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NEXT ROUNDTABLE MEETING

Tuesday, March 10

@ 2:00 pm

LOCATION CHANGE

Rio Grande Water Conservation District
8805 Independence Way
Alamosa, CO

Correction to Winter 2019 edition:

Sam Vance of the Conejos Water Conservancy District was incorrectly named in the caption of the radar article. Apologies for the inadvertent mistake, Sam!

WELCOME!

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

SHOULD THE SAN LUIS VALLEY FIX THE FRONT RANGE'S WATER SHORTAGE?

This is one of the questions asked on the cold call survey recently instituted by Renewable Water Resources. San Luis Valley residents have begun receiving calls garnering opinions, knowledge, and support for a water export plan to pipe 22,000 acre feet from northern Saguache County to the Front Range for consumption by urban populations. The survey states that the Front Range is facing a population growth issue. It then asks the participant if they agree or disagree that the San Luis Valley should help the Front Range to meet their water shortage needs. During the course of the survey, participants are given a limited amount of responses, none of which allows the participant to point out that several of the claims stated in the course of the questions are either inaccurate, misrepresented, or simply untrue. None are supported by scientific data or cite sources. These are a few of the claims made during this survey:

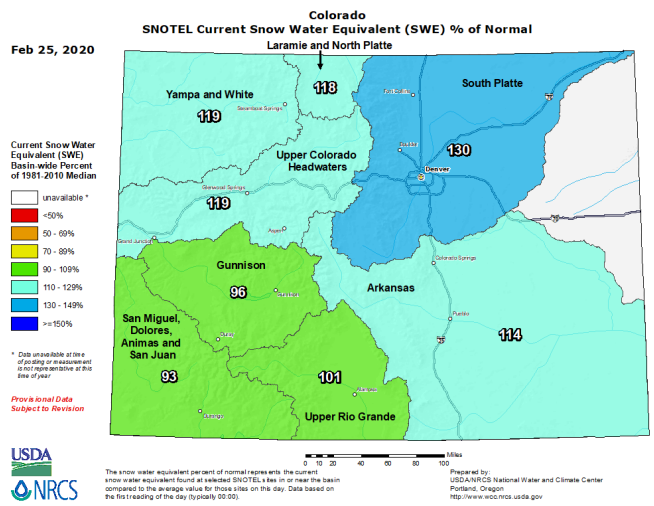
- The aquifer's recharge (not defined as unconfined or confined) will not be impacted by the water export.
 - The confined aquifer contains over 2 billion acre feet of water.
 - Pumping water from 3,000 below the surface will not have environmental impacts upon wildlife or vegetation.
 - The water export will benefit the elk habitat of the Baca Wildlife Refuge
 - Agriculture in the Valley uses 500,000 acre feet every year.
 - There is a water shortage of 500,000 acre feet across Colorado. Piping water from the San Luis Valley will help mitigate that shortage.
 - The state water engineer will shut down wells if farmers and ranchers do not meet sustainability requirements. They will not be compensated.
 - Ranchers and farmers who sell their water rights will be compensated 3 times the average selling price for water.
 - The water export will bring \$120 million into the San Luis Valley.
- continued on Pg. 2*



Export continued...

These claims will be clarified and explored in further articles and communications as local water organizations work together to bring a unified and truthful message to the San Luis Valley. Community members and other interested Coloradans are strongly encouraged to visit the Rio Grande Water Conservation District's website (www.rgwcd.org), the Colorado Division of Water Resources website (www.dwr.state.co.us), and the Colorado Water Conservation board website (<http://cwcb.state.co.us>) in order to see accurate facts and statistics regarding groundwater, surface water, and sustainability issues faced by the Rio Grande Watershed.

Unconfined Aquifer Levels	
Jan 2019 - Jan 2020	+158,426 acre feet
680,972 acre feet needed to attain sustainability levels	



Snowpack data as of February 25, 2020. Snowpack numbers are significantly above average in the northeast basins, while the southwest struggles to meet 100% of average. *Graph from the NRCS website

ROUNDTABLE MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

We are proud of our Roundtable members. They are community members with an investment in water use, conservation, and beneficial projects. We feature a member in each issue so that our community can get to know us a little better. You can find a complete list of members at www.rgbtr.org.



Rio de la Vista works with local, regional, and international nonprofit organizations, land management agencies, community groups, and landowners to achieve land, water and habitat conservation and restoration, agricultural viability, and community sustainability. Rio serves as the Environmental Representative on the Rio Grande Roundtable where she has been a member since 2005. With the Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust, she was part of the Rio Grande Initiative, a broad partnership of conservation organizations that has achieved over \$43 million in conservation, including over 26,000 conserved acres along the Rio Grande and Conejos River corridors since 2007. She now serves as director of the Salazar Rio Grande del Norte Center at Adams State University.

RIO'S HEALTH UPDATE

Our dear friend, long-time ally to good land and water works in the SLV, Rio de la Vista continues to recover from complications of surgery that arose in mid-January. Despite the requirement for ongoing intensive treatment and continued hospitalization, Rio receives each day with her characteristic curiosity and interest, focused on healing and getting back to the Rio Grande Basin Roundtable's collective work.

She welcomes visitors at Room 8-267 at Swedish Medical Center in Englewood.

Please text her before coming, as the hospital keeps her busy!

Contact Heather Greenwolf at executivedirector@headwatersalliance.org for Rio's contact information. The Roundtable wishes Rio all the best in her recovery!

STREAM MANAGEMENT PLANNING - AROUND THE STATE AND HERE AT HOME

METHODS FOR STREAM PLANS AT THE NEW RESOURCE LIBRARY

By Stacy Beaugh Strategic by Nature, Inc.

Just like individuals, each Stream Management Plan (SMP) is unique. The people and the location greatly influence their goals and activities. But there is also a common blueprint, documented at CWCB and River Network's SMP Resource Library. For each step in the planning process, it presents examples, best practices, online resources, and methods to consider. The goal of the SMP Resource Library is to enlarge the pipeline of local coalitions that are interested, ready, and capable of undertaking Stream Management Plans, as well as advance the state of knowledge around how to craft effective and implementable SMPs. Resource Library case studies will be updated annually as SMPs progress. Experts in the different assessment areas (hydrology, water quality, recreation, riparian habitat, etc.) are encouraged to submit their ideas and feedback so it can continue to grow and improve. To learn more about SMP strategies and uses across Colorado, plus the resource library, go to

www.coloradosmp.org



Photo courtesy of the Gunnison River Water Conservancy District

RIO GRANDE WATERSHED

STREAM MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Partners from various agencies & watershed groups met in late February with Daniel Boyes, SMP coordinator for the Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project. Three SMPs are in their final planning stages - Rio Grande, Conejos, & Saguache Creek, covering a total of 370 river miles. Each includes detailed river condition assessments at a reach scale covering multiple river health and function indicators from irrigation infrastructure to water quality. *continued on pg 4*

ROUNDTABLE APPROVES LOCAL PROJECTS

At the January Roundtable meeting, members approved funding for three project proposals. These projects are subject to final approval at the Colorado Water Conservation Board's March meeting.



Terrace Irrigation Company Outlet Works Inspection & Repair Analysis

Inspect extent of heavy corrosion in pipes and formulate a repair plan for increased water flow efficiency.

WSRF Funds - \$15,000

Project Scope: July - March 2020

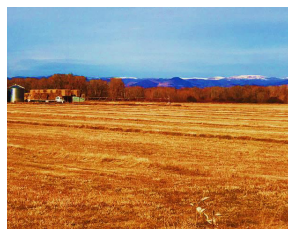


Rio Grande Watershed Conservation Education Initiative Roundtable Community Education Staff Liaison

Communications, outreach, and education on water topics.

WSRF Funds - \$133,500

Project Scope - Aug 2020-2023



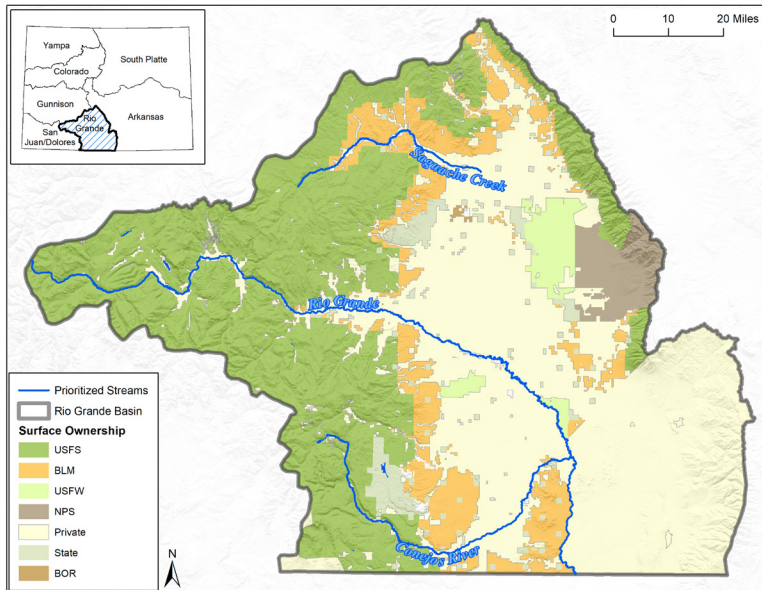
Colorado Open Lands Schaefer Farms & Jackson Ranch

Conservation Easement
Conserving over 1300 acres of agricultural land with wildlife, irrigation, and riparian areas on two private land holdings. Protects senior water rights. Prime soils and diverse crops support significant wildlife populations such as sandhill cranes and ducks.

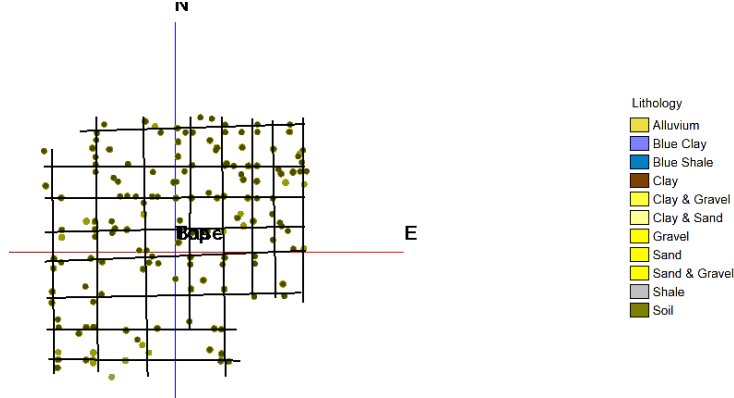
RIO GRANDE STREAM MANAGEMENT PLAN *continued from pg. 2*

The Technical Advisory Team, made up of partners from water user groups, local environmental and recreation interests, and state and federal agencies, are helping to guide the SMP process. The meeting also included a review of action items designed to accomplish goals and provide multiple benefits to water users and river health. The final SMP reports will be finalized and published online soon. As a result of the planning process, several projects are already being explored, including installation of a new stream gauge and a large-scale restoration project that includes improvements to irrigation infrastructure, fish passage and habitat, and floodplain connectivity. For more info, contact:

daniel@riograndeheadwaters.org



“SWEET SPOT” RECHARGE MAPPING PROJECT COMPLETE



Mosca Hooper Conservation District’s recharge mapping project worked with geologic survey company Ziegler Geologic Consulting to map a pilot area in eastern Alamosa County. The side image can be found on the website zieglergeo.com and represents the data found while mapping with electrical arrays. The data confirmed recharge “sweet spots” and the partners hope to replicate the project in other areas of the SLV.

DEL NORTE RIVERFRONT PLAY WAVE - FISH PASSAGE - PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

After a winter of digging in the river with major construction vehicles, grouting, cement work, and re-arranging massive rocks, the Del Norte Riverfront Project has completed another phase of construction. Come spring when the ice and snow finally melt away, residents and visitors to the San Luis Valley will be able to enjoy a recreational experience unlike anything else on the Rio Grande - a play wave! Check out the amazing timelapse video of the structure’s construction at the Rio Grande Headwater Restoration Project’s Facebook page!



Like what you’re reading? Sign up for future editions of the RGBRT Newsletter at info@riograndeheadwaters.org

Want to share news about your water projects, organizations, or events? Email your information to Bethany Howell, Public Education Participation & Outreach Liaison at rgwcei@gmail.com

We’re also happy to share statewide initiatives, events, and other water-centric programs happening in other basins. Let us know!

RIO GRANDE WATER LEADERS COURSE

MARCH 23-27, 2020

The Rio Grande Water Leaders Course has been organized to provide the opportunity for 25 community members to engage in education and networking to prepare to take a future role in safeguarding, developing, and managing the water resources in the San Luis Valley.

COURSE INFORMATION

Where: Rio Grande Water Conservation District Office
8805 Independence Way, Alamosa
When: 6-9pm, March 23-27, 2020
Registration Fee: \$30
Attendance at all meetings is required.



APPLICATIONS DUE FEBRUARY 28 AT 5PM



Pick up applications at 623 Fourth St, Alamosa, or download from riograndeheadwaters.org

rgwcd.org
slvwcd.org

Drop off applications at 623 Fourth St, Alamosa, or email to connor@riograndeheadwaters.org

For more information, contact Emma Reesor at 719-589-2230 or emma@riograndeheadwaters.org

