

Inter Basin Compact Committee Basin Roundtables

Rio Grande Basin Roundtable

Tuesday, October 13, 2020 at 2:00 pm

GoTo Meeting Online

**Meeting Minutes**

**Call to Order**

Meeting called to order at 2:03 pm by secretary Judy Lopez, filling in for Nathan Coombs, chairman. Those in attendance included Travis Smith, Amber Pacheco, Ronda Lobato, Chuck Finnegan, Marisa Fricke, Peter Clark, Ann Bunting, Bethany Howell, Connor Born, Judy Lopez, Cary Aloia, Cathy Morin, Dale Pizel, Darin Schepp, Emily Chavez, Eugene Farish, Brenda Felmlee, Hallie Flynn, Hannah Thill, Jenny Nehring, Jill Lucero, Jim Ehrlich, JoAnn Slivka, Keith Holland, Kevin Terry, Max Ciaglo, Megan Peterson, Peter Barkmann, Rio de la Vista, Russ Sands, Sam Stein, Sophia Sigstedt, Trevor Harmon, Waverly Klaw, Zena Buser, Dave Marquez, Steven Romero.

**Agenda**

Judy Lopez asked for a motion to approve the October Roundtable agenda as presented. Travis Smith made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, Peter Clark seconded the motion.

**Minutes**

Minutes for September were discussed, Rio de la Vista asked for amendments regarding specificity of the mentioned Q&A about the water export to include that it was part of the Basin Symposium and to include the Salazar Del Norte Center playlist on Youtube. Rio also requested the removal of CDOW in the minutes and replaced as Colorado Division of Water Resources to avoid confusion. Otherwise, moved to approve by Rio de la Vista. Ann Bunting seconded. All approved with amendments as proposed.

**Public Comment**

Rio de la Vista announced that there would be a virtual event at noon on November 4 regarding the topic of acequias. More information will be sent out to the Roundtable.

**Basin Goals**

Judy presented the Basin Implementation Plan goals as previously presented to the Roundtable. Judy explained that when writing CWCB grants, referencing the goals are required. The goals from the last BIP were pared down to the current list of 5 overall goals. Judy asked if the Roundtable wanted to go ahead and vote on the goals as there has already been extensive discussion regarding the reasoning behind creating these goals. Travis Smith asked if forest health was included in the watershed health portion of the goals, and Judy explained that yes, all parts of the watershed are included in this broader goal, including forest health and many others. Rio de la Vista asked about infrastructure and storage being represented within the water administration goal. Judy explained that it does include those two topics, and that having broader goals allows RT Grantees to develop a mire concise narrative around the basin goals. Dale Pizel asked about the second goal, stating a concern with limitation to the words used in the goal, i.e. farmers and ranchers, towns, etc. Judy reiterated that broader terms provide more freedom when writing grants with a “less is more” approach. Dale agreed and wanted to make sure that the goal wasn’t limiting. Keith Holland made a motion to approve the Basin goals as presented, Jim Ehrlich seconded the motion. No one opposed and the motion was approved.

**IBCC Report**

Keith Holland explained that the IBCC would meet on October 21, with a morning meeting just for IBCC, and a joint meeting in the afternoon with PEPO. Keith explained that the IBCC members are being asked to go back to their Roundtable with specific questions. Questions included: What do Roundtable members and consultants want to do next, what questions do constituents want answered? Ann Bunting clarified that during the last Roundtable meeting it was briefly mentioned by Nathan, but it wasn’t extensively discussed. Judy asked the Roundtable if there’s anything that they want to know from the IBCC. Travis Smith said that we should remind ourselves of the role of the Roundtable as it has been 15 years of operation and with so many new additions there is a need for a refresher course on what the Roundtable’s roles and expectations are. Bethany Howell noted that for PEPO, she has been thinking of creating a Roundtable 101 that would address those questions. After some discussion, it was decided to add an IBCC overview to next month’s meeting, so that we can include discussion with the Roundtable about IBCC and its role. and address the questions brought to members by the IBCC.

**Subdistrict Report**

Judy asked if Amber or Marissa from the District would like to give a subdistrict update as Cleave Simpson wasn’t in attendance. Amber Pacheco gave a brief update for subdistricts 2, 3, and 6. They continue to work on their annual replacement plan. These districts were allowed to start a little later, through a provision in groundwater district rules and will complete their replacements in April. Subdistricts 2 and 3 requested amendments from state engineer, Kevin Rein, regarding the depletion schedule and were approved for replacements on a new schedule. Subdistricts continue to try to find permanent water supplies. District 6 received a grant for an ATM project from the CWCB on the Alamosa River. The idea is to prevent buy and dry. Notice to proceed was given and Davis Engineering will help create a plan to move forward. Marissa Fricke from subdistrict 1 gave an update regarding the hot and dry weather which has caused issues with sustaining the aquifer. All gains from 2019 were lost in 2020. Because of these conditions, the district has had higher participation in the drought program than in any other year. Metering sign ups and readings will continue in the next few weeks. Sub 1 works with the recharge decree for winter time depletions and continues to look at their plan of water management with making as many gains as possible.

**Basin Plan Update**

Connor Born gave an update regarding the BIP as Daniel Boyes was not in attendance. Three technical update meetings were held in the past week discussing data and analysis. Will hold subcommittee meetings as follow up to create projects based on the data analysis. Connor reminded attandees that the new projects submission for the updated BIP is November 20, so there is still time to develop and submit a project. Any questions about project data or how to complete a template should go to Daniel Boyes or Connor Born of the Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project, daniel@riograndeheadwaters.org. Connor also noted that the annual Rio Reels film festival will be online this year and take place on October 30. Tickets are available and a silent auction will still be held. Email connor@riograndeheadwaters.org for more information.

**Colorado Division of Water Resources Report**

Darin Schepp gave the report in place of Craig Cotton who was not in attendance. Schepp showed a map about extreme drought conditions in the state. The Rio Grande at Del Norte had an early peak and at 308,000 AF, the obligation to downstream states is 93,000 AF. The Rio Grande is projected to be overdelivering at the end of the year. The Conejos also had an early peak in May, with a 143,000 AF flow, obligation downstream is 25,000 AF. It is also an over delivery on this Conejos system. Precipitation for October is still low and projected to be low for the entire winter with not much precipitation and higher than normal temperatures.

Irrigation season ending date projected to be November 1, due to the over deliveries on Rio Grande and Conejos river systems, variances may be granted. Some variance requests have already been received from the Alamosa area. There will be a virtual meeting on November 12 for the division. Offices are still closed to the public and staff have been given furlough days. 2020 abandonment is still happening, objections are due in July.

**CWCB Report**

Sam Stein and Russ Sands from the CWCB were in attendance. Sam explained that there are some changes to the WSRF grant process as Craig Godbout has retired. New WSRF contacts will be Sam Stein and Ben Wade, who can be reached at ben.wade@state.co.us. The website with the update WSRF Criteria and Guidelines as well as the updated WSRF application is available on line at <https://cwcb.colorado.gov/loans-grants/water-supply-reserve-fund-grants>

Sam also explained that the deadlines have changed to align with the Water Plan deadlines. The second change is that 100% of funds will be dispersed into the Basin account rather than in three disbursements. A little bit more money than expected came in, so accounts were given $100,000 instead of $80,000. That will likely be the only money put in for the next 3 years. The WSRF match for state account funds will be over a three-year period. He made a recommendation that roundtables consider developing a three year plan in order to preserve funds without new disbursements. The CWCB also wants to engage stakeholders online with a new website that has just launched. It will also include the new BIP process. There is a section called “Share Your Water Plan Story” to share stories about people or projects that inspire and inform the water plan. To enter your Water Plan story go to *www.Engagecwcb.org*

There is also a demand management link for those interested in participating in this discussion. November 18-19 is the next Board of Directors Meeting. Sam reiterated the IBCC/PEPO meeting date on October 21. He noted that DNR is still limiting Roundtable meetings to fewer than ten people and travel restrictions are in place.

As there was no other business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 2:46 pm.