

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

Board Meeting: Purgatoire River Water Conservancy District monthly meeting was held on Thursday, February 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, Jarrod Tortorelli and Joe Amato & Daryl Aubuchon

Directors Absent: Jeremy Yoder

District Staff:

Steve Kastner; General Manager, Connie Mantelli; District Secretary

Guests:

Kim Falen (Corps of Engineers, Jeff Montoya (Water Commissioner), Julie Knudsen (PWP), Sammie Molinaro

Enterprise Account

There was no activity reported at this time

Regular Monthly Board Meeting

Jarrold Tortorelli made a motion to accept the minutes of the January 2023 meeting. Tom Verquer seconded the motion which was voted upon and passed.

Joe Amato made a motion to approve the Financial Statements and Cash Disbursements for the January 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 and Cuchara snow course measured on Friday January 27th, 2023. We

are currently at 60% water content. Cuchara pass measured at 12" of snowpack; 2' of that is water.

The National Weather Service has predicted March and April to have a measurable amount of snowfall which will impact the amount of moisture available in the rivers.

NRCS has a program for canals and ditches under the watershed operations program. If interested come and see him for more information (see handout). Please call the NRCS office for an appointment to make sure that I am there in the Trinidad Office.

Sammie reported that the NRCS is now done with programs and is working on applications that came in before December 1st, 2023. He expects additional dollars to come in later this year for all of their programs.

Farm Service Agency

As far as the Grasslands Program, there has been no announcement yet. But they do expect something in this area soon.

NRCS Staff are keeping their fingers crossed that additional Federal staff employees in Trinidad and Walsenburg offices will be hired to deal with the heavy workload in both offices. Two new employees from Bird Observatory of the Rockies will start sometime in March. Both have offices and wildlife, rangeland or forestry backgrounds. Two new Federal Employees; one in Walsenburg and one in Springfield have been helping the Trinidad office with the rangeland workload in Eastern Las Animas County.

District Manager's Report – February 2, 2023

A. Trinidad Reservoir and PRWCD Operations Report

- The total content of Trinidad Reservoir on January 31st was 22,116 acre-feet. A net increase of 1,188 acre-feet from the end of the previous month. This net increase is due to Non-Irrigation Season storage.
- The Project Account currently contains 3,940 acre-feet. An increase during December of 792 acre-feet.
- The Model Account currently contains 1,799 acre-feet. An increase during November of 396 acre-feet.
- The Joint Use Pool currently contains 2,939 acre-feet.

- The Permanent Fishery Pool currently contains 13,437 acre-feet.
- Purgatoire River computed inflows into Trinidad Reservoir averaged 19 cubic feet per second for the month of January. The long-term average flows at this gage site for January are 23 cfs. Purgatoire River at Madrid stream gage flows were not used due to ice effects on the gage.
- January precipitation in Trinidad was 0.72 inches. Average January precipitation is 0.38 inches.
- No stock water release or other releases occurred from Trinidad Reservoir during January. Releases are being scheduled for March as work on the Baca/Picketwire Ditch diversion dam and erosion control wall continue.

B. NRCS Public Law 566 Seminar in Rocky Ford

The general manager was unable to attend this seminar as planned. Connie of the District, Julie Knudsen of the Purgatoire Watershed Partnership and Sammie Molinaro of the NRCS-Trinidad Office attended. Summary information regarding this one afternoon seminar was provided to the board by Connie, Julie and Sammie.

General Information

The District received its annual operations, maintenance, and replacement invoice from the Corps of Engineers this week. 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 an extension of the due date of this invoice until August 31st which date has been the due date for this invoice in recent years.

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 28th.

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.

The Las Animas County Recreation planning committee met on January 17th in Trinidad. The general manager attended. Discussions involved economic analysis of various recreational development opportunities, priority of opportunities and next steps of more public engagement.

The general manager did attend a meeting on February 1st with the City of Trinidad and other interested parties which was coordinated by the PWP regarding the removal of further sediment in the Purgatoire River channel upstream of the Baca/Picketwire Ditch diversion dam up to the Commercial Street bridge area. The purpose of this effort is to improve river canal capacity throughout this river reach while also seeking to maintain an adequate fishery environment.

Secretary's Report:

Connie Mantelli asked the Board members to review the proposed diagram of a display to be presented by PRWCD at the Trinidad Water Festival scheduled in May.

Ms. Mantelli asked for additional ideas to be presented.

She also reminded the Board that we needed to replace one of our committee members on this project as one of our previous members was no longer on the board. Joe Amato volunteered to be on the Water Festival Committee.

Connie will set up dates for the committee to meet and discuss/build the project to be presented at the festival.

Water Commissioner's Report:

Jeff Montoya reported that he has been working on diversion records and that they are 70% complete. He reminded us that this is a very long process and it is very important to get all the data correct.

Mr. Montoya met with representatives from the Bar NI Ranch to discuss the Solitario Pond. They discussed diverting water rights

to consumptive use to another water right upstream. The water right is only 9/10 cfs water right. The Bar NI will have to satisfy the Colorado Division of Water Resources with their plan. It appears to be a large investment for such a small amount of water.

Jeff stated that 75 af of delayed return flow waters need to be released from Trinidad Reservoir by April 1.

Mr. Montoya attended the Purgatoire Water Partnership tour in February. He stated that the plan they presented on cleaning the river from Commercial Street to Interstate 25 was a good idea.

Corp of Engineers:

Kim Falen had nothing to report at this time.

City of Trinidad:

No One present

Purgatoire Watershed Project

Julie Knudson reminded everyone that there will be a Purgatoire River Clean-up project on Saturday, February 4 beginning at 10:00 am.

Ms. Knudson is currently working on a federal grant (America the Beautiful). This grant has \$50K available for the upper river region.

Julie reported that the Baca/Picketwire Project is still on-going. Despite the cold weather concrete was recently poured.

Improving the DWR gauge was discussed at the Commercial Street meeting. That will be fixed soon.

Ms. Knudson met with the newly appointed Trinidad City Manager, Steve Ruger. They discussed the plans on the Bac/Picketwire project and she felt that the talk went well.

Other Business:

Steve informed the Board that Cathy Garcia, representative from Lauren Bobbert's office will be attending the March PRWCD meeting. She will be here to discuss the proposed legislation on the Construction Repayment.

Frank Milinazzo made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Tom Verquer seconded the motion. The motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 7:48 pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 2, 2023 at 7:00 pm.

Connie Mantelli, Secretary