

**Southwestern Water Conservation District  
Board of Directors Meeting – Teleconference  
May 14, 2014**

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

**Absent:** Fred Kroeger, Emeritus      J.R. Ford

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

**Guests:** Christine Arbogast, Kogovsek & Associates†  
Ken Curtis, Dolores Water Conservancy District†  
John Taylor, Former SWCD Board Member†  
John Whitney, Field Rep. for Senator Michael Bennet

*†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**

John Taylor, former SWCD board member, provided background on Crowley Reservoir, a privately-owned project located in New Mexico. The reservoir, which supplies water to many irrigators near Chromo, Colorado, has been declared out of compliance by the New Mexico State Engineer's Office. John met with the Upper San Juan Chama Conservation District (NM), which has not yet committed to be the fiscal agent for reservoir repair. John has spoken with various possible funding sources in Colorado and New Mexico.

### **New Business**

#### **Colorado River Basin Critical Conservation Area (Letter of Support)**

John Whitney provided background on the development of the Farm Bill, and the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). At least 35% of the total available program funding will be designated for eight Critical Conservation Areas (CCAs) nationwide, yet to be selected by Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack. Should the Colorado River basin be chosen as a CCA, there may be \$10-15 million dollars available per year for water-related projects in the basin. Secretary Vilsack will choose the eight CCAs by the end of May. Steve Fearn moved to direct staff to send a letter of support for the designation of the Colorado River Basin as a CCA. Monte Naslund seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **Lake Nighthorse Recreation Update**

John Whitney reported that Senators Udall and Bennet will be submitting a letter to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) urging timely action on recreation management at Lake Nighthorse. BOR will host a public meeting on recreation on June 18 at the Durango Community Recreation Center.

**CSU Summer Water Bank Intern**

Steve Harris explained that the Colorado River Water Conservation District (River District) has requested financial assistance from the Water Bank Working Group participants to support a summer water bank intern from Colorado State University. There was discussion. Monte Naslund moved to disburse \$1,500 to the River District to partially fund a summer water bank intern. Steve Fearn seconded. The motion passed.

**Legislative Update & Position on Bills**

The 2014 State Legislative Session ended on May 7. Bruce Whitehead explained water-related legislation and relayed the Colorado Water Congress (CWC) State Affairs Committee’s discussions to the board. CWC had a 90% success rate for 2014. Bruce referenced the most recent bill status report. The following bills were discussed:

**SB 017 – Limit Use of Ag Water for Lawn Irrigation**

SWCD and the Southwest Basin Roundtable supported the bill. The bill will be discussed in the Interim Water Resources Review Committee over the summer.

**SB 023 – Transfer Water Efficiency Savings to Instream Use**

CWC and SWCD supported the bill, while the River District and Farm Bureau opposed the bill. The bill passed and is awaiting signature.

**SB 103 – Phase in High Efficiency Fixture**

CWC and SWCD supported the bill. The bill passed and is awaiting signature. Mike Preston wrote a letter supporting signature by the Governor on behalf of the Southwest Basin Roundtable.

**Public Trust Ballot Initiatives**

Bruce Whitehead reported on the public trust ballot initiatives (#89 and #103). CWC has appealed both titles with the Colorado Supreme Court. Meanwhile, proponents can begin collecting signatures. More than 50 entities have adopted resolutions in opposition to the public trust doctrine.

**Federal Affairs**

**California Emergency Drought Relief Act of 2014**

Bruce Whitehead reported on progress with the California Emergency Drought Relief Act, which has been narrowed again to primarily drought-related issues and possible projects in California, but it may include some benefits for the Upper Colorado River basin.

**“Waters of the U.S.” Working Group Participation**

Christine Arbogast gave background on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)’s proposed definition of the “waters of the United States.” The 90-day comment period is now open. A working group is being formed to request an extension and submit comments in opposition to the rule. Jeff Kane, MBSS, reported that their firm has been reviewing the rule on behalf of SWCD and will have a memo for the next board meeting. Steve Fearn moved to support the working group through the CWC in the amount of \$1,500. Bob Wolff seconded. The motion passed. There was consensus to discuss SWCD’s further review of the rule via MBSS at the June board meeting.

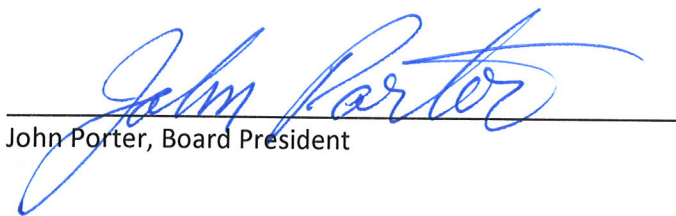
**Next Meetings**

Wednesday, June 11	10:00am	Special Regular Board Meeting
Wednesday, August 13	10:00am	Special Regular Board Meeting
Thursday, September 18	12:00pm	Joint Board Meeting River District (Montrose Holiday Express)
Wednesday, October 8	10:00am	Special Regular Board Meeting

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## Adjournment

President John Porter adjourned the meeting at 10:15 a.m.



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John Porter, Board President