Inter Basin Compact Committee Basin Roundtable

Rio Grande Basin Roundtable

Meeting minutes

Tuesday July 12, 2022

**Call To Order**

President Nathan Coombs called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Those in attendance were Nathan Coombs (CWCD/Roundtable Chair), Emma Reesor (Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project), Judy Jolly ( Ag Member At-Large), Dale Pizel (Wildlife), Pete Clark (Water User at Large), Wayne Schwab (Trinchera), Heather Dutton (CWCB/SLVWCD), Connor Born (Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project), Daniel Boyes (RGHRP), Nikita Cooper (Rio Grande County Representation/Roundtable Secretary), Cassandra McCuen(RGWCD), Jim Ehrlich (Alamosa County), Travis Smith (Reservoirs), Michael Carson (City of Alamosa), Amber Pacheco, Cary Aloia (Environmental Representative), Erin McWilliams (RGHRP), Judy Lopez (Trinchera), Anna Greenburg, Bethany Howell (CDA), Jenny Nehring (Wetland Dynamics), Mario Curto (Ag User at Large), Payton Valentine, Vern Heresink, Amanda Lopez, Chuck Finnegan, Gene Farish, Jeff Rodriguez, (CWCB), Larry Sveum, Megan O’Grady (CWCB), Robert Zakata, Ryan Unterriener (CPW), Sheldon Rocky, Thomas Hanson, Joel Nystrom (COL), Alex Puglisi, Sam Scavo, Nora Flynn (CWCB), Rosalie Reese, Katy Schneider (Colorado School of Mines), Keith Holland, Sally Wier, Pat McDermott(DWR) and Chris Sturm (Wildlife Ready Watershed, CWCB). Members with excused absences: Virginia Christensen (Water User at Large).

The agenda was approved as presented. The minutes from June 11, 2022 were approved with spelling correction of Trinchera.

**Public Comment**

Trinchera Ranch will be hosting a Roundtable Ed committee tour on July 22 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Conejos Conservancy District will be hosting a tour on August 10 of the Acequias. The education committee continues to work on articles about the basin.

**New Business**

Heather Dutton introduced Katy Schneider from the Colorado School of Mines. Katy has been studying Watershed health and the effect forest disturbances have on water supply. There was also a fact sheet passed around.

The title of Katy’s study was Hydrologic Disturbances in the Rio Grande Headwaters. Katy noted that she studied disturbances from land cover and climate disturbances. She concluded that timing and magnitude of water availability in the Rio Grande Headwaters change during: Land cover disturbances, and climate disturbances. This model could help look at surface water budgets. Katy noted that the basin has great data collection throughout the river which helps prove model accuracy. She encourages state and federal streamflow and snowpack monitoring.

Chris Sturm with Wildfire Ready Watersheds outlined the framework that his team has been working on which arose from SB21-240. The framework is to evaluate Wildfire Susceptibility within communities and help communities prepare for wildfires. This team is trying to shift focus from disaster reaction to planning. Website: wildfireready.com

Kara Sobieski and Nora Flynn reviewed the Colorado Water Plan draft release. They noted that the plan has been released for public comment. Nora noted that Chapter 6: Partner actions, agency actions is one of the most important portions of the plan. She directed people to that section along with the rest of the plan. Update includes the following categories: Vibrant Communities, Thriving Watersheds, Robust Agriculture, and Resilient Planning. They underlined that CWCB is looking for stakeholder input during the comment period which is June 30-September 30. Listening sessions will be held July 27, August 10, September 1 and September 28. Nora also noted that there will be four new regional coordinators (starting this fall) with the goal of helping grant projects get off the ground.

Heather Dutton updated the board on CWCB and noted at the next meeting they will be reviewing loans and grants as well as the Water Plan.

Keith and Nathan gave an IBCC update. Keith noted that he was proud of our basin and applauded the education committee for their efforts. Federal Funding for Transportation, Water and resiliency projects might be of interest to this group. Nathan noted that Colorado is standing firm on their position with the Colorado River. The issue is over releasing on the other end, not a Colorado delivery issue.

Nora introduced Jeff Rodriguez, CWCB, as a new Roundtable coordinator. She noted that the project data base will be lunched by the next CWCB board meeting and HB1051 municipal data base has also been lunched. The grant portal is up and running. Nora also noted that the next CWCB board meeting is July 20-21 in Denver.

Amber Pacheco, Rio Grande Water Conservation District, announced that all 7 subdistricts are operating under approved ARPs. Subdistrict 1 is continuing the process to submit their 4th Plan of Water Management to the RGWCD board and state. Other subdistricts are looking for land purchases to secure long term water supply, long term forbearance agreements, and Collaborative Water Sharing Agreements (ATM’s). Senate Bill 6208 will be shared between Rio Grande Basin and Republican Basin with 30 million to each basin. The RGWCD is creating criteria for projects that will be funded with that money. Amber noted that Marissa Fricke has resigned from Rio Grande Water Conservation District, Subdistrict 1. That position will be opening soon. Subdistrict 5 bought replacement water for $11,000/acre foot from Perry Hazard including priority 1, 2 and 4.

Pat Mcdermott, DWR provided new graphs and charts for the group to review regarding water levels for the year. He noted that the new 20 year average reference period is 1991-2020. 230,000 acre feet is anticipated on the Conejos, with 63,000 acre feet being curtailed. The Rio Grande River is anticipated to run 390,000 acre feet with 95,600 acre feet curtailed for downstream states. Pat noted that there is a new well commissioner, Christy Kesselring.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

The next:

Roundtable Meeting August 9, 2022 at 2:00 p.m.

Executive Committee: August 9, 2022 at 1:00 p.m.