

**Southwestern Water Conservation District
Board of Directors Meeting – Teleconference
April 30, 2014**

Present: John Porter, President † Steve Fearn, Vice-President† Bob Wolff, Secretary-Treasurer
Preston Goetzke† Rusty Hinger† Monte Naslund†

Absent: Fred Kroeger, Emeritus J.R. Ford Jenny Russell
Doug Stowe

Staff: Bruce Whitehead, SWCD Executive Director†
Laura Spann, SWCD Office Manager
Steve Harris, Harris Water Engineering
Barry Spear, Maynes, Bradford, Shipps & Sheftel (MBSS)

Guests: Darlene Marcus, Field Rep. For Congressman Scott Tipton†
John Taylor, Former SWCD Board Member†

†Participated by phone.

President John Porter called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. Roll was taken and a quorum was present.

Questions/Comments from Audience

There were none.

New Business

Legislative Update & Position on Bills

The Colorado Water Congress (CWC) State Affairs Committee met on April 21 to discuss water-related legislation. Bruce Whitehead explained the bills and relayed CWC discussion to the board. He referenced the most recent Legislative Report: #2014-12. The following bills were discussed:

HB 1332 – South Platte River Basin Water Management

CWC voted to oppose the bill, and SWCD abstained. Funding would have come from the Water Supply Reserve Account. The bill was killed on the House floor.

SB 188 – Species Conservation Trust Fund

CWC voted to support this bill, which would appropriate funding for programs designed to conserve threatened or endangered native species.

SB 195 – South Platte River Phreatophyte Growth Study

CWC has not taken a position on this bill, which would direct the Colorado Water Conservation Board to evaluate the growth of phreatophytes (deep-rooted plants that absorb water from the water table) along the South Platte River.

SB 198 – Mineral Extraction Study Group

Senator Schwartz has withdrawn this bill.

SB 023 – Transfer Water Efficiency Savings to Instream Use

CWC and SWCD support the bill, while the Colorado River Water Conservation District and Farm Bureau oppose it. Bruce testified before the House Agriculture, Livestock and Natural Resources Committee on March 31. The bill has not yet gone to a vote.

CWC Federal Affairs Committee Update

CWC Federal Affairs Committee met on April 20 and discussed the following topics:

- The Farm Bill has moved forward, which includes a Regional Conservation Partnership Program that would provide funding for water-related projects.
- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has proposed a new definition of the “waters of the United States,” and the 90-day comment period is now open. A “Waters of the U.S.” Working Group is being formed to prepare comments for submission. Board members expressed interested in participating in the Working Group. Staff will review whether board action is required to participate, or if funds have already been budgeted under the Colorado River Coalition.

Announcements

Bruce Whitehead made the following announcements:

- SWCD budgeted \$1,500 to support the Colorado Foundation for Water Education’s President’s Reception, which Steve Fearn will attend on May 2.
- Estevan Lopez, Director of the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission, will be nominated for Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation. There was consensus to direct staff to submit a letter of support for Lopez’s confirmation.
- The Thompson-Epperson Ditch Company and the Sullivan Ditch Company may come before the board to request funding for ditch maintenance and repair.
- The Florida Water Conservancy District may come before the board to request funding related to the proposed listing of the New Mexico Jumping Mouse as an endangered species and the designation of its critical habitat. There was discussion.

Darlene Marcus, Field Representative for Rep. Scott Tipton, reported that the Colorado Congressional Delegation has sent a letter to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Director Daniel Ashe requesting a six-month extension on the proposed listing of the Gunnison Sage Grouse. She also mentioned that the public comment period for the proposal to list the Western Yellow-Billed Cuckoo as a threatened species ended on April 25. Part of the bird’s habitat is in Colorado. There was discussion.

Barry Spear reported on the proposed amendment to the Colorado Open Meetings Law. It has always been the right of a citizen to recover attorney fees if there is a violation of the law. It will not have any effect on how board meetings or executive session are conducted.

Bruce reminded the board of the following dates:

- Bruce will speak at an Agricultural Hydropower Workshop on Monday, May 19 from 6:30-9:00 p.m.
- SWCD will host the 2014 Weather Modification Workshop on Thursday, May 15 from 10:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
- The Southwest Basin Roundtable will meet on Wednesday, May 14 in Cortez.
- The Children’s Water Festival will take place on Wednesday, May 7 at Ft. Lewis College.
- The Colorado Water Workshop will be held June 18-20 in Gunnison. Rusty and Preston plan to attend.
- Bruce will present to the Leadership La Plata Group on water issues at Friday, May 2.
- Bruce will present to local college students on the Hermosa Creek Watershed Act on Thursday, May 1.

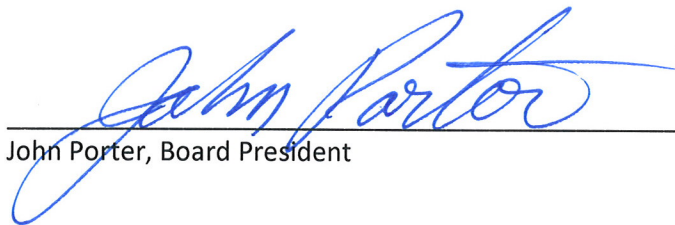
Next Meetings

Wednesday, May 14	9:00am	Teleconference
Wednesday, June 11	10:00am	Special Regular Board Meeting

Wednesday, August 13	10:00am	Special Regular Board Meeting
Wednesday, October 8	10:00am	Special Regular Board Meeting

Adjournment

President John Porter adjourned the meeting at 9:45 a.m.



John Porter, Board President