



Central Advisory Council Minutes
Monday, November 13 2023
1:00 - 3:00 PM
Carbon County Administration Building
751 E 100 N, Price, UT

1. Welcome (William Merkley)

Mr. Merkley, noting a quorum, called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM. Approval of October 23rd Meeting Minutes- Jon Richins and Bill Butcher

2. Approval of the Minutes of the October 23rd, 2023, CAC Meeting - William Merkley

With no edits to the October 23rd, 2023 minutes, a motion was made by Jon Richins and seconded by Bill Butcher to approve the minutes. The motion was unanimously approved.

3. River Update - Cody Stewart

Mr. Stewart summarized the current macro river issues for the council. The post-2026 operations will be wrapping up in March of 2024. Gene Shawcroft has asked for the councils to provide suggestions for the upcoming negotiations, which is the primary focus of today's meeting. He also summarized the current situation in regard to the legislature in terms of the salinity program and the threatened and endangered species program.

4. Member Roundtable - Individual council members gave updates and priorities for each other in their specific focus areas:

Jon Richins- Price City is exploring storage and water rights and exploring options for a lower basin reservoir. Green River working with CRAU on inflow measurements.

Bill Butcher- Would like to have the Authority track the water to show that it is getting to Lake Powell

Derris Jones- Scofield reservoir water levels look to be in good shape.

Cody Allred- wrapping up 2023 projects

Ben Musselman- Groundwater- working with nearby towns on water rights and storage.

Sue Belagamba- Talking with Betsy Morgan about gauging and metering on Price River, TNC has funding, asking whether it might be possible for the Authority might be able to assist with funding. Looking for places that will want to participate in SCPP.

Jack Lytle- Waiting to see how the winter season is in regards to snowpack. Group of landowners are working to protect the streambank stabilization

5. Group Discussion -

Mr. Merkley opened the meeting up for the council to discuss Items to present to the CRAU Board. Mr. Merkley asked the council how they would like to present to the board, in person, or send a letter. Council unanimously agreed to present in person.

Jack Lytle asked that they not have Flaming Gorge be used as storage for Lake Powell.

Sue Bellagamba would like to see that the 3 million af is fully realized. Ms. Bellagamba also stated that TNC is interested in ensuring we don't over pump groundwater, and suggested we look at more long-term durable solutions like Ag optimization.

Mr. Merkley - discussed structural deficit in Lake Mead, 1.2-1.5 million af of system losses that are not accounted for. The lower basin has gotten away from the purpose of building reservoirs for the Colorado River Storage project. The upper basin accounts for system losses whereas lower does not. Curtailment shouldn't be off the table in the upper basin until the lower basin gets their house in order. Mr. Merkley also brought up the item of hydropower and the loss to the basin funds when hydropower is reduced bc of reservoir elevation and releases. As less power is produced then they have to pay for private power.

Cody Allred stated that the upper basin has experienced curtailment since the beginning of the compact and the lower basin does not have to take cuts. We think that's important for Gene to negotiate with the basin states.

Mr. Merkley reminded the council that Amy Hass has stated that they do not want the 2026 guidelines to impede any upper basin water development. The council then discussed the terms of new operational guidelines, and how long should they stand?

Marc Stilson stated that it's all contingent on the levels in Lake Powell.

Bill Butcher suggested that the new guidelines should state that the terms can be renegotiated if the water level drops too low.

Jack Lytle would like to see a focus on mitigating damage in the Green River from the increase of flows when water is released to increase the storage in Lake Powell. He also stated that he and the Price River users prefer to be left alone, and when they are curtailed then they will go along with it. Keep local water managed locally.

Sue Bellagamba would like to see the water users who are conserving water voluntarily be recognized and not be curtailed.

Marc Stilson restated that the UB should not agree to any curtailment until LB gets their house in order, secondly original content of the compact was for equitable distribution, but we are now left with an inequitable distribution, which is not the intent of the compact. Mr. Stilson then informed the council that groundwater stakeholders can put together a management plan that meets the goals of curtailment, and the state engineer has the ability to accept it. This would be an option if the statute is changed.

Jon Richins reminded the council that trans-basin diversions have been brought to the board in the past, but would like to continue to keep this as a recommendation.

6. Administrative Items- Holly McCall

Ms. McCall asked the council to decide on their next meeting date. Council decided to meet in January 2024

7. Adjourn - The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM.

Next meeting date: January 10th, 2024 @ 1:00 PM. Uintah Water Conservancy District, Vernal, Utah