

**RPW Steering Committee  
Regional Discussion  
Meeting Summary  
FINAL  
February 25, 2015**

**In Attendance**

Jimbo Buickerood (San Juan Citizens Alliance) Steve Fearn, Bruce Whitehead, Preston Groetzke (Southwestern Water Conservation District), Ann Oliver (conservation) Jeff Widen (The Wilderness Society), Chuck Wanner (Trout Unlimited) On phone: John Taylor (Hinsdale County), George Rossman (for Congressman Scott Tipton). Marsha Porter-Norton, facilitator, Tami Graham, recorder.

**Proposed Outcomes**

- Continue to work to potentially attain an agreement in principle related to a regional package.
- To develop a list of shared interests
- Clarify next steps for moving forward including potential of a smaller group meeting before reconvening the larger group.

Introductions and a brief review of ground rules and process principles was conducted by facilitator. The agenda was approved by all in attendance

**Observer comments:** None.

**How to move forward?**

Review of major interests:

- Durable and permanent protections
- Taking care of and protecting values
- Protect existing water rights and ability to develop water
- To be successful and to look good
- Maintain healthy water quality,
- Maintain ecological systems
- Maintain healthy watersheds and forest health
- Limit conflict between state and federal laws
- Follow through on forest plan decisions regarding ORV's
- Ecological, social and economic balance
- Pragmatic on-the-ground solutions
- A level of conservation that is "sellable"
- A product that is clear and requires implementation, not perceived as a government over-reach.

Marsha asked for any additional interests not reflected above. The following interests were named:

- Maintain agricultural viability including grazing
- Economic viability (timber, mining, outfitting, recreation)
- Those reflected in the values statements from the workgroups

Comments:

- Steve feels he has an interest in all interests mentioned
- Bruce asked if Marsha had gone back and compared this list of

interests to those from the workgroups. She has not but said we could pull stated interests from all five workgroups and one document, for reference.

### **RPW Regional Package: Agreement in Principle**

A review and discussion of the Agreement in Principle document occurred. A summary of this discussion to be reflected in the updated Agreements in Principle document, which will be disseminated with this summary.

General comments:

- Bruce wanted to reflect that there may be water rights issues (Tall Timber Ditch) that had an alternate point of diversion on Grasshopper Creek, for note for future. - Bruce asked Suzanne to confirm that.
- Ann remembers that the group did identify a water right on Grasshopper, near the confluence with the Animas.
- Marsha asked the group to make sure and review the summary of issues and concerns document that Tami put together, as related to the regional discussion and various proposals to date.
- Jimbo recalled that the steering committee had previously agreed to leave the upper San Juan alone in this process, asking if it's being brought up again in order to play a role in finding a regional agreement. Others disagreed that the group had agreed to leave it alone. To be discussed further at a future meeting.

### **Where does the group go from here?**

Process steps for moving forward discussed.

Options:

- a) Continue as a 'big' group working out the agreement. Note: If a, is the course of action, determine methods for meeting structure and processes related to how to move forward. (The facilitator will bring 2-3 ideas about process steps that could be used either in this meeting or at a future meeting.)
- b) Form a small group to see if agreement can be obtained, which would be brought back to the 'bigger' group for vetting and perhaps approval. Note: If b is the option selected, the group will need to appoint the smaller committee.
- c) Other

Discussion:

- o Jimbo: if we're trying to maximize the possibilities of getting somewhere, probably fewer people are more likely to have that result. Smaller may be better for furthering discussion.
- o Ann: Supportive of a smaller group.
- o Bruce: Felt small group was the way to go as discussed at last meeting. Marsha said the group wasn't opposed to the idea but wasn't sure they wanted to go there until broad Agreements in Principle in place.

Action: The steering committee agreed in full to move forward with a smaller group for now.

Who should be involved in smaller group?

- Ann: From her interest stand point, she can live with any of the components on the table. She is not arguing for or against a particular component. Would like to see a smaller group work out the final differences.
- Suzanne: would like to offer to assist in any way possible, as a resource related to other basins and their work, technical support, etc.
- Matt: Also willing to be technical support moving forward.

Action: It was agreed that the members of the small group to include Jimbo, Jeff, Chuck, Steve, John Taylor (volunteered by Steve).

- Jimbo: Assumption that any other members of steering committee that could provide technical support, would do so.
- Marsha said that John Whitney is willing to not be on the small group, especially since Darlene is not available right now.
- CWCB, Parks & Wildlife, FS, congressional representatives all available for technical support, as needed.

Action: It was agreed that the charge of the smaller group is to work through page 3 of Agreements in Principle and see if additional agreements may be gained in relation to a regional package. The small group will report back to the full steering committee. The small group will be as highly efficient as possible in their work and reporting back to larger group. Adaptive management could emerge as a discussion item for the small group.

Timeline for smaller group

- Bruce: Lets set a goal of a timeframe and a check-in with larger workgroup. If resolution not met in a few meetings, re-group with steering committee.
- Steve: Have a work session and come back.

It was agreed that the second to third week of April is the timeframe when the smaller group would report back to the full steering committee. Marsha will send out a Doodle poll regarding meeting dates for the smaller group. Marsha suggests meeting every two weeks with a total of 3-4 meetings. Will look at first meeting occurring next week. John Taylor will be back the week of March 16<sup>th</sup>.

## **Review of Minutes**

December 15, 2014:

- Bruce asked if there was any word from any other members regarding contributions to the regional discussion. Chuck asked to have Marsha find out when TU put money in last.
- Minutes approved as presented.

February 5, 2015:

- Jeff edits to page 5: "purple" should be changed to "purpose"....

- Other than that note, minutes approved as presented.

**Observer comments:**

Mark:

- Regarding the reference to use “on-the-ground” realities to find agreements, feels there’s some imperfect language there. Existing law prohibits diversions or other water development within the Piedra area as it relates to the Piedra mainstem. Should be more precise about what segment we’re talking about. Same language applies from Whitehead Gulch to Cascade Creek on the Animas because of the Weminuche Wilderness boundary. Can’t put in any water resource facilities there now. Some of these prohibitions are not new, they are legal existing prohibitions that should be factored in to our decisions.
- Much of the McCarthy property on East Fork has federal minerals, as such there is a federal interest. Needs to be factored into consideration if we’re looking at changing existing suitability findings.
- Regarding the possible removal of eligibility, as stated on the Agreements in Principle document – eligibility is a reality on the ground, defined by the character of the landscape. With roadless areas being defined out of existence, if we’re talking about defining eligibility out of existence, it’s a fact of the landscape. Suggested that when we say “removal of eligibility and suitability” what we’re really meaning is removal of the finding of suitability, not eligibility.
- Bruce: On Piedra, setbacks are just on the west side of the river. Could be wrong about that. On the Animas, the Wilderness boundary comes within ¼ mile of the river. Mark stated that is not correct, that the setback it’s at the river’s edge. Marsha stated that this needs to be researched. Needs follow-up and clarification.
- Preston: Asked Mark for clarification of the boundary of Piedra area. Preston clarified that Little Sand Creek dumps into Weminuche Creek.
- Jeff: We can bring in the Forest Service to clarify some of the points Mark and Bruce discussed. If a recommendation from a workgroup comes forward, we should reference if protections are already in place, to Mark’s point. Have FS bring in maps.

**Recap of meeting by Marsha:**

- Group has developed a list of major interests;
- Reiteration of the importance of reviewing the interest-based negotiation handout;
- Updates to the Agreements in Principle document. Will send the group the updated version.
- Marsha will send out Doodle poll for a meeting of smaller group next week;
- Goal of smaller group is to reach resolution, not just report progress to larger workgroup, by second or third week of April;
- Need to get information from FS regarding setbacks in Wilderness areas;

Meeting observer(s): Mark Pearson