

White River Integrated Water Initiative

Planning Advisory Committee Meeting

March 25, 2021 6:00p.m. @ RBC Fairgrounds, Meeker, CO

Alden Vanden Brink	Elizabeth Chandler	Linda Masters
Brett Harvey	Forrest Nelson	Mario Sullivan
Callie Hendrickson	Ian Wilson	Ron Reich
Chris Collins	John Kaminsky	Rosalyn Coombs
Colton Brown	John Leary	Stu Massey
David Graf	Kari Brennan	Travis Day
Deirdre Macnab	Kendra Young	Tristan Nielsen
		Walt Proctor

Welcome and Introductions: Facilitator, Linda Masters – CSU Extension Director, welcomed everyone. She reviewed the ground rules and expectations of the meeting.

The purpose of this meeting was to hear updates from the Diversion Structure and Riparian Assessment teams and updates on grant funding and the new coordinator position.

Grant & Coordinator Update: The Conservation Districts were awarded the Water Supply Reserve Fund (WSRF) grant to fund the Coordinator position. They received a few applications for the position and are currently working on finalizing a contract with applicants. The grant will also pay for two workshops/trainings.

Diversion Structure Assessment Committee Update: Kendra Young updated the PAC with progress the committee has made on creating ranking criteria for the (approximately) twenty diversion structure assessments (4 Reaches x 5 Diversions). Fieldwork will be completed during the summer of 2021 and will be completed by an ID team that consists of the same members at each site for consistency. Kendra's diversion structure selection and assessment presentation can be found on the [White River Integrated Water Initiative tab on the Districts' website](#).

- General Diversion Structure Selection Criteria: 1) Structure Size, 2) Water Right Date, 3) Self – Named or Volunteered, and 4) non-consumptive needs (as needed).
- The Committee suggested picking the five largest structures in each reach to start with. The PAC agreed and suggested to also consider the water right priority dates as the second criteria in the ranking. The PAC suggested using the earliest water right as the first and highest priority ranking on Piceance creek.
- Ian suggested considering lower density of structures when prioritizing.
- Discussion was had on making sure the PAC doesn't get involved with diversions that have legal issues such as the diversion being in a significantly different location than the State has it listed. If there are issues with the location of the structure being incorrect, the team can move forward with the assessment as long as it is within 200 ft. of the designated location. Discussion was also had regarding a water right being on the abandonment list. If it is only a partial abandonment, the PAC was comfortable with the assessment being conducted.

- Assessment Criteria will include pictures, structure information, environmental considerations, and water right information.
- The Rio Blanco Water Conservancy District is willing to assist with the lower reach and threatened and endangered species issues, which should be considered in the assessment criteria. They have done some modeling on the middle reach which can be made available for this plan.
- The team will select five structures to start with, but the goal will be to do all the diversion structures that fit into the criteria that they can. Shanna Lewis, Local Water Commissioner, will be consulted when prioritizing structures.
- Personal information related to individual structures will not be made public. A suggestion was made to interview the ditch operator since they will have good insight on the operation of the ditch.

Riparian Health Assessment Committee Update: Mario Sullivan gave a presentation (link) with background information on each reach regarding sinuosity, hydrology, geologic transitions and Rosgen 1994 classifications. Mario's reach assessment Power Point presentation and detailed summary of reach assessments can be found on the [White River Integrated Water Initiative tab on the Districts' website](#).

- A suggestion was made to include Rosgen classifications 1-3 to help in prioritizing.
- Deirdre Macnab provided a link to the local River Watch Group that has up to date information on river flows (https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5cec4f0392a90f00012570c3/t/5ffb8590de3f5f064f6db10a/1610319248700/ClimateTrendsWhiteRiver2021_PDF+%281%29.pdf).
- The PAC agreed that the Diversion Structure and Riparian Health Assessments should NOT be combined. Reason for this is for the sake of the PFC report which should only include the riparian information not the diversion structure information.

Riparian Health Assessment Training Date Suggestions: John Kaminsky and Mario Sullivan will work with a team to schedule a 4-day training in June-July. Two days will be in class and two in the field. John Kaminsky will work with the training team to pick a date that will work for the trainers and students. A suggestion was made that we invite team members first, PAC members next and then landowners if there is still room for attendees. There are approximately 25 slots open for the Riparian Health Assessments.

Diversion Structure Assessment Training Date Suggestions: The Diversion Structure team will work on their ranking criteria then set training dates once they have a plan.

Decisions:

- a. How will the assessments be utilized: This discussion item will be on the next PAC meeting agenda as it needed more discussion time than we had at this meeting.
- b. Include Technical Advisors to the PAC including BLM, USFS, and NRCS: The PAC suggested that we include the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), US Forest Service (USFS), and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and maybe United States Geological Survey (USGS) as Technical Advisors on the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC).

PAC Next Steps: The two committees will continue working on ranking criteria for their assessments and coordinating their respective trainings to prepare for the assessments.

Next Meeting: To be determined. The next meeting date will be dictated by the sub-committees and their progress on preparing for the assessments.