

FALL 2020
VOL. 4 ISSUE 4

RIO GRANDE BASIN ROUNDTABLE NEWSLETTER



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WELCOME!

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

NEXT ROUNDTABLE MEETING: JAN. 12, 2021 @ 2 PM

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the next Rio Grande Basin Roundtable meeting will be held virtually. Community members are welcome to “attend” either on the phone or by computer. The agenda is available online at www.rgbrt.org. All comments and questions during the meeting should be directed to the facilitator through the “Chat” function to help us avoid confusion and extra noise. Attendees are also encouraged to keep microphones muted to prevent background noise.

TO JOIN MEETING BY COMPUTER:

[HTTPS://WWW.GOTOMEET.ME/RIOGRANDEROUNDTABLE](https://www.gotomeet.me/riograndroundtable)

TO CALL IN BY PHONE: (TOLL FREE): 1-866-899-4679 OR +1 (571) 317-3117 ACCESS CODE: 759-646-093

PROTECT SAN LUIS VALLEY

WATER *Agua es Vida -Water is Life*

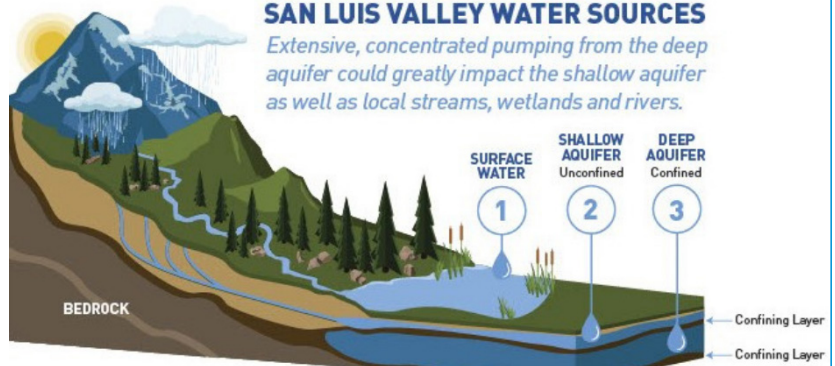
Recent propaganda campaigns by Renewable Water Resources, the privately owned company exploring ways to export San Luis Valley water out of the basin, have spurred local efforts to combat untruths with accurate facts. RWR's Facebook ads and videos contain assertions with no basis in reality, but which are serving to “muddy the waters” of the actual water situation faced in the San Luis Valley. A recently launched website, www.protectsanluisvalley-water.com contains fact sheets, past history of other water export attempts, and provides resources and ways to get involved. This isn't the first time that private companies have tried a water grab, but with an aquifer that isn't currently at sustainable levels, combined with drier temperatures and an unreliable snowpack, the Rio Grande basin needs all Coloradans to understand the truth. (see Pg. 3)

FACT



SAN LUIS VALLEY WATER SOURCES

Extensive, concentrated pumping from the deep aquifer could greatly impact the shallow aquifer as well as local streams, wetlands and rivers.



Protect Our Water
Learn More at

ProtectSanLuisValleyWater.com/Resources

Access resource fact sheets and follow trusted sources online for information regarding Rio Grande Watershed surface and groundwater issues. Follow [Protect San Luis Valley Water & Rio Grande Basin Roundtable](#) on Facebook!



RIO GRANDE WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT HONORS WATER LEADERS

Source Credit: Courtesy article in the Oct. 21, 2020 Valley Courier

The Rio Grande Water Conservation District Board of Directors recently acknowledged the legacy of two water leaders who passed away in 2020. These early members of the board set the tone for many important discussions and provided enormous leadership in gathering the Valley citizenry to address common problems. The current board of directors recognizes them and acknowledges their contributions to the peace and prosperity of the entire Valley. Both water leaders fostered an attitude that significantly reduced tensions that had existed for generations, allowing there to be a common purpose in protecting and conserving the Valley's water resources.

Kelly Sowards was an original member of the RGWCD BOD, representing Conejos County. He filled this role for more than 20 years and sought to ensure that the interests of the Conejos River and the citizens who depended upon it received fair treatment and protection.

Harold Ziegler, while not a founding member of the BOD, was nonetheless an early appointee representing Alamosa County for more than ten years, and became a true leader while serving as its Board president. Harold's firm but friendly approach ensured that there was an environment that allowed competing interests for the Valley's water, together with opposing perspectives about the consequences of well development, to discuss and ultimately resolve these problems.

It is with great respect that the RGWCD Board of Directors wishes to recognize these men as leaders in the San Luis Valley and in longstanding protection of its water resources.



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.rgbrt.org.

ANN BUNTING - SAGUACHE COUNTY, IBCC REP



Ann Bunting serves on the Rio Grande Basin Roundtable representing Saguache County municipalities (Saguache, Crestone, Center). She has held that position since 2015. Ann is a longtime Colorado resident, growing up in Glenwood Springs and has lived in Crestone for more than 20 years. She became a Certified Water Professional in 2014 and began working for the Town of Crestone shortly after, first as a Water System Operator and more recently as Water System Manager. She enjoys the versatility of the job: from meeting with engineers in developing the Town's augmentation plan, to exercising valves, upgrading system components, educating schoolchildren, and everything in between. Her interests focus on travel, languages and music. She's always happy to get back home where she appreciates clean, satisfying water and the efforts that many people make to ensure its delivery.

BASIN GOALS APPROVED

At the October Roundtable meeting, members approved an updated version of the previous Basin Implementation Plan's goals. Partners discussed the need for more encompassing, versatile goals that would allow multiple projects across agriculture, environment & recreation, municipal & industrial, water administration, and education & outreach to meet them. The updated RBRT goals reflect the heart of the basin.

RIO GRANDE BASIN ROUNDTABLE GOALS



HEALTHY WATERSHEDS
that provide critical ecosystem services, are resilient to disturbances, and benefit from ongoing efforts to protect water sources, improve water quality, enhance aquatic, riparian, wetland, and upland habitat, and maintain connected ecosystems.



THRIVING COMMUNITIES
vibrant and resilient agriculture, recreation, municipal, and industrial economies that support thriving communities.



WATER ADMINISTRATION
that is adaptive, flexible, and creative while complying with state statutes and the doctrine of prior appropriation, and fully utilizing Colorado's compact entitlements under the Rio Grande and Costilla Creek compacts.



ENGAGED & INFORMED CITIZENS
who understand the scope and urgency of local, state, and regional water issues and participate in robust and diverse educational opportunities.



RIO GRANDE BASIN ROUNDTABLE



SUSTAINABLE GROUNDWATER
Aquifers with sustainable supplies of groundwater for farmers and ranchers, towns, and wildlife habitat.

BASIN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

PROJECT SUBMISSION DEADLINE



NOV. 20TH, 2020

5:00 PM

Projects must use the approved project template available at www.rgbrt.org/rgbip-update/

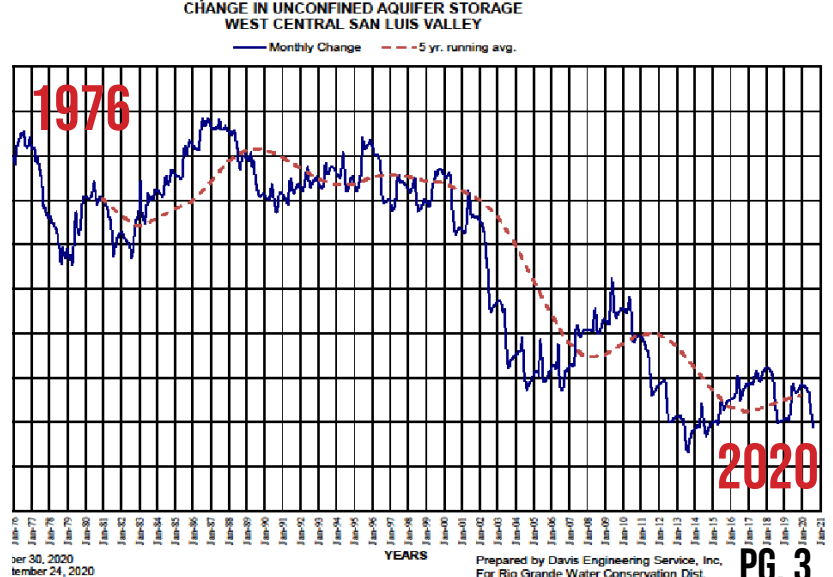
DANIEL BOYES

RIO GRANDE HEADWATERS RESTORATION PROJECT

DANIEL@RIOGRANDEHEADWATERS.ORG

GROUNDWATER & AQUIFER REALITY

(continued from pg. 1) Contrary to claims by Renewable Water Resources, agricultural producers in the San Luis Valley are not sitting on a ridiculous amount of groundwater. In fact, farmers and ranchers have been working hard for years to replace groundwater depletions for a more sustainable unconfined aquifer. Unfortunately, climate conditions in 2020 were not conducive for aquifer recharge and the SLV now finds itself struggling. The graph below, from the Colorado Division of Water Resources, shows exactly how the situation stands.



CWCB
Board of Directors
Meeting
Nov. 18-19

Funding Update:
WSRF Funds will be dispersed at one time into Basin accounts, not in separate installments.

Share Your Story!
CWCB wants to know the projects that inspire you.
Go to www.engagecwcb.org/your-water-plan-story

Grant Management
New contact for grants is **Ben Wade**
ben.wade@state.co.us

NOVEMBER 19

Colorado Water Plan CELEBRATES 5 YEARS!

In 2015, stakeholders around Colorado worked hard to put together a sustainable plan for future water use. We are proud and grateful to work, live, and play in a state that values ALL our water users!



We need your feedback! The State Water Educational Action Plan (SWEAP) has identified six Critical Water Concepts important for every Coloradan, from the youngest to the oldest, to understand. They are all high priority - but we want to know your thoughts about which mean the most to our Basin, right now. Please copy and paste this link into your internet search engine and take our 5 minute survey to give your opinion! <https://forms.gle/DYcCDZ8QQHybN55B9>

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 bethany@rgwcei.org

We're also happy to share statewide initiatives, events, and other water-centric programs. **PG. 4**

SAN LUIS VALLEY CANDIDATES WIN STATE OFFICES

Congratulations to candidates from the San Luis Valley who were successful in their bids for state office. Donald Valdez (D), the incumbent for House District 62, defeated his challenger to keep his seat as representative. Cleave Simpson (R), the general manager of the Rio Grande Water Conservation District and former IBCC rep for the Roundtable, takes over term-limited state senator Larry Crowder's seat in District 35.
Donald Valdez (l) & Cleave Simpson (r) with his family



LISTEN AND LEARN!

Going for a hike or a long car ride and want to learn more about our Basin? Listen to our newly released **Big River Podcast: Stories of the Rio Grande.**

Episodes feature local projects with bonus episodes from other great places around Colorado.

You can find all our media in one place by going to

www.rgbrt.org/media

