RioGrandeRBRules.aspx>

WELCOME!

For more information on the Rio Grande Basin Roundtable, visit www.rgbrt.org

RADAR PROJECT RIBBON CUTTING KICKS OFF USE

After many months of meetings, planning, estimates, and research, the San Luis Valley Radar Project officially cut the ribbon on the tower's use on September 18, 2019. Heather Dutton of the San Luis Valley Water Conservancy District, Nathan Coombs of the Conejos Water Conservancy District, and Cleave Simpson of the Rio Grande Water Conservation District were key partners, along with their organization's boards, in pushing a new, updated radar system for use in the San Luis Valley. Steve Vance, Conejos Water Conservancy District board president gave remarks to the crowd before the official ribbon cutting. Representatives from EWR Weather Radar Systems of St. Louis, MO, the Colorado Division of Transportation, the Colorado State Water Conservation Board, and Alamosa County Commissioners were also on hand to give comments and represent their organizations' participation in this monumental undertaking. Recognition was also given to the driving force behind the idea, Joe Bustos of the Colorado Water Conservation Board. Due to ill health, Bustos was unable to attend the ceremony, but his drive and passion for the project were noted by his fellow partners. Ceremony attendees listened to partners explain the benefits of a state of the art radar system for snowpack forecasting, wildfire tracking, and emergency alerts for the public. Undoubtedly, this project will revolutionize our Basin.



(Above) CWCD president Steve Vance addresses the crowd at the site of the San Luis Valley's new radar at the Alamosa Regional Airport.



TO ACCESS RADAR INFORMATION
GO TO WWW.SLVWEATHER.COM

(L) The wind was strong but the smiles were stronger as various members of state and local organizations joined in the ribbon cutting ceremony.

C-9 JOINT BASIN SUMMIT



Members of the Rio Grande Roundtable participated in the C-9 Joint Basin Summit that took place in Winter Park during September 25-26th and was hosted by the Colorado Water Conservation Board. Attendees met with fellow Roundtable chairs, represented the Rio Grande Basin in Public Education, Participation, & Outreach, engaged in panel discussions, and explored the new Headwaters Education Center.

(Not all Roundtable members who attended are pictured here - we are sorry to have missed a photo opportunity with them).



Special recognition was given to the Rio Grande Basin's own Vice Chair, Emma Reesor, as an inaugural "Basin Hero." One "hero" from each basin was chosen and honored during the kick off event dinner. Emma was lauded for her dedication and hard work for the past five years as part of the Roundtable and our members have long known that we are fortunate to have her in our Basin!



Heather Dutton (third from right) answers questions about partnerships as part of a panel discussion.

MOUNTAIN HOME RESERVOIR PROJECT

Mountain Home Reservoir recently completed their multi-year reservoir update project. The outlet works had reached the end of their designed functionality and were experiencing significant leakage - up to 2250 AF per year. Phase I of the project gave funds for a feasibility study that included underwater inspection, capture and analysis video data, and determined the best way to repair damaged gates and outlet works. Phase II funded engineering designs for the repair, and Phase III funded replacement of existing gate valves, repairs to concrete within the outlet tunnel, installation of a hydraulic operation system, and the actuators for each valve.

Located in the southeastern portion of the San Luis Valley in Costilla County, the reservoir is located just off of Highway 160 and acts as one of the few public recreation areas in the county.

Trinchera Irrigation supervisor and Mountain Home Reservoir manager Wayne Schwab shared photos of the completed project with the Roundtable in September.

These are just a few examples of the huge amount of work undertaken to update the aging reservoir infrastructure.

ROUNDTABLE PROJECT FUNDS: \$145,000
(2014) PHASE I - \$25,000
(2017) PHASE II - \$70,000
(2018) PHASE III - \$50,000



Reservoir Then...



And Now

RESERVOIR PROJECT CONT.



Updated controls



Replacing the pipeline



Functional AND effective

CURRENT WATERSHED PROJECTS

As exciting as our completed projects are, we are also happy that many others are still working diligently to enhance the beauty, accessibility, and sustainability of our river. One such workhorse is the Del Norte Riverfront Project, a three year, multi-phase construction behemoth that is working with multiple partners to stay on track. The Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project staff, spearheaded by Emma Reesor and supported by Mennonite volunteer Connor Born, has worked tirelessly with the City of Del Norte to begin the next phase of construction. Reminder that the boat ramp is closed to vehicles and foot traffic at this time as it is the staging area for the construction vehicles. Questions welcome at info@riograndeheadwaters.org!



Robins Construction begins work in the river, forming the coffer dam to dewater the site and begin construction on the new grouted rock playwave. In addition to the playwave, construction of tiered rock river access, fish habitat enhancements, and riparian habitat restoration will also take place this winter. The end result will be a healthier, more accessible (and more fun!) river.

ROUNDTABLE MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

We are proud of our Rio Grande Basin Roundtable members. They are community leaders with an investment in water use, conservation, and beneficial projects. We'll feature a member in each newsletter in an effort to help our community get to know us a little better! You can also find a complete list of members at our website, www.rgbrt.org.



WAYNE SCHWAB, TRINCHERA IRRIGATION COMPANY

Wayne manages the overall operations of the Trinchera Irrigation Company in Blanca, Colorado. The Trinchera Irrigation Co. is comprised of 47 stockholders farming approximately 12,000 acres in the north half of Costilla County. Wayne oversees the delivery of surface water from the Trinchera basin which consists of Ute creek, Trinchera creek, Sangre creek and Ojito creek. Along with operating and maintaining the Mountain Home reservoir and Smith reservoir he is in charge of 26 miles of canals and 45 miles of laterals. Besides being a voting member of the Rio Grande Roundtable, Wayne is a Board member of the Town of Blanca.

RIO GRANDE BASIN EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT



Beautiful fall weather brought many opportunities for Rio Grande Basin organizations to engage youth in the outdoors. *Let's Go Fishing: Rediscovering the Alamosa River* is a two-year project that includes a fishing program for children 6 to 16-years old. 26 participants were provided fishing poles and tackle, t-shirts, fishing caps, and opportunities to learn how to fish in the Alamosa River. The second part of the program was facilitated by Kevin Terry, Trout Unlimited. Kevin taught classes about watershed health of the Alamosa River to middle school students. Field training courses included water sampling, macro-invertebrate sampling, and riparian health assessment.



Desiree Quintana, champion fisherwoman with her prize

“Kevin was key to the success of this project. He is passionate about fishing and riparian health and conveys enthusiasm to his students. By partnering with Trout Unlimited, we were able to bring additional resources to this program.”

~ Cindy Medina, Alamosa Riverkeeper



FROM FARMS TO FIELDS TO RIVERS, YOUTH EXPLORED THE SAN LUIS VALLEY

Thanks to many partners across the watershed, kids from Pre-K to 12th grade were out and about in almost every county of the San Luis Valley. From high school workshops in Aquatic Ecology, Forestry, Wildlife, & Soil Health/Land Use to exploring local farms with PreK kids, watershed issues & water were at the forefront of our outreach and education efforts. The Rio Grande Watershed Conservation & Education Initiative facilitated over 2,000 youth interactions just this fall!



UPDATES FROM AROUND THE STATE



The newest edition of the Headwaters Pulse magazine is now out from Water Education Colorado. This edition focuses on the Colorado River's drought contingency plan, but includes useful information for those of us living in other basins. The Rio Grande Basin has long lived with curtailments on irrigation. Now demand management is a hot topic being discussed for the Colorado River Basin.

You can find the online edition of the magazine by going to <https://www.watereducationcolorado.org/publications-and-radio/headwaters-magazine/fall-2019-contingency-plan/>

Keep in touch with the big news happening weekly around Colorado by checking out Water Education Colorado's Freshwater News. This is an independent, nonpartisan news service dedicated to Western water issues. Each week they report on important water stories not only in the state of Colorado, but throughout the West. Don't get left behind in the digital age of information.



Check out their Facebook page or online at <https://www.watereducationcolorado.org>.

KNOW YOUR REPRESENTATIVES AT THE STATE

CWCB Roundtable Liaison: Megan Holcomb

megan.holcomb@state.co.us

CWCB Board of Directors Representative: Heather Dutton, Rio Grande

heather@slvwcd.org

InterBasin Compact Committee (IBCC): Cleave Simpson & Keith Holland

Public Education, Participation, & Outreach: Bethany Howell

rgwcei@gmail.com

House Representative District 62: Donald Valdez

donald.valdez.house@state.co.us

State Senator District 35: Larry Crowder

larry.crowder.senate@state.co.us

STAY IN TOUCH WITH THE RIO GRANDE BASIN ROUNDTABLE

CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAYS WITH US!

Next month's Roundtable Meeting will be in a different location and at a different time than usual. We will celebrate the holiday season with a short business meeting and then a meal. Join us with a friend and let's bid farewell to 2019 while looking forward to all the amazing work to be done in 2020!

Tuesday, December 10th at 1:00 pm
Calvillo's Restaurant in Alamosa

The Roundtable Newsletter is only as good as the information we are given, so give us more!

In 2020, we want to include projects, events, and happenings from all around the Valley, so please share your photos and information with

Bethany Howell, Public Education, Participation, & Outreach Liaison at

rgwcei@gmail.com

Tell your friends that it's easy to be added to the newsletter mailing list!

Email info@riograndeheadwaters.org to stay in the loop with the Rio Grande Basin.