

~~~ *Gunnison Basin Roundtable* ~~~

Michelle Pierce – Chair

George Sibley – Public Education, Participation and Outreach Liaison

PEPO LIAISON REPORT: 2015 WATER YEAR

Review of Educational Goals for 2015, with progress or lack of indicated:

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.

REPORT: Seven meetings were held in all areas of the Gunnison Basin in 2015 prior to the deadline for the second submission of the GBIP. Guides to both the GBIP and the CWP were prepared and distributed.

(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*)

REPORT: Numerous articles and op-eds were written, primarily by Hannah Holm of the CMU Water Center, others by George Sibley, and were published in newspapers throughout the Basin. A series of “Quick Guides” to the GBIP and CWP were distributed, primarily electronically but also in paper format at public meetings.

(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*)

REPORT: The CMU Water Center website was used to distribute information about the water planning process, and it was also used to conduct a survey of attitudes about water development.

(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.

REPORT: This was achieved to some degree, but by no means completely. Meetings with constituents were, however, held in each of the river sub-basins.

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.”

REPORT: Barely begun in some sub-basins, not at all in others.

(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).

REPORT: Three different “Quick Guides” to the water planning process, and how to submit input, were published, in electronic and paper forms, at different stages of the planning process: following release of the first CWP draft, following completion of the second GBIP draft, and prior to submission of second CWP draft.

(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.

REPORT: Neither requested nor done.

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.

REPORT: *There has been interaction with the new Masters in Environmental Management program at WSCU; they hosted a meeting on the CWP, and have members working with different water organizations in the Upper Gunnison River basin.*

(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.

REPORT: *The Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District took on two interns with those job descriptions, but with very indifferent results; the program needs more development.*

(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.

REPORT: *Efforts made to work with “Protect Our Winters” but without success; a meeting with some students at WSCU about developing such a program went nowhere.*

(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.)

REPORT: *Three teachers from the Gunnison Watershed School District and one swimming instructor from the Gunnison Recreation Department have pursued water-related topics thanks to UGRWCD mini-grants; Upper Gunnison water leaders expect the program to grow.*

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.

REPORT: *The “Our River, Our Valley” Upper Gunnison Valley Journal (published late in 2014) has been an ongoing success, in terms of broadening people’s perspective on water as something more or different than a topic of concern.*

(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.

REPORT: *Nothing done yet on this.*

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.