



Roaring Fork Watershed Collaborative: Water Group

Minutes of Meeting October 20, 2005 Eagle County Building, El Jebel, CO

- **Andrea Holland Sears called meeting to order.**
 - General announcements: Cindy Houben has stepped down from steering committee and is being replaced by Rose Ann Sullivan.

- **Mission Statement Review**

“To assist local, state, and federal agencies and organization in planning and managing for land and water uses within the Roaring Fork Watershed with the objectives of protecting riparian and aquatic resources while providing for a sustainable economic community.”

Objectives: Efficiently use agency and organization resources to:

- Provide information and data sufficient to guide land and water management and planning decisions,
- Competitively apply for major grants supporting watershed studies, planning and management efforts,
- Collaborate on public outreach efforts on water resource issues within the watershed, and
- Provide a mechanism to transfer information between state water-related forums (i.e. SWSI and HB1177) and stakeholders.

Discussions:

- Wording should be changed to a) present a clause that incorporates joint efforts of educating and grant funding and b) address “detecting trends in water resources, being more proactive in our research, promoting land and water management”.
- The eventual outcome of the Collaborative structure was debated: a) How should the public view the Collaborative? b) What are the goals of the Collaborative? c) How do water, growth, health and economic issues relate to the Collaborative and dictate needs. This topic will be revisited when it’s appropriate to do so.
- The Healthy Mountain Communities webpage (www.hmccolorado.org) is a good resource as it includes Collaborative and water committee information.

Action Items:

- Members need to email Rose Ann Sullivan suggestions for changes to the mission statement, which will be compiled (roseanns@co.pitkin.co.us) by the end of next week.
- The steering committee will a) **edit the mission statement** and organize an email dialogue for further suggestions, b) **create an organizational chart** for all Collaborative members, c) consider **separating goals and objectives** for clarity.
- Discussion is needed in order to: a) establish a committee that addresses **amorphous research areas**, b) address a more **holistic approach** to promoting broader multi-faceted planning as a result of the many jurisdictions represented by the Collaborative members.

- **Education Updates**

- **American Leadership Forum (Gwen Garcelon)**

- ALF, in an effort to not repeat existing education models, has been researching what currently exists and what is needed for water issues education.
- The following conclusions were reached:
 - The general public needs to be involved in policy making.

- A venue is needed where people can ask questions and voice their concerns to public officials.
 - An educational model needs to be creative that is interactive, not just informative: ALF would like to set up interactive education with speakers that are brought into the valley by Collaborative members.
 - The business community (board of realtors, water engineers, water attorneys, educational institutions, etc.) is willing to assist, but needs to be actively involved.
- **Colorado River Water Conservation District (Jim Pokrandt)**
 - CRWCD and board of directors has been actively involved in elevating the dialogue about water issues to increase public awareness and involvement (as a result of noting the 25% population turnover):
 - Public access TV will air ‘Consider the Source’ which will present water issues.
 - The CRWCD website is being improved and expanded by changing branding and distribution channels.
 - CRWCD suggested that the Collaborative a) get a column in a newspaper in the valley and produce one article a month on water issues, b) produce a website, c) get Grassroots TV involved in airing events.
 - **Roaring Fork Conservancy (Tim O’Keefe)**
 - RFC has been involved mostly with children’s education programs, but is shifting focus onto adult education using ALF models
 - Programs that have been initiated to address this: a) the River Float takes 150 people down the river, b) a speaker series with panel discussions, c) a River Center to provide an educational location and collaborative efforts.
 - RFC would like the Collaborative to work together to discuss educational outreach programs and how to create a more unified message so as to not recreate the wheel. ‘Keep It Clean’ campaign may be a program on which the Collaborative would like to join forces.

Discussions:

- The Collaborative would like ways in which to measure interactive levels and effectiveness of an educational program.
- ALF suggested providing a follow up outlet for event attendees.

Action Items:

- Tim O’Keefe will send out an email to begin an education subcommittee.
- Contact RFC each month to initiate an events calendar, so we’re communicating amongst members and supporting each event.

➤ **Political Updates**

- **SWSI (Kristine Crandall)** website: www.cwcb.state.co.us/swsi
 - Statewide Water Study Initiative (SWSI) started 2 years ago from Referendum A state decision to prioritize future water planning and assess current water availability.
 - Phase I, managed by CWCB, has been completed to gather information by basin. Bottom line conclusion for 2030 is that we’re going to have a gap in water supply of about 120,000 acre feet, under the current trend of Front Range municipalities and development.
 - Phase II deals with technical, topical roundtables that address water conservation in order to understand impacts and the development of measures that can be implemented for future needs.
 - Some of the technical aspects being researched are:

- Active M&I metering, water rate structures, regulating landscape use, agricultural efficiency measures, eradication control (e.g. tamarisk removal projects) as well as how much impact each regulation has, Local rep-Dave Merritt
 - Agricultural transfers and shift in water use to M&I. Alternatives to protect property rights are being researched. Local rep-Steve Childs
 - Prioritizing recreational and environmental needs, as well as researching funding by exploring multi-use projects. Local rep-Kristine Crandall
 - **November 9th gap group meeting** will discuss Phase I findings, expectations, potential work projects, and SWSI overview and legislative relationship (connection with 1177 project). Local rep-Louis Meyers
- **HB 1177 (Rose Ann Sullivan)** website: www.dnr.state.co.us/hb1177/index.asp
 - SWSI is a foundation for HB 1177 and has representation for the Colorado River Basin roundtable from the Roaring Fork Valley. **A list of all roundtable members is listed at the end of the minutes.*
 - The DNR website lists river basin roundtables-minutes, meeting dates, etc.
 - **Next meeting is on November 14th** in Glenwood at the Community Center at 2:00, and three additional nonvoting members will be attending.
 - Bylaws for CORBRT-draft bylaws presented by Department of Natural Resources should be reviewed before the meeting: need to determine the structure of voting
 - Interbasin compact committee will create a governing interbasin charter, allowing fair representation across river basins in CO to begin negotiations among basins.

Discussions:

- Merge the legislative information to the general public, education subcommittees should work with SWSI and HB1177 representatives to create updates and informative dialogue that can be accessed, understandably, by the general public
- The White, Yampa, Colorado and Gunnison are also represented, so the website might be a good way of disseminating information amongst many jurisdictions.

➤ Resource Updates

- **Hydrogeologic study/Ken Holm study (Warren Rider)**
 - General **hydrogeologic research** topics that were addressed include:
 - Collaborative needs to address data sharing as GIS can be used to support efforts of conservancy and legislation.
 - BBC consulting on Front Range will be involved in modeling of Roaring Fork River at least up to Basalt, and the Colorado River.
 - Kirby and Paul are doing retrospective water analysis of the Roaring Fork to develop a baseline for water quality/quantity.
 - As resources are tools for making decisions, **Ken Holm** has been researching the geologic stratigraphy in Pitkin County. This study will address availability of surface and underground water supplies, as well as vulnerability, water degradation, aquifer depletion, etc. Ken is mapping geologic zones in order to allow PitCo to look at underlying areas of development to address sustainable/nonvulnerable water sources and hold the developer responsible for areas that are not sustainable or vulnerable.
 - Information that Ken is developing for Pitkin County can be of great use from a stream health initiative perspective, because the relationship of groundwater and water quality is unclear in the valley. A lot of information is available regarding water quality from groundwater wells, but not from aquifers and overall groundwater resources.
 - Planners and county commissioners asked for this research so that they could make more informed decisions, which presented the opportunity to create the Collaborative.

- This project could be taken to the state level to update and map thickness of geologic layers to address water level data and gaps in data.

➤ **Resources Updates/Relationships (Rick Lofaro)**

- **Stream Health Initiative Study partners are:** The Nature Conservancy, Roaring Fork Conservancy, Stream Health Initiative and USGS retrospective.
 - The Roaring Fork Watershed (RFW) encompasses 1,451 miles² (roughly the same size as Rhode Island) and Multiple jurisdictions (4 counties, 5 cities and towns involved in water planning)
 - Streamflow project is meant to determine flows to sustain each function, identify threats, future streamflow threats and demands.
 - **Investments:**
 - Thus far \$300,000 has been invested in research on watershed, streamflow study, WQ studies, streamhealth initiative, biological inventory, conservation area planning, Collaborative, etc.
 - **Identified threats to the RFW:**
 - point and nonpoint source pollution, drought transbasin diversions, natural flow and habitat degradation, nonnative species, and development.
 - **Impacted resources include:**
 - recreation, quality of life, utilities, cultural and environmental integrity (\$18 million income for angling in valley alone), 4% of water is used in valley while the rest is sent to the Front Range or down the Colorado River for lower basin states usage.
 - An **economic value** for the Fryingpan river was researched. That study concluded that 34,000 visitor days are spent on the river every year and 15,000 visitor days on the reservoir.
 - **Role of partners:**
 - SHI is an assessment of riparian and instream habitat of Roaring Fork River and its tributaries to assist with management
 - TNC conservation area planning defines scope and targets, defines stresses, sources and key ecological attributes to analyze and suggest management goals
 - AVLT, CO natural heritage program identifies key resources and areas
 - WQ studies with USGS peer review involving River District, Pitkin/Eagle County, RFC, Town of Basalt to produce a state of the watershed report-available for broad distribution, although a broad database and comprehensive review for stream ecology and human impact/demand.
 - Data from these studies for the Crystal River Watershed, Upper Roaring Fork and Lower Roaring Fork tributaries were presented at the meeting
 - Results:
 - **Crystal River:** RFC Water Quality (WQ) for Crystal River is a **double dipper status (average rating)**. In-stream flows have been lower than average, riparian habitat is being degraded. WQ compared to other streams in valley, although it's being monitored for sediment (suspended sediment has only risen above 150mg per L once over past 4 years). Al, Se, and pH have been spiking in certain areas. *More details on specific study results can be obtained by contacting the RFC at 927-1290.*
 - **Crystal River Conservation Area Plan:** key species, attributes and threats are to be identified for conservation
 - **Upper Roaring Fork: triple dipper status (high)**, high WQ. There has been an increase in total hardness & Al, (trying to target high Al source).
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 - Habitat Assessment: riverbank stability, protection, channel flow status is lower than desired on the Roaring Fork as stream straightening effects are evident in habitat reduction (especially near Northstar).

- **Lower Roaring Fork and Tributaries:** Cattle creek WQ 1 ¼ **dippers (low)**. Upper Cattle Creek data is available: riparian habitat levels are low, -Se levels are low, low macroinvertebrate sampling (mayflies are high-which are tolerant of pollution)
- In general, Collaborative members can learn from each other, as well as **integrating resources**; we need an action plan as a Collaborative: by coordinating and communicating.
 - Collaborate to finish and implement watershed plan, create an ongoing mechanism to review, fund and implement river protection projects
 - GOCO grant has been submitted in partnership with SHI, TNC, RFC, etc. to create prioritization matrix that includes biological, recreation, and biological conditions (WQ, flow alteration and aquatic conditions) to target protection and restoration areas..
- **Possible plan target areas:**
 - Habitat degradation: 1) acquisition of conservation easements and open space- TNC, Pitkin Co, Eagle Co, Garfield Co; 2) habitat restoration-need more efforts; 3) identification of restoration and preservation priorities- GOCO grant is targeted to help with this.

Discussions:

- No guarantee of GOCO grant, so Collaborative needs to consider how to accomplish study without GOCO funding.
- County commissioners, those who have funded SHI, TNC conservation area planning, etc. need to be informed about the outcome of the studies, which might be best when the plan is finalized.
- Collaborative has been a storing house of information, but hasn't been proactive in legislation or public opinion. With the watershed plan, is this a role that the Collaborative wants to address or be in charge of doing? More discussion is needed, perhaps by a subcommittee.
- Altered flow regimes is affecting biological and riparian habitat-altered physical processes are occurring: the relationships between SWSI, HB 1177, and Collaborative need to be clear in order to determine the outcome of these flows. Widely accepted information about flow regime effects need to be identified by technical roundtable in order to impact the flow regime legislation.
- Resources:
 - Need to maintain continuity of paid and unpaid staff funding. USGS database has been used historically, but other institutions need to be located and utilized as this will reduce the dependence on USGS and need to expand Collaborative. Denver water funds gages in Eagle County.
 - The minimum number of gages and nutrient targets needs to be addressed in order to determine funding purposes. This needs more discussion.
 - If funding is needed for 2006, then boards and commissioners need to be addressed now.

➤ **Discussion of Watershed Plan**

- Reasons for a watershed plan include: identifying needs of local municipalities, proposing projects that will benefit entire watershed, allocating responsibility for projects, targeting funding for projects.
- To some, the need for watershed focused groups is apparent, so a watershed based institutional program is necessary to address current and future issues in order to control involvement and outcome of legislation.
- State initiatives relate to local planning in that:
 - HB 1177 steering committee is trying to identify projects to minimize gaps and to create criteria to be set into HB 1177. Steering committee is looking for standards that come out of SWSI and also for suggestions for creating baselines.
 - Section 208 of Water Quality Act outlines standards and policies written for towns and counties, development reviews are dictated by standards in this section. Water Quality

assessment is outdated and live databases are more useful (USGS as an example) for writing legislation. A concern is how to keep these databases functional and updated.

- Proposed committees addressing:
 - **Technical resource issues**
 - Sharon Clarke will organize this subcommittee in order to define **what** is necessary to reflect the values of different communities (may begin with areas that have been funded)
 - **Institutional, legal and financial issues**
 - Rose Ann Sullivan will organize this committee in order to define **how** the needs of the technical resource committee will be addressed.
 - Issues to address include: How do we move forward? What is the watershed plan going to look like? Will there be a series of recommendations? A plan needs to be outlined before people get involved in different aspects of the plan. The institutional/legal/financial needs could outline the needs of the watershed plan.

Action Items:

- Continue working on mission and goals.
- **Contact Sharon or Rose Ann** if you're interested in working on the Technical Resource Committee or Institutional, Legal and Financial Committee, respectively.
- Compile a wishlist.
- Research existing watershed plans.
- Outline RFWC's watershed plan based on existing watershed plans.
 - *Technical Resource Committee/Watershed plan subcommittee will research different watershed plans that are in existence (eg. City of Glenwood Springs, Colorado River Project, Eagle Watershed Plan) and discuss possibility of bringing in outside representatives/ experts (USGS, USFS, county, state and town) and various stakeholder entities to develop watershed plan
- Identify existing support within jurisdictions.
- Email will be sent to establish the next meeting to address the plan:
- Next Watershed Collaborative meeting date: January, 2006.

➤ **Suggested topics for future discussion:**

- Ground water
- The effect of climate change on water resources
- Field trips
- Funding of stream gages
- Grand database

➤ Contact information of those in attendance:

Name	Organization	Number	Email
Paul von Guerard	USGS	970-245-5257 x 14	pbvongue@usgs.gov
Kirby Wynn	USGS	970-245-5257 x23	khwynn@usgs.gov
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Kristine Crandall		970-927-5087	birke@comcast.net
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Colin Laird	HMC	963-5502	claird@hmccolorado.org
Betsy Suerth	Town of Basalt	927-4701	betsys@basalt.net
John Emerick	RFSHI	925-4281	jemerick@sopris.net
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Dave Merritt	CRWCD	945-8522	dmerritt@crwcd.org
Ray Merry	Eagle Co Env'tl Health	328-8757	ray.merry@eaglecounty.us
Cliff Simonton	EagCo Plan	328-8751	clifford.simonton@eaglecounty.us
Louis Meyer	SGM	945-1004	Louism@sgm-inc.gov
Gwen Garcelon	ALF	963-9182	gghighlife@earthlink.net
Andrea Holland-Sears	USFS	(970) 945-3256	ahollandsears@fs.fed.us

➤ **Colorado Basin Roundtable Members:**

Organization	Name	City
Bluestone Water Conservancy District	Clay Altenbern	Debeque
Basalt Water Conservancy District	Art Bowles	Basalt
Eagle Municipality	Chuck Ogilby	Vail
Middle Park Water Conservancy District	Stanley Cazier	Granby
Grand County	Lurline Curran	Hot Sulphur Springs
Colbran Water Conservancy District	Carlyle Currier	Molina
Silt Water Conservancy District	Scot Dodero	New Castle
Garfield Municipality	Karl Hanlon	Glenwood Springs
Grand Municipality	Bruce Hutchins	Winter Park
Ute Water Conservancy District	Harley Jackson	Grand Junction
Summit County	Tom Long	Breckenridge
Eagle County	Arn Menconi	Eagle
Colorado River Water Conservation District	David Merritt	Glenwood Springs
Garfield County	Louis Meyer	Glenwood Springs
Pitkin Municipality	Phillip Overreynder	Aspen
West Divide Water Conservancy District	Ed Olszewski	
Mesa County	Richard Proctor	Grand Junction
CWCB Member	John Redifer	Grand Junction
Routt County	Wayne Shomaker	Taponas
Pitkin County	Rose Ann Sullivan	Aspen
Mesa Municipality	Greg Trainor	Grand Junction
Summit Municipality	Lane Wyatt	Silverthorne
Gunnison County	Eli Beeding	Marble