



MEMORANDUM
DECEMBER 28, 2018

TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FROM: JIM POKRANDT AND ZANE KESSLER

SUBJECT: EXTERNAL AFFAIRS ACTIVITIES/ JANUARY 15-16, 2019 BOARD MEETING MEMO

ACTION: The Information and Outreach Committee will be reconstituted at the Tuesday, January 15th Board meeting. Committee members will meet at 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday afternoon to discuss the 2019 work plan. This memo will be the basis for the Committee's discussion.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE(S):

- 1.E. & 1.F. Outreach and Advocacy**
 - 2.A. Outreach in All Basins**
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2018 brought a significant expansion of the River District's outreach and education efforts on the West Slope. The External Affairs team – in partnership with the entire staff – engaged in digital and on-the-ground efforts that increased overall visibility in the communities we serve and further established the District as the leading voice on West Slope water issues. Among other things, the District held 11 State of the River meetings, expanded its online/digital outreach efforts, coordinated briefings for Andy Mueller with each of the 15 Boards of County Commissioners and enjoyed record-breaking attendance at our 15th Annual Water Seminar in Grand Junction.

In the year to come, it will be more important than ever for the Colorado River District to promote public understanding of West Slope water issues while continuing to brand the District's mission and services to our constituents. Ongoing drought conditions and looming shortages in the Colorado River System also present an important opportunity to brand the District as a leader on both inter- and intra-state water issues affecting the Colorado River. Branding is also critical for positioning the District as a recognized, trusted water leader for its role in any ballot issues that may arise regionally or statewide.

Below is an overview of the District's proposed outreach plan for 2019. New items are italicized. We welcome the Board's input on this work plan and look forward to discussing it with you in more detail.

1. **Water News/Annual Report magazine.** At each April Board meeting, the magazine is released, both in print and electronically. *Staff will continue to explore new ways to distribute the report through online media to promote awareness of our mission and brand throughout the District and Colorado.*
2. **River District Webinars.** Online educational platforms present a new and cost-effective opportunity for engaging with our constituents on various water issues – especially in the more remote areas of the District. *The EA Team and Admin Staff are proposing to host three webinars in 2019 on the following topics: 1)The Importance of Snowpack for Water Management in Colorado, 2) The Impacts of a Changing Climate on Water Supplies in the West and 3) Colorado River Storage and Compact Compliance. Also under consideration is a discussion of the Colorado constitutional amendments that are conspiring to reduce revenues for public entities in rural Colorado.*
3. **Annual Water Seminar.** Our signature event drew a record crowd of more than 300 attendees to the Two Rivers Convention Center in Grand Junction last fall. That number includes those who viewed the program live on Facebook. The 2019 seminar is set tentatively for Friday, September 20th. Because of renovations to Two Rivers Convention Center we are working to secure a new venue. We have narrowed the options to Colorado Mesa University or the Doubletree Hotel in Grand Junction. We plan to aggressively promote the seminar again this year using a combination of print, email and online announcements. We also video the program, which can be live-streamed via our Facebook page and can be viewed subsequently on our website and YouTube channel.
4. **Eleven State of the River** public meetings January through June are designed to address current snowpack/runoff conditions. We always feature a CRD segment to keep our work before the public. We round them out with presentations on topical water issues. A key feature of these meetings is that we have collaborative partners in all locations to help with organizing, costs and publicity. Attendance ranges from 50 to 150 for each, depending on the location. Several of the meetings are filmed by local cable TV video coverage that are then repeatedly aired on local Public, Education and Government channels. 2019 State of the River meetings will be held in the following locations:
 - a. Carbondale
 - b. Craig
 - c. Eagle County
 - d. Grand County
 - e. Gunnison Basin
 - f. Mesa County
 - g. Meeker (Jan. 17)
 - h. Rifle
 - i. Steamboat Springs
 - j. Summit County
 - k. Montrose or Ouray?

5. **BOCC Meetings.** *The EA team would like to take the baton from Andy Mueller in 2019 and is proposing to ensure some River District staff attendance at least one BOCC meeting in each of the 15 River District Counties in 2019.*
6. **Outreach to Western Slope Water Conservancy and Ag Conservation Districts** will continue to be a priority for the District in 2019. Admin staff has compiled and updated an extensive list of contacts to assist with our outreach efforts in the coming months.
7. **Board News Summary.** These reports are emailed broadly to the public, the press and local governments after each quarterly Board meeting. This is an all-electronic endeavor, but the reports are designed for easy printing for hard-copy distribution. News Summaries are also be distributed in the form of online articles, or original content, via social media and on our website. Additionally, we saw an increase in the number of quarterly publication articles picked up by local media.
8. **Public Radio Underwriting.** We continue to promote water messages and branding on public radio stations throughout Colorado. This is a fairly cost-effective way to message an audience that is more likely to discover an interest (and participate) in western water issues.
9. **Water Festivals.** We continue to take part in local water festivals upon request. The most noteworthy, and the largest in the state, is the Western Colorado's Children's Water Festival held at on the Colorado Mesa University campus that attracts about 2,500 students over two days each May.
10. **Website/Social Media.** We maintain a robust website that gives a good window into our operations and issues. The District also maintains a suite of growing social media platforms that are consistently used to promote visibility in the communities we serve, and to disseminate targeted information to constituents. *We will continue to build upon and expand our social media outreach.*
11. **Speakers Bureau.** A variety of staff members are recruited by civic groups and other organizations to address current water issues.
12. **Press Relations.** The Colorado River District has become a go-to place for reporters to find background, context and quotes for an increasing awareness and coverage of Western water issues.
13. **Director Briefings.** As individual director's desire and request, staff is available to assist in any briefings or public meetings you may have in your county.
14. **Shoshone.** Protection of the Shoshone senior water rights call on the river is a high priority of the District, the Colorado River Cooperative Agreement and the Colorado Basin Roundtable. *We will actively seek and solicit opportunities to educate the public on Shoshone's importance.*
15. **Live Audio of Board Meetings.** The River District, through the work of Denise Hussain and the admin staff, proposes to continue broadcasting our Board meetings live, while also archiving them on our website for continual access to the public.
16. **Legislator Briefings/Updates:** Chris, Zane and the team will continue to engage West Slope legislators, as well as statewide elected officials and key Front Range legislators in the year to come.
17. **Gallagher/TABOR Education:** *At our State of the River meetings and other public engagement endeavors, possibly including a webinar, we will introduce information about the constitutional challenges and potential alternatives that are reducing funding*

for special districts and rural governments because of what Front Range development is doing to residential property tax calculations.

18. ***Triennial Survey:*** *Every three years we conduct a survey of constituents to measure recognition of the Colorado River District and the public's awareness/caring about water issues that are at the core of our work. This is a survey year. We plan to conduct the survey again in May, or perhaps earlier, and present the survey results at the July Board meeting.*