

**Flaming Gorge Committee Talking Points for Interim Water Committee
August 2012**

BACKGROUND

Purpose

The purpose of Basin Roundtable Project Exploration Committee is to:

1. Explore interests and issues related to a possible Flaming Gorge water supply project
2. Explore the current state of knowledge regarding the potential impact of a Flaming Gorge water supply project on those interests and issues
3. Explore what additional work or activities would be needed to address the identified interests and issues.

Additionally, the Committee is a pilot project that seeks to assess the effectiveness of using a roundtable-based collaborative dialogue to explore water supply projects and issues. The process is focused on a possible Flaming Gorge water supply project, but the Committee will note any issues, ideas, concepts, or concerns that emerge that may apply to or be associated with other potential water supply projects. *The Committee is engaged in an exploratory and information-gathering process; no decisions or recommendations about whether or how to build a Flaming Gorge water supply project will emerge from this process.*

Membership

Seat / Interest	Representative 1	Representative 2
Arkansas BRT	Gary Barber	Betty Konarski
Colorado BRT	Dan Birch	Mel Rettig
Gunnison BRT	Rick Brinkman	Ken Spann
Metro BRT	Janet Bell	Tim Murrell
North Platte BRT	Carl Trick	N/A
Rio Grande BRT	Mike Gibson	N/A
South Platte BRT	Eric Wilkinson	Jim Yahn
Southwest BRT	Bruce Whitehead	Ann Oliver
Yampa/White/Green BRT	Kevin McBride	Kai Turner
State of Colorado	Jacob Bornstein	N/A
Environmental	Chuck Wanner (West Slope)	Bob Streeter (Front Range)
Recreation	Ken Neubecker (West Slope)	Reed Dils (Front Range)
Agriculture	Gene Manuello	T. Wright Dickinson

Timeline

- The first meeting was in December of 2011.
- The Committee has met monthly since then, except for February 2012.
- The Committee anticipates completing its work in December of 2012 and delivering a final work product to the Board in January or February of 2013.

Overview

Deliberations are congenial and productive. The Committee is advancing their understanding of the project concepts and the potential benefits and impacts it may bring, as well as the legal, hydrological, and Compact complexities of it.

Activities to Date

- A. Identified a list of key issues and questions regarding a Flaming Gorge project, including issues of legality, feasibility, hydrology, and cost, as well as potential social, environmental, agricultural, and economic impacts (both positive and negative)
- B. Heard presentations on:
 - o Each project proponent's vision for a Flaming Gorge project, including diversion points, mode of acquiring water, project priority date, pipeline location, etc.
 - o CWCB's consideration of a Flaming Gorge project in SWSI 2010
 - o The Colorado River Compact and how it might be impacted by a Flaming Gorge project
 - o The Colorado State Engineer's current thinking about his approach to and authorities for administering water from a Flaming Gorge project
 - o The Bureau of Reclamation's current thinking about how it would approach water contracting for and administration of a Flaming Gorge project
 - o The US Fish and Wildlife Service's current work to restore endangered fish populations and whether/how they might be impacted by a Flaming Gorge project
- C. Discussed:
 - o The various perspectives, hopes, and concerns among Committee members about a Flaming Gorge project
 - o Potential environmental, social, agricultural, and economic benefits of a Flaming Gorge project
 - o The characteristics of a "good" project (generically for any new transmountain diversion and for a Flaming Gorge project specifically)

Future Activities

- At its next meeting, the Committee will discuss what options exist for a State role in a project like this one, as well as the potential risks and benefits of State involvement.
- The Committee will continue its work to identify the characteristics of a good project.
- The Committee will continue to outline the potential benefits, challenges, and opportunities associated with a Flaming Gorge project.
- The Committee remains interested in hearing from the State of Wyoming about their perspective on the legal and administrative questions related to a Flaming Gorge project. The facilitator is pursuing this on the group's behalf. In the past, Wyoming has politely declined to participate but expressed a willingness to speak to one or two representatives of the group if they were to travel to Wyoming.
- The Committee will start identifying the key issues about which there is insufficient information, with an eye toward final recommendations to the Board for further research or study. Some of these may apply to any new transmountain diversion; some may apply only to a Flaming Gorge project.
- The Committee will also make a recommendation about whether a facilitated dialogue based in cross-roundtable discussions is an effective way of exploring new projects and issues or not.