



Colorado River District

75 Years

Protecting Western Colorado Water



MEMORANDUM

JANUARY 5, 2012

**TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS
ERIC KUHN, GENERAL MANAGER**

FROM: DAN BIRCH, DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER

SUBJECT: BASIN ROUNDTABLE PROJECT EXPLORATION COMMITTEE: FLAMING GORGE

We wanted to provide an update on the Flaming Gorge Exploration Committee *This matter is informational and no Board action is requested at this time.*

The Board may recall that last September the Colorado Water Conservation Board approved a grant to explore the Flaming Gorge Pumpback project. The exploration was to be done under the auspices of a committee comprised, in part, of members appointed by each of the basin roundtables. At the time, there was significant opposition to the grant expressed by environmental interests and ultimately what was approved was greatly scaled back from what was initially proposed. Attached is the scope of work for the effort.

Roundtable representatives from the basins of the River District include Kevin McBride and Kai Turner from the Yampa/White, Mel Rettig and Dan Birch from the Colorado, and Rick Brinkman and Ken Spann from the Gunnison. The group intends to appoint additional members representing environmental, recreational, and agricultural interests.

The first meeting of the group was held in December. Unfortunately, because of previous commitments I was not able to attend. The next meeting is scheduled for January 12 in Silverthorne.

We believe the cart is before the horse, and that studying a Flaming Gorge project is premature. Before a particular project is considered, a range of projects should be explored. And before a range of projects is explored, we really need to come to some form of agreement about the amount of a future West Slope transmountain project, the proverbial length of the IBCC's "4th leg of the stool". And before we arrive at the "4th leg" of the stool, we really need to come to terms with Colorado River supply availability and how to deal with the questions of risk that Eric Kuhn has been expressing.

There are a number of other serious questions we have about the project, including how the project would be administered within the states' system of water rights, whether the project

Flaming Gorge Committee

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could be financed, and how the additional depletion could adversely affect recovery and the various biological opinions in Colorado.

We intend to express our views – which fundamentally are in opposition to the project -- and advocate for our interests within the committee. Because the committee's sole focus is project specific, we're likely to be at odds with Front Range interests on the committee.

The River District has already formally opposed the project and recently Grand Junction and Mesa County took action to oppose as well. Others, such as the Upper Yampa District took action to oppose a number of years ago when the project was first proposed by Aaron Million. We have heard through the grapevine that environmental interests are actively seeking additional opposition and we would not be surprised to see more opposition from West Slope entities.

Attachment

Scope of Work

Basin Roundtable Project Exploration Committee: Flaming Gorge Project
Scope of Work
September 21, 2011

Task 1: Identification of Interests and Issues

- Prepare preliminary list of interests and issues based on SWSI 2010 analysis, Flaming Gorge Task Force Situation Assessment interviews, and public comment
- Send preliminary list of interests and issues to IBCC members and roundtable chairs and encourage roundtable discussion (in-person or via email) to identify interests and issues in advance of IBCC discussion
- Work with Director of the IBCC to schedule IBCC discussion to identify additional interests and issues
- Finalize preliminary list of interests and issues for first Project Exploration Committee meeting

Number of Meetings	Cost	Travel Pool for Non-RT Members	RT Member Travel Cost per Person	Deliverable
0	\$500	\$0	\$0	Preliminary list of interests and issues

Task 2: Exploration of Current State of Knowledge Regarding Interests and Issues

- **Logistics**
 - Work with roundtable chairs to ensure that roundtable representatives are identified
 - Convene and facilitate initial meeting of the Committee to finalize participants, develop operating protocols, and determine how to understand a “Flaming Gorge project”
 - Schedule all subsequent meetings, including securing venue, food, and materials as needed
 - Communicate all meeting times and locations to participants and interested parties via email
 - Ensure that all agendas allow for public participation
- **Facilitation of Up to Six Committee Meetings to:**
 - Discuss preliminary list of interests and issues; revise as necessary
 - Prioritize interests and issues for discussion; combine interests and issues as needed
 - Identify and discuss existing documents, reports, and studies that address interests and issues
 - Engage additional stakeholders and experts as needed to inform discussion of existing documents, reports, and studies
 - Engage IBCC in discussion of existing documents, reports, and studies, and work with roundtable representatives to engage full roundtables in this discussion
 - Ensure good-faith effort to incorporate feedback from IBCC, CWCB, roundtables, and the public
 - Seek agreement on 1) list of interests and issues, and 2) range of perspectives/conclusions in existing documents, reports, and studies

Basin Roundtable Project Exploration Committee: Flaming Gorge Project
Scope of Work
September 21, 2011

- **Coordination**
 - Confer as necessary with participants prior to meetings to ensure a focused and productive discussion
 - Work with IBCC director, CWCB staff, roundtable representatives on Committee, and roundtable chairs to ensure regular and meaningful dialogue between Committee and IBCC, IBCC New Supply Subcommittee, and roundtable discussions
 - Work with roundtable representatives on Committee and roundtable chairs to ensure opportunities for feedback at roundtable meetings
 - Ensure regular updates to IBCC, IBCC New Supply Subcommittee, and roundtables and updates from those entities to the Committee as needed
- **Documentation**
 - Prepare draft summaries of all meetings in a timely fashion and distribute to meeting participants to ensure accuracy
 - Finalize meeting summaries to reflect feedback from participants; distribute final meeting summaries to participants and interest parties via email
 - Prepare final report of this task for distribution to IBCC, CWCB, and roundtables including findings that apply to Flaming Gorge only, to any new supply project, and to any source of water (including conservation or IPPs)

Number of Meetings	Cost	Travel Pool for Non-RT Members	RT Member Travel Cost per Person	Deliverable
6	\$30,000	\$1000	\$1000	Report of 1) interests and issues, and 2) range of perspectives/conclusions in existing documents, reports, and studies

Task 3: Exploration of What Would Be Needed to Address Interests and Issues

- **Logistics**
 - Schedule all meetings, including securing venue, food, and materials as needed
 - Communicate all meeting times and locations to participants and interested parties via email
 - Ensure that all agendas allow for public participation
- **Facilitation of Up to Six Committee Meetings to:**
 - Discuss what would be needed to address interests and issues (including additional studies, processes, collaborative discussions, etc.)
 - Engage additional stakeholders and experts as needed to inform discussion of additional work that is needed
 - Engage IBCC to identify additional work that is needed to address interests and issues, and work with roundtable representatives to engage full roundtables in this discussion
 - Ensure good-faith effort to incorporate feedback from IBCC, CWCB, roundtables, and the public

Basin Roundtable Project Exploration Committee: Flaming Gorge Project

Scope of Work

September 21, 2011

- Identify pros and cons of using the Project Exploration Committee as the venue for discussions of specific projects
- Seek agreement on additional work that is needed to address interests and issues above and beyond Task 2
- Discuss ideas and options for next steps regarding the work of the Project Exploration Committee
- Seek agreement on recommended next steps for the Committee
- **Coordination**
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Number of Meetings	Cost	Travel Pool for Non-RT Members	RT Member Travel Cost per Person	Deliverables
6	\$30,000	\$1000	\$1000	1. Report of additional work that is needed to address interests and issues 2. Recommended next steps for Project Exploration Committee (including moving forward or not)

TIMELINE

Complete Task 1	Notice to Proceed + 30 days
Complete Task 2	June 1, 2012
Complete Task 3	December 31, 2012