



Colorado River District

Protecting Western Colorado Water Since 1937

Board of Directors Meeting Summary

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Jan. 18-19, 2011



The Colorado River District Board of Directors for 2011 are, front row from left, Warner Dewey of Hinsdale County, Gary Martinez of Summit County, Vice President James Newberry of Grand County, President Tom Sharp of Routt County, Dave Merritt of Garfield County, Tom Alvey of Delta County, top row, from left, Tom Gray of Moffat County, Andy Mueller of Ouray County, Bill Trampe of Gunnison County, Steve Acquafresca of Mesa County, Steve Mathis of Montrose County, Jon Stavney of Eagle County, Forest Nelson of Rio Blanco County and John Ely of Pitkin County. Missing from the group picture is Rebie Hazard of Saguache County, pictured at right. For more on the Board appointments and officer elections, please see page 2.



The Colorado River District Mission Statement:

To lead in the protection, conservation, use and development of the water resources of the Colorado River Basin for the welfare of the District, and to safeguard for Colorado all waters of the Colorado River to which it is entitled.



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Acquafresca joins CRD Board of Directors

Every year, a third of the Colorado River District's 15-member Board of Directors is appointed to three-year terms.

At the Board's regular Jan. 18-19, 2011, quarterly meeting, the group welcomed new member Steve Acquafresca of Mesa County. Acquafresca is a Mesa County Commissioner, a former state representative to the General Assembly and a fruit grower.

Members appointed for another term were Tom Sharp of Routt County, Rebie Hazard of Saguache County, Tom Gray of Moffat County and John Ely of Pitkin County.

Sharp is an attorney, Hazard is a rancher, Gray is a County Com-

missioner and a rancher and Ely is the Pitkin County attorney.

The appointees joined current Board members James Newberry of Grand County, Andy Mueller of Ouray County, Steve Mathis of Montrose County, Forest Nelson of Rio Blanco County, Tom Alvey of Delta County, Dave Merritt of Garfield County, Jon Stavney of Eagle County, Warner Dewey of Hinsdale County, Bill Trampe of Gunnison County and Gary Martinez of Summit County.

Newberry is a Grand County Commissioner, Mueller is an attorney, Mathis is an attorney, Nelson is a rancher, Alvey is a fruit grower, Merritt is an engineer, Stavney is an Eagle County Commissioner, Dewey

is a retired physician, Trampe is a rancher and Martinez is the Summit County Manager.

Acquafresca replaced Dick Proctor, who elected not to seek re-appointment. The Board passed a resolution saluting Proctor for his service.

"During the years he served, everybody in the water community in Mesa County had great confidence in Dick," Acquafresca said. "He served admirably, and I was disappointed when he chose not to continue."

Appointments are the responsibility of the respective County Commissioners in each of the 15 counties comprising the Colorado River District.

Sharp elected president; Newberry tabbed VP

Annually, the Board of Directors elects new officers. At the Jan. 18-19, 2011, regular quarterly meeting, the Board elected Tom Sharp of Routt County as President. He replaced Andy Mueller of Ouray County. The Board limits officers to serving for two years and Mueller was term-limited. Sharp had been the Board Vice

President. In the election for a new Vice President, the Board tabbed James Newberry of Grand County.

"I very much appreciate your confidence in me," Sharp said. "I will try to make sure we proceed in an orderly and judicious fashion through our agendas."

The Board passed a resolution to commend Mueller for his work

as President. The officer elections elicited a Board discussion on whether to do away with term limits in light of the fact that other Boards in the water community do not have term limits, and that builds institutional knowledge helpful to critical water supply negotiations. The Board resolved, however, to keep term limits.

Board discusses Interbasin Compact Committee

Concern emerges for possible state advocacy of water projects

General Manager Eric Kuhn briefed the Board on issues surrounding the Interbasin Compact Committee (IBCC) and the Roundtables, both of which are looking at how Colorado should meet its water supply challenges.

He said the Board would likely be asked their opinions on the IBCC and the Roundtables when they eventually meet with new Gov. John Hickenlooper and state Department of Natural Resources Executive Director Mike King.

The Roundtables are currently completing assessments of consumptive and nonconsumptive water needs in each of the nine basins that they represent. The IBCC has issued a draft report to the governor that lays out a water supply vision. It can be reviewed at the Colorado River District website at http://www.crwcd.org/media/uploads/20110118_IBCC_report_to_GovRitter.pdf.

The report says that if the status quo for water development occurs in the face of a growing population, significant amounts of irrigated agriculture could disappear on both sides of the Continental Divide.

The report calls for balancing the values of agriculture, the envi-

ronment and recreation in seeking water-supply solutions.

It says the tools of the vision are conservation, the success of water projects already on the drawing board, reuse of water and new water projects. The last puts a target on the Colorado River.

Among the report's suggestions is the idea that the state should align its water project review responsibilities and find a way to champion a project.

Kuhn also said the issue of state advocacy for water projects also surrounds the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) and whether it should assume a new role in water projects.

Board member Andy Mueller said he was "not sure there is a groundswell of support" for the state advocating for water projects. Rather, he said the push is a "calculated" effort by the CWCB leadership that wants to endorse projects.

Mueller said the effort is inspired by the Australian drought that "resulted in the centralized control of the water system" in that country.

"I am concerned with the effort to push centralization at the state level. It is important for us to ac-

knowledge what is going on. It's a concerted effort by people of that vision," Mueller said.

He added: "Do we think it is a good idea? The historical answer is 'hell no, we don't think that is a good idea.' It goes back to 1937 and creation of both the Colorado River District and the CWCB.

"The state owning or endorsing projects is not a good idea because where the money and votes are will decide what is going to happen," Mueller said.

Board member Tom Gray opined that Roundtables still provide a valuable role in funding local projects through the Water Supply Reserve Account funds that the General Assembly allocated to the Basin Roundtables.

Board member Jon Stavney said the process is in its sixth year and wondered what it has produced.

Board member Bill Trampe said, "To me, you want to keep it. It is an opportunity for the grassroots to respond. But how do we want the Roundtables to move forward?"

Board member Dave Merritt said the Roundtables "have been valuable" in that they provide a

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New faces, budget cuts define State Capitol

With a new governor, 31 new state legislators and a change in majority party in the Colorado House of Representatives, the Colorado River District will be busy establishing new working relationships while advocating for West Slope water interests and priorities.

At the Jan. 18-19, 2011, Board meeting, External Affairs Manager Chris Treese reviewed the many new faces and changing dynamics, both at the legislature and in the new administration, at the State Capitol.

Colorado continues to suffer from the national recession; accordingly, the state budget will again this year overshadow all other legislative proposals.

The next fiscal year's projected shortfall is roughly \$1.25 billion.

And the next fiscal year's budget will not have federal stimulus dollars that this year's budget benefitted from.

Treese warned the Board to look for dramatic structural cuts in the budget and raids on cash funds including the Colorado Water Conservation Board's

(CWCB) construction and severance tax funds, which are used to support and assist water development statewide.

With the Legislature convening less than a week prior to the first quarter's board meeting, few water-related bills had been introduced for formal action by the Board. One exception was Senate Bill 35, which as introduced would protect only cash funds for the Department of Local Affairs and Higher Education. Noticeably absent from funds protected was the CWCB's construction and severance tax funds, which have a history of being raided to supplement the state's General Fund.

However, quick communication with the bill's sponsor resulted in an amendment to include the CWCB's water development funds to the protected list. The Board took a formal position to support the proposed amendment to Senate Bill 35.

With no other bills of pressing interest, Treese surveyed for the Board some of the other legislative proposals that are expected this year.

The Board agreed to schedule bi-weekly special meetings every other Friday at noon, starting Feb. 4, to receive information on legislative developments and to adopt formal positions and provide staff direction on recently introduced legislation.

Finally, Treese noted that two citizens are proposing a Public Trust Doctrine amendment to the Colorado Constitution through the initiation process. Through the Colorado Water Congress, the Colorado River District will closely monitor the title setting and signature gathering process, if these proceed.

IBCC discussed

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mechanism of "basic communication" to the state. He also said the Roundtables "engaged people in each basin, from the top to the bottom."

Board member Steve Acquafresca agreed that the Roundtables "offer a geographically diverse voice that was not there before. Regardless of the limitations of that voice, it is better to have what it is."

Board President Tom Sharp said the Roundtables have "undoubtedly increased the awareness of water issues in each basin" through the engagement of more people attending more meetings.

Contact us

For more information about the Colorado River District or board actions, call Jim Pokrandt at (970) 945-8522 x 236 ; ednfo@crwcd.org. Visit www.ColoradoRiverDistrict.org.

Gridlock, House hearings expected at Federal level

The Colorado River District closely follows both administrative and legislative activities in Washington, D.C., that may affect water use and water rights in Colorado.

At the Jan. 18-19, 2011, Board meeting, External Affairs Manager Chris Treese reviewed the changing faces and priorities facing the new Congress.

With a Republican majority in the U.S. House and Democrat majority in the Senate, predictions for gridlock are common.

House Republicans are expected to hold numerous oversight hearings concerning new and existing rules and regulations especially from the Environmental Protection Agency.

Among the issues the Colorado River District will prioritize this Congress are:

— Legislation to secure a permanent source of water for the West Slope's half of Colorado River water users' obligation to the endangered fish under the 15 Mile Reach Programmatic Biological Opinion. The Colorado River Dis-

trict must wait for completion of National Environmental Policy Act review on the 10,825 alternatives before finalizing a contract with the Bureau Reclamation for the West Slope portion of the 10,825 water. This contract will be for a 40-year term. The Colorado River District will seek legislation to authorize and direct Reclamation to convert that 40-year contract to a permanent contract without expiration.

— Authorizing legislation for the annual operations of the Upper Colorado and San Juan River Endangered Fish Recovery Programs did not pass in the 111th Congress. Passage early in the 112th Congress is critical to the on-going support and success of these two important programs.

— Emerging from a stakeholders' analysis of potential Wild and Scenic Rivers designations for the Grand Junction field office of the BLM was a consensus to modify the boundaries of the Black Ridge Wilderness Area within McInnis Canyons west of Grand Junction. Boundary adjustment legislation

will also include Congressional direction to never again evaluate the lower Colorado River for Wild and Scenic designation and "hard release" language for non-wilderness lands within the recently created Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area.

— The Colorado River District has historically and will continue to advocate for "Good Samaritan" liability protections to those willing to engage in clean up of abandoned mine and mine waste sites.

— The Colorado River District will also continue to support legislative efforts to encourage and provide incentives for installation of hydro-electric power generation on existing infrastructure.

— New and expanded Colorado wilderness proposals seem to be common these days. The Colorado River District will continue to work with wilderness advocates and Congress to add only those lands to the nation's wilderness system that do not adversely affect water development and water rights.

How to contact us

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Board reviews policies on Big River issues

Colorado River District Board policies are reviewed and adopted every three years. Policies must be discussed for at least two quarterly meetings before final Board action.

Directors initiated their policy review at the Jan. 18-19, 2011, meeting with an analysis and discussion of existing policies concerning: Colorado River Compacts, Colorado's Remaining Allocation of Colorado River Basin Water, Interstate Water Marketing and Colo-

rado River Storage Project Act.

The board requested staff to re-draft one policy that would essentially combine two existing policies: Transmountain Water Diversions and Existing Transmountain Diversion Projects. This draft and edits made to the other four policies listed will be presented to the Board at its April 2011 meeting.

Policies under review are available by visiting:

[www.ColoradoRiverDistrict.org/page 9](http://www.ColoradoRiverDistrict.org/page_9). Comments may be directed to: edinfo@crwed.org.

Future meetings

- **Legislative Board Conference Calls:** Every other Friday at noon, starting Feb. 4, 2011
- **March 3, 2011:** Statewide Roundtable Summit, Westminster
- **March 16, 2011:** CRD Executive Committee meeting, Glenwood Springs
- **April 19-20, 2011:** Second quarterly CRD meeting, Glenwood Springs
- **Mid-June (TBD):** Joint meeting with Southwestern Water Conservation District
- **June 13-15:** Colorado Foundation for Water Education Tour of the Colorado River Basin (mainstem).
- **July 19-20, 2011:** Third quarterly CRD meeting, Glenwood Springs
- **July 20-22, 2011:** Western Water Workshop, Western State College, Gunnison
- **Aug. 24-26, 2011:** Colorado Water Congress Summer Convention, Steamboat Springs
- **Sept. 14, 2011:** CRD Board Budget Workshop, Grand Junction
- **Sept. 15, 2011:** Colorado River District Annual Water Seminar, Grand Junction
- **Oct. 18-19, 2011:** Fourth quarterly CRD meeting, Glenwood Springs

Reports on the CRD website

General Counsel Peter Fleming and Associate Counsel Jason V. Turner issued a written report to the Board of Directors. It can be read in its entirety at http://www.crwcd.org/media/uploads/20110118_GC.pdf.

General Manager Eric Kuhn issued reports on Goals and Objectives for 2011 and on the Interbasin Compact Committee. They can be found at http://www.crwcd.org/media/uploads/20110118_RD_goals.pdf, http://www.crwcd.org/media/uploads/20110118_IBCC_memo.pdf and http://www.crwcd.org/media/uploads/20110118_IBCC_report_to_GovRitter.pdf respectively. To view the full agenda and reports from the Jan. 18-19, 2011, meeting, visit [http://www.crwcd.org/page 17](http://www.crwcd.org/page_17).

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