

Upper Snowmass Creek Caucus

Agenda for July 15, 2019

Meeting at 7:00PM at our new meeting location:

Basalt Fire Substation

Lazy O Ranch

Snowmass, CO 81654

7:26

Call to Order – Establish a Quorum : Brian, Jan, Dave

Also in attendance: Bobbie Brazell, Bob Helm, and Farr Edwards

Approval of Minutes – Tabled until read

Guest ISP speakers on broadband initiative to increase internet speed and reliability:

The County is rolling out a broadband initiative that for some people may provide faster service at a lower price and everyone who is interested should attend.

Farr Shepherd from Pathfinder gave a very detailed overview of the options for our valley. An email will go out to members with a presentation once the board receives it.

Treasurer's Report: Itemized expenditures and balance in account

Committee Reports:

Water – Art Martin

I missed last month's Snowmass Water & Sanitation District because they changed the date and I had a conflict with the new date. (I attended today's (July 16) District Board meeting. Average stream flows for Snowmass Creek in June were 286.11 cfs this year versus 193.96 last year.)

I sent out to the Board the article in the Aspen Times by Brent Gardner-Smith entitled "Dividing the Waters" which details the amount of water Coloradans use and what would happen if curtailment is required pursuant to the 1922 Interstate compact signed by seven western states. Generally speaking, water rights obtained before 1922 are not subject to a compact call.

One of the main takeaways is that of the 626,200 acre feet of average annual post compact use in the Colorado River basin, 532,000, or about 60%, is attributed to transmountain diversions, meaning water taken from the western slope and re-routed to the Front Range.

Depending on how much water the upper basin states must send to the lower basin states, there is a chance that, with an increase in demand, there would be a compact call. The study's model assumes that if the state needed to send 100,000 acre feet to the lower basin, it would have to curtail post compact rights dating to July 1957. For 300,000 acre feet, it would have to curtail rights back to September 1940. This would stop Denver Water from transmountain diversion from Dillon Reservoir. The point is that the Front range is quite dependent on post compact rights and if there were severe compact calls the political pressure would be great to do something to help residents of the Front Range.. One example of that would be getting the state to not strictly apply the priority system which would then impact the Western Slope including Snowmass Creek. Snowmass Creek is a part of the Colorado River Basin and I have made contact with the Colorado River District and will attend a part of their quarterly board meeting on July 16.

The intertwined interests of all levels of water use and planning raises the question of whether the USCC should also look at the big picture in addition to monitoring things that primarily affect Snowmass Creek. Therefore, I recommend to the Board that while we keep open the channels of communication with the SWSD, and continue to monitor their activities, we add an additional emphasis on education and to understanding the larger questions dealing with the Roaring Fork Valley, the Colorado River District, the state, the Interstate Compact and all actors involved in water issues. Just as we have done with our fire mitigation initiative, education should be a priority of the Water Committee and the USCC Board.

Fire Mitigation – Jan Martin

The Upper Snowmass Creek Caucus was presented with a plaque signifying its designation as a Fire Wise Community by the fire officials of Roaring Fork Fire.

On July 1 the Upper Snowmass Creek Caucus hosted a Fire Education Day as a part of their continuing education regarding fire danger awareness and how to establish defensible spaces around their homes. Fire personnel and trucks were on site to answer residents' questions regarding specific issues related to their property. The Caucus provided a hot dog lunch to attendees. All caucuses were invited to attend the event so that they could carry information obtained to their members and thereby leverage the presentation.

"Fire Drill" Evacuation signs were placed during Fire Mitigation Week to remind residents of potential escape routes in the event of a fire. Residents were also reminded to be sure to register with Pitkin Alert to be able to receive specific directions during an event.

The Committee met with an official from Pitkin County Roads and Bridges to discuss augmentation of the fuel removal funded by the Caucus. A potential August timeframe was

established for the County to remove additional vegetation to provide better sightlines and evacuation safety along Snowmass Creek Road.

The Committee met with representatives of Holy Cross Electric at their Glenwood office to discuss the potential for burying their lines spanning heavily forested area. The utility representatives calculated 3800 lineal feet of line that is in the problem zone. The cost to bury these lines is approximately \$250,000. Holy Cross has not borne these types of cost in the past. Discussion ensued regarding a matching funds approach to the effort. Since this is a new concept, internal discussions within Holy Cross would be needed to further the dialog. It was revealed that Holy Cross currently has a “smart” software application that automatically shuts off service to areas to deter sparks igniting a fire when a tree hits a line. They also have a tree trimming program to reduce the probability of a tree or branch brushing against the wires. Holy Cross completed tree trimming in our area in June.

Other Business:

Bears – Plentiful encounters this summer – Wildlife has been notified

Adjourn 8:21