

**PURGATOIRE RIVER WATER CONSERVANCY DISTRICT  
MINUTES, THURSDAY, March 2, 2023**

**Board Meeting:** Purgatoire River Water Conservancy District monthly meeting was held on Thursday, March 2, 2023, at 7:00 P.M. City Hall Chambers, Trinidad, CO.81082

**Directors Present:**

Tom Verquer, Frank Milinazzo, Joey DeGarbo, David Philpott, Tony Paradisa, Jeremy Yoder, Jarrod Tortorelli, Joe Amato & Daryl Aubuchon

**Directors Absent:** None

**District Staff:**

Steve Kastner; General Manager, Connie Mantelli; District Secretary

**Guests:**

Kim Falen (Corps of Engineers, Jeff Montoya (Water Commissioner), Sammie Molinaro, Michael Yoder (Enlarged South Side Ditch)

**Enterprise Account**

There was no activity reported at this time

**Regular Monthly Board Meeting**

Tom Verquer made a motion to accept the minutes of the February 2023 meeting. Joe Amato seconded the motion which was voted upon and passed.

Jarrold Tortorelli made a motion to approve the Financial Statements and Cash Disbursements for the February 2023 as printed. Frank Milinazzo seconded the motion which was voted upon and passed.

**Chairman's Report:**

Nothing to report at this time

**NRCS:**

Sammie Molinaro gave an update on the Whiskey Creek SnowTel site

As of 5:00 pm March 2, 2023 there was 6" of measurable water and 24" of snow. This is an 83% snow pack as of July 1, which is the start of the Colorado water year.

When measuring at Cuchara pass, the NRCS staff hit ice. Hopefully this means that there is water on the horizon when the melt off begins.

The Apishipa currently measures 3" of water and 8" of snow. The Arkansas Basin is currently at 78% of normal. This area measures the worst in the state. That being said, the state of Colorado as a whole is at 110%.

### **District Manager's Report – March 2, 2023**

#### **A. Trinidad Reservoir and PRWCD Operations Report**

- The total content of Trinidad Reservoir on February 28th was 23,074 acre-feet. A net increase of 958 acre-feet from the end of the previous month. This net increase is due to Non-Irrigation Season storage.
- The Project Account currently contains 4,588 acre-feet. An increase during the preceding month of 648 acre-feet.
- The Model Account currently contains 2,123 acre-feet. An increase during the preceding month of 324 acre-feet.
- The Joint Use Pool currently contains 2,936 acre-feet.
- The Permanent Fishery Pool currently contains 13,427 acre-feet.
- Purgatoire River computed inflows into Trinidad Reservoir averaged 18 cubic feet per second for the month of February. The long-term average flows at this gage site for February are 23 cfs.
- February precipitation in Trinidad was 0.35 inches. Average February precipitation is 0.38 inches.
- No stock water release or other releases occurred from Trinidad Reservoir during February. Releases are being scheduled for March as work on the Baca/Picketwire Ditch diversion dam and erosion control wall continue, sediment

removal work by the City of Trinidad under the Commercial Street bridge begins and the Model Canal new headgate installation work was completed.

### **B. General Information**

The District received the Acreage Verification Report from the Division Engineer's Office on February 13<sup>th</sup>. Initial review indicates that there may be some parcels indicating as being irrigated during the 2022 season that were not actually irrigated. Review of this information is ongoing.

A new Rubicon headgate has been installed on the Model Canal. The installation occurred on February 28 & March 1<sup>st</sup>. The installation went generally as planned. This headgate was installed on the west opening of the diversion wall for the Model Canal.

Installation of a new Rubicon headgate on the Hoehne Ditch was also begun. This headgate installation should be finished by the end of March.

Installation of the solar panels and antenna was also completed on the Enlarged Southside Ditch. These components were not available during the November 2022 installation of the two headgates on this ditch.

The District is still awaiting final approval and contracting for its applied for WaterSmart grant funds for the purchase and installation of the new headgates for the Picketwire and John Flood Ditches.

The District did participate in a Bureau of Reclamation webinar on February 6<sup>th</sup> concerning a new bureau grant program similar to its WaterSmart grants. This grant funding opportunity provides for up to 75% cost funding up to 6 million dollars for projects that include significant ecological improvement aspects.

Colorado Legislative Updates. Three legislative efforts were included in the board's meeting packets. One providing for agricultural equipment repairs to be able to be conducted by independent repair facilities. One for funding a task force to

evaluate the potential for high altitude snow water storage reservoirs. This bill may be related to the lagged benefits of snowmaking. And a third effort (not introduced yet) to provide for stream channel restoration work crafted apparently to not conflict with existing water law.

The District received its annual operations, maintenance, and replacement invoice from the Corps of Engineers on February 1<sup>st</sup>. Per this invoice this bill is due April 1. This invoice was for \$209,002. For several financial reasons of the District and the ditch companies, the District has requested on February 2<sup>nd</sup> an extension of the due date from the Bureau of Reclamation of this invoice until August 31<sup>st</sup> which date has been the due date for this invoice in recent years. No reply has been provided yet to this Repayment Contract modification request.

The District has not yet received its construction loan repayment invoice from the Bureau of Reclamation for 2022. This invoice is typically provided during the month of December.

The District and the City of Trinidad continue discussions on the city's proposed conditional right of exchange from its WWTP upstream to Trinidad Reservoir. A settlement conference scheduled for January 25 was cancelled. Applicant is to provide a new proposed decree by February 8 with another settlement conference by February 28<sup>th</sup>. The city missed its February 8 deadline for a new proposed decree and an end of February conference call.

The District did file its water court application for reasonable diligence on the remaining conditional portion of the District's Joint Use Water Storage right in Trinidad Reservoir on January 12, 2023. The case number is 23CW3000. Publication of the application will occur in February and with any statements of opposition due by March 31. So far, the only inquiry has been from the Division Engineer's Office seeking confirmation that the District has the authority to store water in the Joint Use Pool. The District forwarded a copy of the District - US Department of Interior repayment contract confirming this authority of the District.

Arkansas Basin Roundtable February Meeting. Topics of interests were CWCB programs for urban turf lawn replacement funding. Under this program, municipal or water supplier entities are provided

funds to incentivize residents to replace their turf grass lawns with more Colorado climate appropriate landscaping. Uncertain to what extent this effort may entail property easements. Another topic was Colorado Springs Utilities partnering with farmers under the Fort Lyon Canal to install center pivot sprinkler systems and for the water savings through efficiency improvements to be shared between the farmers and Colorado Springs Utilities. This project is just beginning and will ultimately require Water Court approval.

**Secretary's Report:**

Connie Mantelli advised the Board of an invitation from the Spanish Peaks Soil Conservation District. The SPSCD will hold their annual meeting on May 3, 2023 from 5-7:30 pm. The location will be announced soon. Phil Brink, Colorado Cattlemen's Ag Water NetWORK Consulting Coordinator will be speaking. Some of the topics to be discussed will be funding for agriculture and water projects in Colorado. There is no cost for the event and dinner will be served. Everyone is encouraged to attend.

Connie informed the Board that the District's liability insurance policy is to be renewed in May. As part of the current policy the District has each ditch's head gates insured. Steve and Connie discussed whether the newly installed automatic gates should be included in the policy or if each ditch should be required to insure them. Due to the fact that the gates were funded with government grants, they need to be covered for any damage that may incur. If the District adds the new gates to their policy the premium will remain the same. Connie suggested that since the District is willing to include the gates on our policy, would the ditches agree to cover the deductible if any claims are made? The board members agreed that that would be acceptable. Connie will research the amount of the deductible and distribute this information to the ditches. Connie and Steve asked that the Ditch presidents address this with their boards and report back to the District by the April 6, 2023 PRWCD meeting.

Ms. Mantelli reminded the Board that beginning in April the PRWCD Board Meetings will begin at 7:30 pm.

**Water Commissioner's Report:**

Jeff Montoya reported that he had attended a mega meeting in February. They discussed the Bar NI electric plant. This is the

3<sup>rd</sup> year they have requested flow diversions. The division engineer decided they needed a reliable source of water for the initial fill of their penstock, which they received from the City of Trinidad. A temporary 5-year agreement was granted. They will have to go through the water court for a permanent agreement. Jeff and Ed have been gearing up for the 2023 irrigation season. They will be checking all of the flumes in the district making sure they are cleaned and cleared of debris and sediment before irrigation water is released.

Mr. Montoya reported that the Chilili ditch measuring equipment has not been transmitting correctly. It appears that there has been some vandalism on the solar panels. It should be fixed soon. Jeff has been dealing with staff from the Fisher's Peak State Park regarding augmentation. This is an issue that should be resolved soon.

He has also been recently involved in discussions with the City of Trinidad. A City is trying to get a water dispensary back in working order for use by the public. This is the located next to the Trinidad city garage.

**Corp of Engineers:**

Kim Falen had nothing to report at this time.

**City of Trinidad:**

No One present

**Purgatoire Watershed Project**

No one Present

**Other Business:**

Tom Verquer made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Joe Amato seconded the motion. The motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 6, 2023 at 7:30 pm.

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**Connie Mantelli, Secretary**