

Colorado WaterWise Board Meeting

Thursday, May 13, 2021
Conference Call
10 a.m. to noon

P: Called-in via phone
X: Attended in-person

Board:

P	Alyssa Quinn	Platte Canyon W&S District	alquinn@plattecanyon.org
P	Amy Volckens	Brendle Group	avolckens@brendlegroup.com
P	Brad Brady	Yearout Energy Solutions	brad.brady@yearoutenergy.com
P	Courtney Black	Intera	CBlack@intera.com
P	Diana Denwood	Aurora Water	ddenwood@auroragov.org
P	Don Drew	Courageous Marketing	d.drews@courageousmarketing.com
P	Eric Olson	City of Fort Collins	eolson@fcgov.com
P	John Berggren	Western Resource Advocates	john.berggren@westernresources.org
P	Katie Helm	City of Fountain	khelm@fountaincolorado.org
P	Lance Ackerman	Colorado Springs Utilities	lackerman@csu.org
P	Laura Wing	City of Thornton	laura.wing@cityofthornton.net
P	Lindsay Rogers	WaterNow Alliance	ler@waternow.org
P	Lyndsey Lucia	Northern Water Conservancy	llucia@northernwater.org
	Quint Redmond	Agriburbia	qredmond@agriburbia.com
P	Ruth Quade	City of Greeley	ruth.quade@greeleygov.com
P	Thomas Riggle	Centennial W&S District	triggle@highlandsranch.org
P	Tyler Kesler	Town of Erie	tkesler@erieco.gov
P	Melissa Brasfield	CWW Board Staff	admin@coloradowaterwise.org

Guests:

Call to Order

Katie called the meeting to order at 10:02 AM

Board Business and Action Items

- Approval of April Board Minutes. Ruth motions, Alyssa seconds. April minutes are approved.

BMP Manual

The ad hoc committee had met twice so far to continue to develop the BMP manual process and details. The group has been defining major components of the manual. They identified the audience for the update to be consistent with the current audience description, but we may consider removing the Colorado specific mention so that other western states can use this document. The existing purpose won't need any major tweaks and likely will have some small edits. The group thought the 14 BMPs are still relevant but the information is what needs to be updated. We will stick with the current 14 BMPs and may consider revisiting them with another stakeholder group at the beginning of this process. The committee likes the current structure of three suites – foundational, other regulatory best practices and the complete package. This approach is still good and will likely be kept. There may also be a self-assessment for organizations to help guide them through the document.

The committee has a few new features for the document which will be discussed with a consultant. The committee has a list of side topics that might be included with additional resources but not necessarily a full BMP on each topic. Those side topics

include graywater, urban farming/agriculture and water/land use planning. Additional details on the new features will be shared later.

The final product of this work will be a combination of things but first and foremost it will be a document (2nd edition). It will also have a virtual space to house the case studies and update them on a regular basis. The side topics could also be available on the website in addition to more resources that can be updated more quickly as things change over the years.

The committee is still thinking a budget around \$100-150k between all the various pieces of the project. The process will include grouping the 14 BMPs into 4 categories to include: water system/utility best practices, outdoor landscape/irrigation best practices, indoor residential best practices, indoor non-residential best practices. Board members can choose one of these groups along with other members of the community to work with the selected consultant during a couple of stakeholder meetings. The first meeting is information gathering and would be facilitated by the consultant. The consultant would then create a draft document to be shared with the stakeholder group for review and updates.

Courtney mentioned that there is potential for additional money to be made available through stimulus money and it is probably best to wait and see until we can better understand how grant opportunities might change in the next couple months. Current thought is to hold on grant applications for a couple months to see how some legislation works out. Courtney noted that most of the grants have some sort of organization matching component. The matching portion can come from both money and in-kind hours that we are putting into this project to meet the required percentage.

Diana asked about the timeline and if we are still looking to start the project this year. Courtney said it depends on the grants we apply to most of the applications have deadlines later in the year. Diana also asked if we would put out an RFP/RFQ before we go out for grants, so we have a better idea of the cost of the project? Courtney said it's still up for more discussion and the committee thought we would apply to the grants then go out for RFP with a project cost estimate in mind. She added there are pros and cons to each option and risks with each as well. Katie asked what the risk is with getting the RFP out before the grant. Courtney said the risk would be having a consultant hired through the RFP process without having the grant funding secured. Katie followed up and asked if Diana meant putting out an RFI to get information. Courtney said that would also be an option. Katie said putting out an RFI might make sense since we are still waiting for additional information on what funding might become available. Thomas added that we should know about state funding in about a month once the legislative session ends in mid-June. Katie added that it would be good to know what our expected cost of the project is and only have to go after one grant instead of multiple grants. Courtney agreed. Courtney asked if we have a template for an RFI. Melissa is not aware of one. Diana added that they likely had one for the original BMP. Melissa and Alyssa will look through old files and emails.

Amy stated another option would be to go to RFP and have the consultant help with the grant application and we could use the in-kind hours toward the grant contribution. It could be awarded in two parts, the first for the grant application assistance and the second is contingent upon grant award. Amy noted we should be keeping track of who is participating in the meetings now so we can be counting them to the in-kind hours.

Courtney asked the board what the preference was for either an RFI or RFP process like Amy just described. Eric thinks the approach Amy described sounds great. Tyler agrees and could work well if we have a small group of consultants in mind already. Amy added that she has an example RFP and contract that she can share, and they have developed a short list of possible consultants to reach out to.

Budget Review

Brad reviewed the Q1 snapshot. Our cash total is doing well and higher than it was this time last year.

- General Management
 - Income is above budget through Q1 this year. About twice as much as we had budgeted for Q1.
 - Of these incomes types 29 are “organizations due” and 10 of them were new members.
 - The 10 new members are likely linked to LLYLI benefits.
 - Expenses is below our budget through Q1 this year.
 - Overall, we are doing well for our Q1 operating income.
- LLYLI

- There may be some concern here. The income that has come in is through CO Gives Day.
- We budgeted more however with the transition of LLYLI into a member benefit this income is tracking lower. Melissa added that there may still be income coming in from organizations that support LLYLI in addition to their CWW membership.
- Expenses are under thus far to Q1 but some additional website expenses are expected soon.
- Symposium
 - No income or major expenses at this point in the year.

Committee Update – Educational Events

The committee is following the 2021 action plan well. We are on track to host 6 events this year. We have held two events so far this year. The most recent webinar had about 94 attendees with great post event responses. We had some topics planned for June on Watershed Health and July/August on Next Generation Water and Land Use planning. **If anyone has any ideas for topics, please email them to Brad.** Amy added that if we can tie in water restrictions with the watershed health that would be timely.

State of Urban Water Conservation in Colorado

Diana and Amy are drafting the initial report. They are a few weeks away from having the draft completed and will be sharing it with the larger State of Urban Water Conservation committee first then sending it to the board. It won't be extremely dense information. It will likely be helpful for CWCB and other groups on what the struggles and successes across the state. Amy noted that they do not have the report in any designed format and the document that is shared for review will be a simple word document. Diana noted it will be sent to those organizations that participated in the survey and it will be posted to the website. Amy added that an executive summary fact sheet would be available as well but the final decision of making the report available as a member benefit has not been determined. Katie thinks making it accessible to everyone makes the most sense to get the greatest impact. The rest of the board agreed with that approach.

Drought Coalition Update

Alyssa discussed the last drought coordination meeting and recent presentation on LLYLI materials and a request for feedback from the coalition. The feedback we received during the meeting included increasing the Spanish translation materials and having the LLYLI website be more of the public facing website for other utilities to host their information in a central location. The Metro and Front Range drought coalitions groups have merged into a single Front Range Drought Coordination Group. The LLYLI committee met last week to discuss this feedback. Evoque is getting a proposal to develop some Spanish translated drought materials and subtitling the recent drought video. Frank Kinder said they might be able to fund some of the translation work.

There have been several new members that have joined to gain access to all the LLYLI materials. The coordination groups have talked about continuing these discussions in the long term and everyone agreed that the conversations should continue. Tyler added that Alyssa has been doing a great job with getting information out there. Tyler was able to present to a group of sustainability coordinators to use LLYLI. Alyssa added that we are also developing a LLYLI survey to gain additional feedback from the coordination group to be sent out by the end of next week. Katie thinks the survey idea is great and gives meeting attendees the time to digest the information.

Melissa added that she can email Brad and Tyler a list of recent new members that are likely "LLYLI motivated" to help connect the dots in the membership versus LLYLI income. Ruth suggested having a welcome section in the next monthly email.

Legislative Update

- SB-200 A bill to hold the state accountable to reductions in Greenhouse Gas Emission goals. There is a lot of support from across the state on this bill. Polis is threatening to veto the bill. Tyler shared a link to a Town of Erie support letter as an example or template.
- All the water related legislation has passed.
 - Underground storage bill is still in the process.
 - Additional funding for grant programs was approved.
 - Water right/ mutual ditch issue passed.
 - Pumped hydro and green energy passed.

- Management of plastic products – bans the use of Styrofoam and bags.
- Ag Soil health program is being created.
- Air pollutant monitoring bill requiring both monitoring and communication/notification of exceedance.
- State level Agriculture Drought and Climate Resilience office being proposed.
- Initiative for PARA to divest from fossil fuels.
- Reduction in fees for solar installation.
- Energy performance for building standard.
- Melissa had asked for an update for the Newsletter. She asked if it's possible to provide links that we can provide a list of bills and allow people to get the update that way. John also discussed a resource through the Pikes Peak Regional Water Authority.

CWW Member Recognition Program

The small subcommittee has met twice to refine the strawman proposal based on board feedback. One of the big changes is that it is no longer a certification program and has transitioned to a recognition program. The launch of the program would begin in 2022 which will allow us to work through a pilot program and finalize details throughout 2021. The bigger change is that the program will not only be focused on CWW programming. It will allow for other types of programs and events to count toward their recognition. And more broadly, during the pilot phase, we want to develop if this program can be cocreated or self-directed by the participants. We will try to identify what members want to be receiving and what their interests are. There may also be an opportunity to gather information about what individuals are doing in addition to CWW programs that can contribute to their recognition. Don said part of the reason to cocreate this is to maximize engagement and interest..

Lyndsey says the rearranged structure allows us to identify how people are engaging with CWW and might help us adjust things that we are planning and providing to the public and our members. Amy thinks its heading in a good direction. Alyssa agrees with the adjustments and updates that were made this round. Katie agrees.

Board voted to formally develop the program. Alyssa motions, Lyndsey seconds. All board members approved the motion.

Round Robin

- Thomas is working to hire interns for the summer. Resource Central sold more Garden in a Boxes than they have in the Spring and Fall combined for their area. They have also sold almost all the Slow the Flow program slots. They are working a lot on AMI conversions for irrigation accounts. They are still in drought watch at least for another month. Thomas is looking into increasing those two Resource Central programs. They have also had a lot of interest in turf replacements. Thomas noted they also have a couple HOAs that are interested in replacing multiple acres of turf grass. They are also working on the parkways conversion improvements pilot program.
- Katie compared her programs to those of others in the group, and they have a very different appetite among their customers compared to other areas. They tried to promote the turf removal and Garden in a Box program, and had 18 applicants but only two followed through with the program. They are hosting a Firewise Landscaping seminar this week. They are also working to update their Water Master Plan.
- Laura asked if anyone is attending the Growing Watersmart Workshop. They changed their campaign to focus more on what the city is doing for water efficiency, planning and water supply planning. They have some new blog articles that focus on what the city is doing. Laura noted water rates and water quality are very intertwined in people's minds and because of that they held focus groups to ask people about what's important to them. They get a lot of bad feedback about the new treatment plants and taste and odor issues and are trying to find ways to counteract those negative comments. They had a lot of interest in Garden in a Box programs and waterwise landscape rebates. They are hoping the new outreach strategy will help with customer engagement. Tyler asked if anyone is able to quantify the water savings from Garden in a Box. Laura said no, they just use the information in the Resource Central reporting. Lyndsay said they have a report on their website that has some data. Eric added they do see some savings in year three and they check to make sure they are adjusting their irrigation controller. Don asked if they are also trying to promote visibility. Diana said they have a free front yard design program, They don't see much water savings results but they have pushed to normalize the landscape image.
- Don is working to relandscape his home lawn to low water landscape. He is in a corner lot and he's hoping it will increase visibility in the neighborhood.

- Lindsay noted that she is transitioning to a new role with Western Resource Advocates. John will be stepping down from the board and Lindsay will be taking the WRA position. WaterNow is also looking to rehire Lindsay's role with the hope that new person would fill her role on the board.
- John added the Landscape Certification Program committee is working and making progress on this initiative. They are finalizing a survey to be sent out next week. There is also a Strategic Plan being developed to keep things moving over the next few years.
- Courtney and Intera is putting on a drought webinar in July with national representation. How you define drought in a region, challenges and process with droughts. Courtney will send out the invite once it is available.
- Tyler discussed the Town of Erie just finished their Water Efficiency Plan and Water Supply Storage Plans. This is leading to additional staff and ordinance changes. They are also participating in the upcoming Growing Watersmart Workshop. They made great progress in Green HOA Certification program and to his knowledge is the first in the state. They certified the first two and working with the state on this initiative as well. They are hiring a Sustainability Data Analyst position. Katie asked about how he promoted the program to HOAs. Tyler said the city has a robust list already and he has added sustainability topics to their quarterly meeting to promote the program.
- Eric is starting their irrigation auditor training. They have a goal of 450 residential audits. They sold out of Garden in a Box rebates. First residential code meeting did not go well.
- Amy said they are doing the CII Audit program with Northern Water pilot. Growing Watersmart Metrics Pilot Program deadline is May 21. Need more Round 1 participants.
- Brad wanted to echo Don, since joining the board your start noticing things and trying to change things. Brad lives in a newer neighborhood and they have done a good job with their landscaping and will share some photos.

Wrap Up and Adjourn

Katie adjourned the meeting at 11:56 a.m.

Submitted by:
Melissa Brasfield