



SUMMER 2020 VOL. 4 ISSUE 3

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: SEPT. 8, 2020 @ 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/RIOGRANDEROUNDTABLE)

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



BASIN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2015 GOALS REVIEW

As part of the Basin Implementation Plan (BIP) Update, the Basin Roundtable is holding a meeting to review its goals included in the 2015 BIP. The meeting will include a review of the current Basin Goals and, with group consensus, possible goal revisions. Please review the 2015 goals which can be found by clicking Basin Implementation Plan at www.rgbrt.org prior to the meeting.

When: August 17th from 1:00 to 4:00 pm

How: Virtual Format (see sidebar)

Who: All Roundtable members and interested members of the public are invited to attend.

For more information, contact Daniel Boyes at daniel@riograndeheadwaters.org

Please join us via video or phone using the GoToMeeting information below:

Click this link to join from your computer, tablet or smartphone:

<https://www.gotomeet.me/RioGrandeRoundtable>

OR, you can also dial in using your phone:

United States (Toll Free): 1 866 899 4679

United States: +1 (571) 317-3117

Access Code: 759-646-093

PROJECT UPDATE: RIO GRANDE RESERVOIR OUTLET WORKS COMPLETE

Source Credit: Courtesy article in the Aug. 8, 2020 Valley Courier

The Rio Grande Reservoir and contractor Moltz Civil, LLC have met their completion date of July 31, 2020 for the second year of the Rio Grande Reservoir Phase II Rehabilitation Project. The project consists of two 84-inch cone valves and one 36 inch cone valve inside the valve house that will service the reservoir.

Project manager and district superintendent Robert Phillips extended his gratitude: "On behalf of the San Luis Valley Irrigation District, I would like to thank the Moltz Civil, LLC and Deere & Ault employees for their tremendous efforts on this project. This was a historical event on the Rio Grande and a once in a lifetime opportunity for those involved. Thank you for a job well done." Among those recognized were Moltz Civil, LLC, Westley Ferraro, Ken Tunstall, Cole Phillips, Matt Huffington, Tom Luster, Chad Carter, Clayton Benish, Josh Miller, Tyson Keast, Brandon Kohl, Logan Cooper, Parker Wahner, Willie Dominguez, Jacob Fowler, Eric Johnston, Layne Carpenter, Darian Graf, Josiah Shown, Jacob Tunstall, Noah Overton, Lee Phillips, Darrin Howell, Mickey Koonce, Carlos Gallegos, Casey Wilson, Shawn Romero, James Keller, Jason Yenter,

Troy McDaniel, Scott Canchola, Andre Guteriz, Terell Goldtooth, Thomas Moltz, Ben Yoder, Aaron Neff, Danny Groy, Dave Blea, Sam Frazer, and Ault Engineering staff Don Deere, Ted Deere, Glen Church, Allison Wolfe, Kelby Sommer, Joe Delden, Bryan Black, Nathan Germann, and Ray Eldridge.

The SLVID also thanked the community businesses in Creede and the San Luis Valley who were involved in making this project a reality.



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.

BETHANY HOWELL - PEPO/EDUCATION LIAISON



Bethany is the Public Education, Participation, & Outreach liaison for the Rio Grande Basin Roundtable. She also acts as the executive director for the Rio Grande Watershed Conservation & Education Initiative, where she has facilitated K-12 education programs since 2016. Born in Hugo, Bethany moved to Texas at age 4 where she was raised on her family's heritage ranch in Marble Falls with sheep, turkeys, cattle, goats, and three sisters. Bethany earned two degrees in English from Hardin-Simmons University and worked in public relations for two universities. She came back to Colorado in 2013 with her husband and two children where they are all happy living and playing in the Del Norte area. Bethany is now working more fully with the Roundtable to provide education, engagement, and outreach to our communities regarding water issues. Please see Page 4 for an update on Roundtable outreach projects!

RIO GRANDE BASIN PROJECT PROPOSAL: CONEJOS RIVER PARTNERSHIP PROJECT - PHASE I

BASIN & STATE ACCOUNT FUNDS REQUESTED: \$250,000

MATCHING FUNDS: \$372,000

This project involves the North Eastern, New JB Romero, Sabine School section, Fuerticitos, and Elledges ditches which draw from the Conejos River to supply 1,129 agricultural acres with water. Each ditch faces aging infrastructure and inefficient diversions and the river is impacted by nearby channel instability issues. The proposal addresses these issues by funding rehabilitation of each of the ditches, improving function & efficiency and water administration, enhancing aquatic and riparian habitats, and providing multiple benefits to the Conejos River and its users. Partners include the Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project, ditch owners, & the Conejos Water Conservancy District. The first phase of proposal was approved by the Roundtable at the July meeting.



The Elledges Ditch (left) and the project map detailing each ditch's location along the Conejos River main stem and South Branch (above).

ANNOUNCING THE DEBUT OF THE FIRST EVER BASIN ROUNDTABLE PODCAST!



We are excited that the Big River Podcast: Stories of the Rio Grande is now available for the entire world to hear! Our first episode features the Del Norte Riverfront Project, with interviews with Emma Reesor and community members. We think it's a great kick off for our summer episodes and hope you enjoy listening to it as much as we enjoyed producing it. Podcasts are basically radio shows available any time you can get to your smartphone or computer. Give us a listen and let us know what you think! We are open for any ideas and stories that illustrate the relationships between our watershed and our water. We want to give the rest of Colorado and the world a chance to hear what our Rio Grande Basin cares about, works hard on, and why we love living here. Send your ideas to Bethany Howell at rgwcei@gmail.com. Stay tuned for future episodes featuring trails and the Basin Implementation Plan!



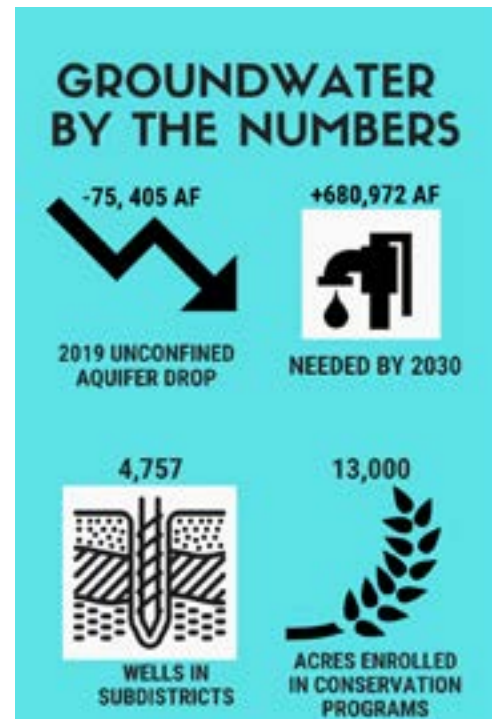
Available on Apple iTunes, Stitcher, and www.rgbrt.org PG. 3

STATE OF THE BASIN SYMPOSIUM

After the symposium's postponement from its original February date, a virtual event was held on July 28th with robust participation. Rio de la Vista, director of the Salazar del Norte Center at Adams State University, welcomed everyone after noting the symposium's delay due to multiple circumstances, but pleased to finally hold it, albeit virtually.

Former US Attorney General Ken Salazar kicked off the event with thoughts about living through crisis, specifically the San Luis Valley's struggle with the pandemic, economy, racial injustics, as well as climate, drought, and a water export scheme.

Keynote speaker Kevin Rein, state water engineer, gave his thoughts on the dry climate conditions and their implications for groundwater users in the San Luis Valley. While realistic about the hardships ahead for reaching and maintaining aquifer sustainability, Rein remained positive and encouraging about the approaches currently being made by farmers in active subdistricts. Cleave Simpson, manager of the Rio Grande Water Conservation District as well as Amber Pacheco, program manager for the RGWCD also noted the hard work put in by farmers across the Valley. The state and the San Luis Valley water districts are working closely to prevent well shut offs, realizing that the time for reaching sustainably is growing ever shorter. Other reports were given by Clinton Phillips of Davies Engineering, Craig Cotten, Division 3 engineer and Emma Reesor, executive director of the Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project.



Recent legislative budget cuts have unfortunately impacted some funding. The Colorado Water Conservation Board staff and directors are working to the best of their ability to provide funding for current and future water projects. More information about WSRF and other state funds can be found at <https://cwcb.colorado.gov/loans-grants/program-budget-impacts>



PLAY AND LEARN!

As our summer begins to fade, we welcome the opportunity for fall and winter recreation. Remind yourself why you love to recreate in the Rio Grande Basin while respecting our water and land stewardship values. Check out this 7 minute, recently released video by Christi Bode of Moxiecran Media in partnership with the Roundtable, Wolf Creek Ski, SLVGO, and the Rio Grande Farm Park.

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.

You can find all our media in one place by going to www.rgbrt.org/media

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. **PG. 4**