

~~~ *Gunnison Basin Roundtable* ~~~

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GUNNISON BASIN ROUNDTABLE EDUCATION ACTION PLAN – 2015-2020

Educational Goals for 2014, and strategies to meet them

The Gunnison Basin Roundtable PEPO Liaison will work with partners in the Gunnison Basin to address these public education, participation and outreach goals, primarily associated with the GBRT Basin Implementation Plan and the ensuing draft Colorado Water Plan:

GOAL 1: Ensure that Basin economic and cultural groups involved with water resources, as well as the general citizenry, are getting ample information about, and opportunities for input into, the Basin Implementation Plan, and ultimately, the Colorado Water Plan.

STRATEGIES: (a) Liaison with the Wilson Water Group (contractor to the GBRT) to set up focus groups, community meetings, or more informal “coffees” with groups from whom input is needed or desired.

(b) Continue collaboration with the Water Center at Colorado Mesa University on the dissemination of information about the BIP through media articles, op-ed essays, et cetera. (*Water Center grant funds available*)

(c) Continue collaboration with the Water Center at Colorado Mesa University on a website with opportunities to easily respond to specific questions about matters on which input is needed or desired. (Information about the website and surveys is noted in the articles and op-ed pieces.) (*Water Center grant funds available as needed*)

(d) Request that all Roundtable members host at least one meeting with the organization or group of organizations they represent, to inform said organization(s) about the BIP as it nears completion, and to seek their personal and group input. Work with the Water Center at CMU to prepare a short Powerpoint presentation to be used with such meetings.

GOAL 2: Identify the “movers and shakers” in the Basin – decision-makers and opinion-shapers – and develop a process for regularly and formally seeking their input on the evolving draft plans.

STRATEGIES: (a) Have GBRT members identify the movers and shakers in their part of the Basin; then compile a list for a regular mailing, with an invitation to participate in a “movers and shakers group” by responding with an email address. The mailing will include another copy of the “Gunnison River Basin Handbook.”

(b) Generate 3-5 one-page newsletters summarizing progress in the planning process, to be emailed to this group, with several specific questions on which input is desired, and a link to an easy-to-access response tool (not on the DNR/CWCB webfiche site).

(c) If the contractor or GBRT discussion indicates it might be desirable for a particular sub-basin, generate focus groups or more informal “coffees” bringing together the movers and shakers from that sub-basin to discuss an issue on which there is some tension or some input needed.

GOAL 3: Engage the “next generation” of Gunnison Basin water users and river lovers in the planning process, since the execution of a water plan with a 2050 horizon will ultimately fall on them.

STRATEGIES: (a) Collaborate with the Center for Environmental and Sustainable Studies at Western State Colorado University and the Water Center at Colorado Mesa University, and other relevant programs at both colleges, to identify courses for which a slate of outside speakers from the water community might be identified and committed to presentations.

(b) Develop internship programs with Western State Colorado College and Colorado Mesa University, with at least two types of internships: one, communications internships for students with good communication skills, to develop website material and other materials for local media and social media that will “speak”

to the younger mind and point toward the ambiguous future; and the second, “community organizer” internships for students with good people skills and organizing ability, to put together work groups from the public schools and community for labor-intensive riparian, wet-meadow and other restoration work.

(c) Identify and work with external groups who are attempting to address the same problem of engaging young people. Example: the “Protect Our Winters” group of winter-sport athletes presenting assembly programs for public schools on the need to take seriously climate change.

(d) Identify and work with a cadre of middle and high school science, geography and social studies teachers who are interested in developing water-education units. Offer “blank-check” mini-grants (\$100-200) to public school teachers to help them develop such units. (NOTE: The Upper Gunnison River District is trying such a program of mini-grants.)

GOAL 4: Explore new ways of taking on the task of getting the general citizenry to more seriously and continuously keep up with their own and the regional water situation, and to actively participate in addressing that situation.

STRATEGIES: (a) Find partners in the “right-brain” parts of the community – artists, art administrators, librarians, humanities scholars, et cetera – with whom programs can be developed awakening people’s usually unarticulated passions for water and the rivers from which the water comes. Example: follow the “Our River, Our Valley” project that will be executed spring, summer and fall of 2014 in a partnership between the Gunnison Arts Center and the Upper Gunnison River District.

(b) Add water-related “reading lists,” book reviews, essays and the like, to organizational websites for those more introverted (and often more thoughtful) individuals for whom reading provides access to the imagination.

Roundtable Involvement in Education Action Plan

GBRT members are asked to participate in the execution of this plan in two ways:

- The BIP is discussed by the full Roundtable at every meeting; this identifies areas in which more Roundtable education is needed if the members are to be successful advocates for the planning process among their constituents.
- The PEPO Liaison seeks feedback from Roundtable members on education actions proposed, and responses and participation from them on actions undertaken.
- They are providing the names and contact information for the “movers and shakers” in their communities, organizations or sub-basins, in order to assemble that essential group for plan input.
- They will be responsible for setting up meetings in their communities, organizations or sub-basins when the plan is nearing completion, to obtain grassroots input on the work.

Partnerships

Partnerships with local organizations are indicated in the Strategies above for each goal.

Budget (for \$2,000 CWCB funds)

Travel and lodging as necessary for PEPO Coordinator	1,000
Travel for other RT members to do BIP presentations	500
Miscellaneous (refreshments for focus groups, copying, etc.)	<u>500</u>
Total	\$2,000

Grants obtained by the Colorado Mesa University Water Center will cover some of the strategies discussed above.