Sangre de Cristo Ranch Owners, Inc. Board of Directors Meetings	Zoom meeting ID: 834 9260 1289 Zoom passcode: 543203

SCRO BoD Work Session for October 2025
Thursday, October 16, 8:30-10:00am on Zoom

Agenda Packet

Zoom link: https://tinyurl.com/prer5uav
(instructions for Zoom are on page 8)

Call to order

Welcome to all.

This meeting is being audio- and video-recorded and will subsequently be published to a publicly accessible website. If you do not wish to be part of the recording, please take steps now to protect your identity. You may keep your camera turned off, you may use a meeting identifier other than your name, and you may decline to participate in the meeting.

Individuals wishing to speak during the "Community input" portion of the meeting are requested to post their first and last names, and their relationship with the community (property owner, property tenet, prospective owner, representative from another community or organization, etc.) in the meeting room chat as early in the meeting as possible. The message should be visible to "everyone." Community members may speak even if they are not a member of SCRO.

Individuals wishing to speak but who are participating via phone call can request to be added to the queue at this point in the work session.

Roll call

President: Nancy Frase
Vice-President Josabeth (Jo) Way
Secretary: Mike Powell
Treasurer: Dagmara (Mara) Rodriguez-Walters
At Large Member: Steve Navratil
At Large Member: Scott Cessac
At Large Member: VACANT

Review of agenda

Discussion: Consider requests for modifications to the agenda. Please note that we will likely not get through all the agenda items. Remaining items will be rescheduled for the next board work session.

Community Input

Community members wishing to make a public comment will be called upon in the order they added themselves to the meeting room chat. Individuals participating via phone call will be allowed to comment before those participating via the audio/video interface.

When you are recognized, please unmute your mic, then state your name and your relationship with the community. Then, begin your comments. Your comments will be limited to five minutes. Comments are to be respectful (i.e., no personal attacks) and relevant to the Sangre de Cristo Ranches community. Please be aware that your comments are being audio- and video-recorded and will subsequently be published to a publicly accessible website.

The SCRO BoD will not respond to any questions or comments made by community members during this section of the work session, through it will take all input under advisement.

Presentation by Pat McDermott, Colorado Division of Water Resources (DWR)

Presentation: Pat McDermott is a staff engineer for Division 3 of DWR. He has been working with various community members within the Ranches and Costilla County to find a long-term solution for a more reliable source of water for cisterns. He will be presenting on the various options our community might have for finding a relatively sustainable solution. His presentation will be followed by a Q&A session.

SCRO's water rights attorney, Katie Randall, will also be in attendance. She is planning to participate in the Q&A to the extent she can without compromising confidentiality. We can discuss options available to the general community. However, we cannot discuss what actions SCRO, specifically, might want to consider as that is confidential and should not be discussed in a meeting that is open to the public.

Please see the following attachments: SLV subdistricts map, Trinchera Ranch well locations, and the photo of the Polo Field Well.

Board Member Averett's resignation

Background: On Oct 13th, Board Member Eric Averett submitted his emailed resignation from the board, effective immediately. The text of his email is as follows:

> "Good morning,
>
> My health is not very good right now. I've been working with the VA trying to get me in a good place. I was working full time but had to resign because of my health. I think it would be best for the community if there was someone who could bring more value than I can. I feel that I need to respectfully resign from the board. I thought I could handle simple tasks but it's proving too much for me at this time.
>
> Best,
> Eric"

Discussion led by Board Member Frase: Consider how to appoint a new board member; the following is a list of board candidates that were presented at the Sep 4th board meeting:

Already appointed to the board:
- Dagmara “Mara” Rodriguez-Walters
- Eric Averett
- Scott Cessac

Still qualified…??:
- Margie Palmer
- Jeff Hidek
- John J. Baich

May not be qualified…??:
- Kevin Lawson, Sr.

Contents of storage unit

Background: SCRO has been storing supplies and hardcopy historical records in a local storage unit. These records may be helpful in addressing the water rights issue. Also, the paper records are at risk of being destroyed by environmental factors. The records need to be scanned and stored digitally. Finally, the remaining contents of the storage unit need to be evaluated to determine if they are worth the cost of storage.

During the Sep 4 board meeting, a historical records committee was formed. That committee is to:
- Sort and scan all paper records in the storage unit
- Forward any records related to water rights to the board
- Index those scanned records for ease of retrieval
- Establish a system for the digital storage of and indexing of future records
- Facilitate making those scanned records available to the public
- Determine which paper records should be retained for posterity’s sake
- Design a storage system for the paper records to ensure they remain in good condition
- Sort through the remaining contents of the storage until to determine if they are worth the cost of storage
- Recommend “next steps” to the board, if any

Board Member Averett accepted an action item to lead the historical records committee and recruit members as needed. He planned to upload the scanned documents to SCRO’s Google drive.

Discussion led by Board Member Frase: Now that Eric Averett has resigned, consider how we might reassign these responsibilities.

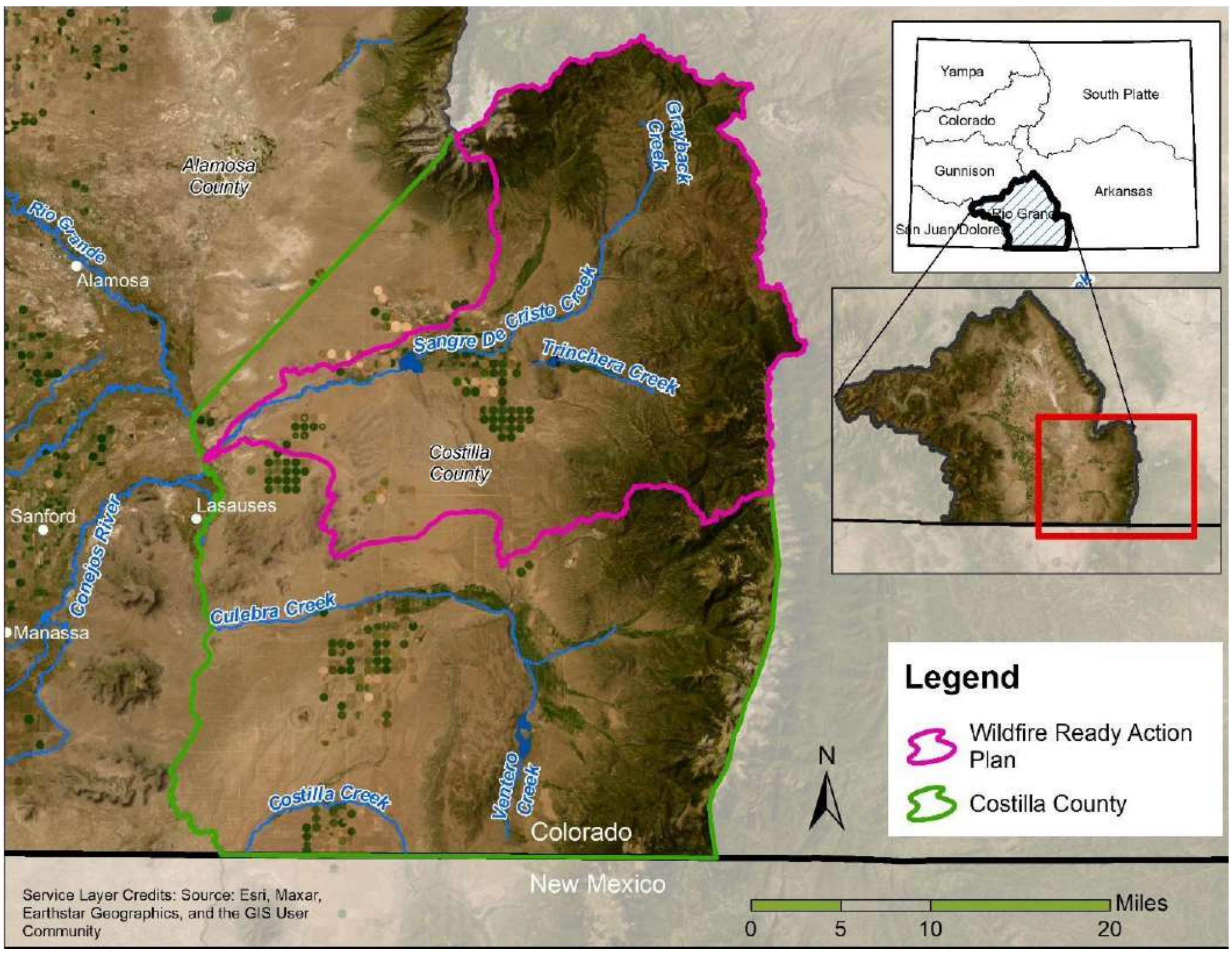
Review of outstanding action items

Discussion led by Board Member Frase: Review the status of outstanding action items (see attachment “Action Items”).

November 1st membership meeting

Announcement: Our guest speaker for the November 1st membership meeting is Daniel Boyes, Executive Director of the Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project. He may be joined by Adam Moore, Supervisory Forester from the Alamosa Field Office of the Colorado State Forest Service.

Last Friday (Oct 10), the Colorado Rio Grande Restoration Foundation (CRGRF) published a request for bid proposals from qualified contractors to develop, in tandem, the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) for Costilla County [the area outlined in green in the photo below] and Wildfire Ready Action Plan (WRAP) for a sub-watershed within Costilla County [the area outlined in pink in the photo below]. The Ranches community is a key stakeholder in this effort.



This joint CWPP/WRAP plan is essential for reducing wildfire risks to communities and ecosystems, protecting water resources and forest/stream health, engaging communities in proactive measures, and allocating emergency resources efficiently. These combined efforts will contribute to safer, more resilient communities and healthier ecosystems.

The contract will be awarded on December 2nd and the “hands-on” work is anticipated to begin during this upcoming winter. These two guest speakers are the two people who will be managing this contract and to whom the selected contractor will be reporting. The November 1st presentation will help our community understand what will be happening and how we can best participate as invested stakeholders.

Discussion led by Board Member Frase: What reports should we include in the agenda packet?

Discussion led by Board Member Frase: How are we going to capture the names and contact information of attendees (business meeting portion only)?

Discussion led by Board Member Frase: Who can help with the marketing for the meeting (graphics, distribution)?

Wildfire mitigation

Background: Our community is prone to wildfire disasters; yet, we have no active plan for mitigating fires. During the regular board meeting on 8/7, Board Member Navratil accepted an action item to give a presentation on wildfire mitigation.

Presentation by Board Member Navratil: Presentation on wildfire mitigation (see attachment "Wildfire Mitigation").

Discussion led by Board Member Navratil: Provide feedback on the options presented and determine next steps.

Water access

Background: Reliable and relatively stable access to water for refilling cisterns has become a monumental concern in recent months. Multiple residents have stepped into leadership roles to find and implement solutions. This has created a disjointed approach to finding solutions.

During the Sep 4 board meeting, the board voted to accept the proposal related to SCRO taking on the role of an information clearinghouse and a facilitator/mediator to ensure effective collaboration among the various entities and grassroots effort and entities within the community. Each board member has agreed to act as liaisons in the following capacities, with Board Member Frase facilitating the overall effort:

- Board Member Cessac as the "water rights" liaison
- Board Member Navratil as the "filling stations" liaison
- Board Member Averett as the "Costilla County" liaison
- Board Member Way as the "public relations" liaison
- Board Member Rodriguez-Walters as the "storage & transportation" liaison
- Board Member Powell as the "strategic planning" liaison

Discussion led by Board Member Frase: Inquire about each liaison's progress (see attachment titled, "SCRO-Led Facilitation of the Management of the Water Access Crisis").

Limit on number of non-local owners on the board

Background: Historically, the board of directors has been mostly made up of individuals who live in the Ranches or within about an hour of the Ranches. This has left non-local owners, especially those living outside of Colorado, largely without representation on the board for the past four decades.

Recently, board meetings have recently been moved to a virtual format with public access. This will allow non-local owners to have a greater presence on the board. In fact, the current president lives in northern Colorado, four hours away from the Ranches. Opening up the board to non-local owners will encourage greater involvement, greater influence, and greater access to professional skills and knowledge. It also lightens the load of the handful of local owners who are willing to be on the board.

On the other hand, this development has created a concern that the local resident owners may lose their voice in matters that impact them every day in a very personal way. Decisions made by the board impacts local owners disproportionately. Thus, it has been proposed that a limit be placed on the number of non-local owners on the board at any one time.

Discussion led by Board Member Way: Consider referring this matter to the membership for a vote (see attachment titled, “SCRO Board Membership Eligibility & Representation”).

Social connection within the Ranches

Presentation by Board Member Way: This presentation explores the value of social connection with the Ranches community and how SCRO can facilitate such connection (see attachment titled, “Building Social Connections”).

Discussion led by Board Member Way: Consider “next steps” that the board would be inclined to take to facilitate and develop social connection within our community.

Local economic development and growth

Presentation by Board Member Way: This presentation explores how SCRO could be instrumental in developing and growing the local economy (see attachment titled, “Local Economic Development & Growth).

Discussion led by Board Member Way: Consider “next steps” that the board would be inclined to take to facilitate and develop the local economy.

Hybrid meeting formal for membership meetings

Background: The board is hoping to find a way to host a hybrid meeting for the August 1st annual membership meeting. This would allow non-local members to attend the meeting while also honoring the four-decade tradition of the local members (and any non-local member who are able) gathering together for face-to-face fellowship for the all-important annual meeting. However, at this time, we do not have a facility that can support a hybrid meeting.

Discussion led by Board Member Frase: Consider the options we may have for locating and reserving a facility that can support a fully-functional hybrid meeting, with a focus on accomplishing this task in time for the August 1st annual membership meeting.

Building permits

Background: SCRO has been receiving an increasing number of reports of Costilla County Planning and Zoning not approving building permits when there seems to be a legal obligation to do so.

Discussion led by Board Member Frase: Consider launching an investigation into this matter to determine if there is inappropriate action being taken by the county, or if this is simply a matter of applicants not meeting requirements. If the former, then consider how we might advocate on behalf of community members. If the latter, then consider how educational efforts might improve outcomes.

Announcements

Next regular membership meeting: Saturday, November 1, 2025, at 10:00am-12:30pm on Zoom (self-organized small groups encouraged)

Next regular board meeting: Thursday, November 6, 2025, at 8:30-10:00am on Zoom

Next regular board work session: Thursday, November 20, 2025, at 8:30-10:00am on Zoom

Next social event: Saturday, November 22, 2025, at 5:00pm (Ranch-giving Potluck Dinner, location TBD)

Adjourn

About Zoom

Zoom link: https://tinyurl.com/prer5uav
Zoom meeting ID: 834 9260 1289
Zoom passcode: 543203

To join the Zoom meeting using audio and video:

1) Ahead of the meeting, download the Zoom app from the appropriate app store onto a device that has speakers, a mic, and a camera (camera is optional). You only need to do this one time.
2) A few minutes before the meeting, either click on the Zoom link (provided above) or, from within the app, click the “Join” button and enter the meeting ID & passcode (provided above).
3) You will be presented with a screen in which you can adjust your audio and video settings. When you are ready to join the meeting, click the “Join” button and you will be placed in the meeting’s waiting room.
4) The meeting host will admit you into the meeting.

You can also dial-in from your phone (voice only):

1) Call 719-359-4580.
2) When prompted, entering the meeting ID (provided above) followed by the pound key.
3) When prompted for participant ID, just press the pound key (you don’t have a participant ID).
4) When prompted, enter the meeting passcode (provided above) followed by the pound key.
5) You will be placed in the meeting’s waiting room.
6) The meeting host will admit you into the meeting.

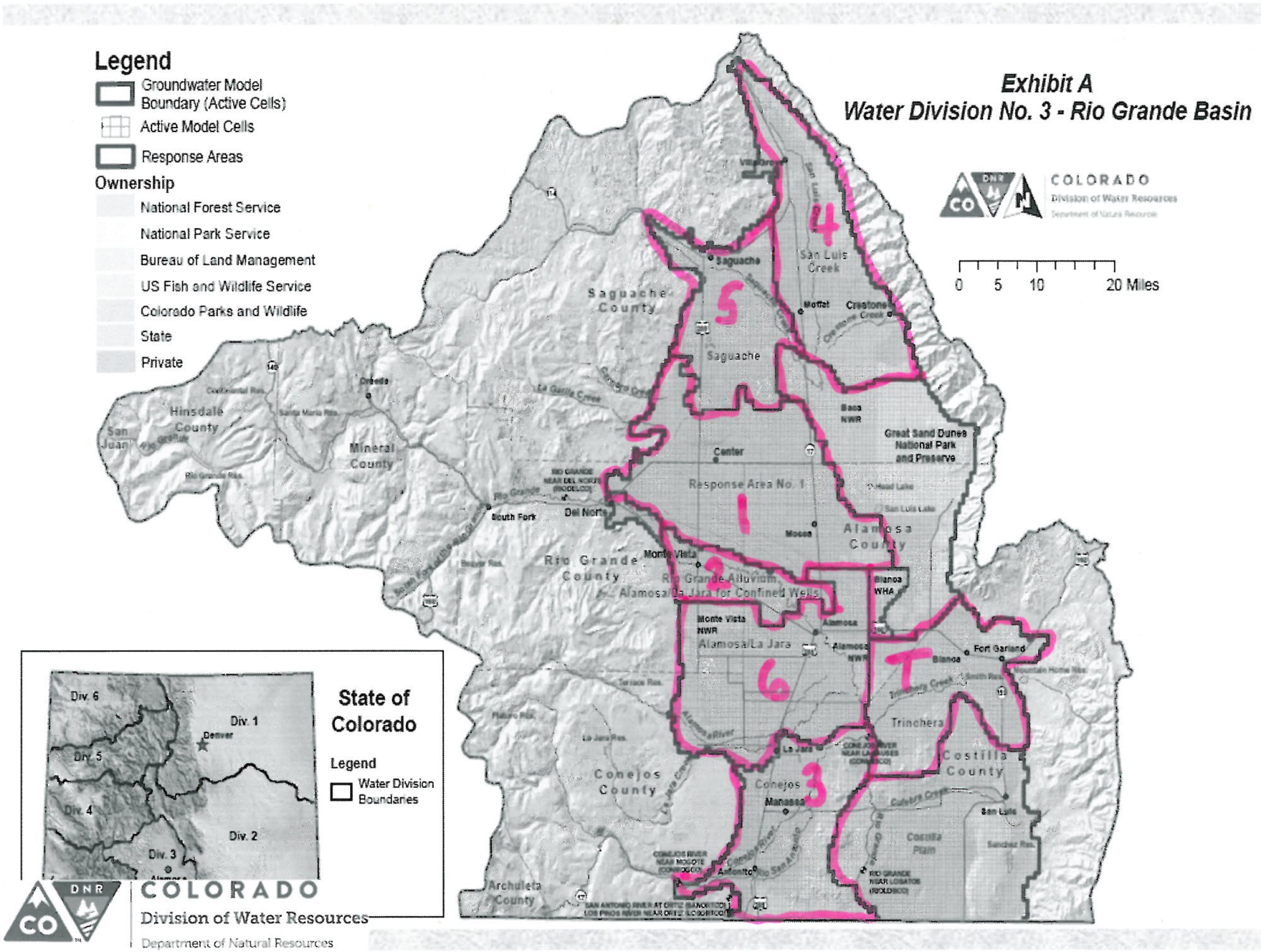
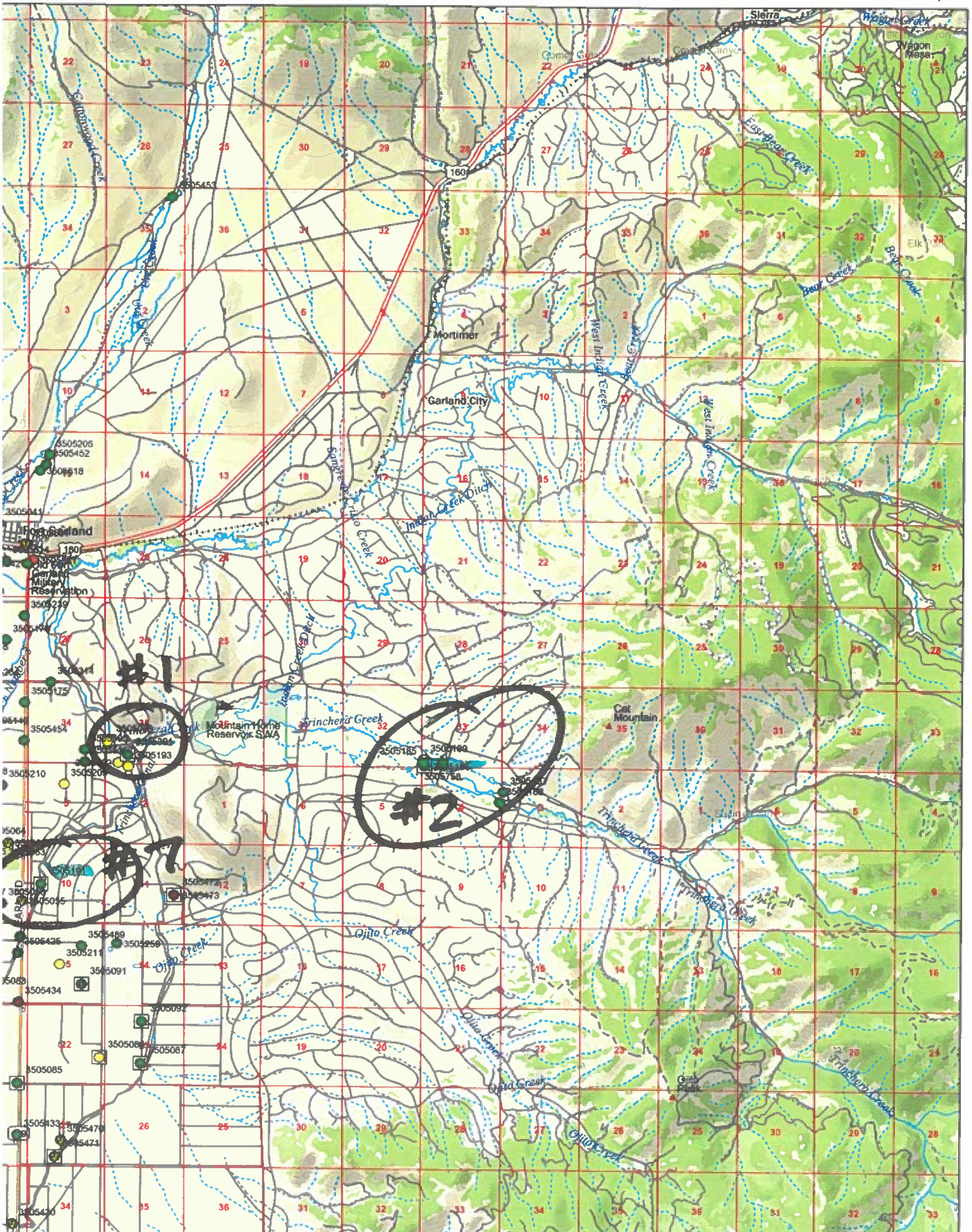


Exhibit A
Water Division No. 3 - Rio Grande Basin
Legend
Groundwater Model Boundary (Active Cells)
Active Model Cells
Response Areas
Ownership
National Forest Service
National Park Service
Bureau of Land Management
US Fish and Wildlife Service
Colorado Parks and Wildlife
State
Private
COLORADO
Division of Water Resources
Department of Natural Resources
0 5 10 20 Miles
Saguache County
Hinsdale County
Mineral County
Rio Grande County
Alamosa County
Conejos County
Costilla County
Archuleta County
San Juan
Saguache
Villa Grove
San Luis Creek
Moffat
Crestone
Crestone Creek
Baca NWR
Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve
Center
Response Area No. 1
Creede
Del Norte
South Fork
Monte Vista
Mosca
Rio Grande Alluvium
Alamosa/La Jara for Confined Wells
Blanca WHA
Monte Vista NWR
Alamosa
Alamosa NWR
Alamosa/La Jara
Blanca
Fort Garland
Trinchera
Trinchera Creek
La Jara
Conejos
Manassa
Antonito
San Luis
Culebra Creek
Costilla Plain
Sanchez Res.
Alamosa River
La Jara Creek
Conejos River
La Garita Creek
Rio Grande
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
State of Colorado
Div. 1
Div. 2
Div. 3
Div. 4
Div. 5
Div. 6
Denver
Legend
Water Division Boundaries
COLORADO
Division of Water Resources
Department of Natural Resources

XMap® 8



Scale 1 : 100,000

1" = 1,847.7 ft

Data Zoom 11-0

09/01/2022 12:03

Action Items – last updated 10/15/24

Black items – on track
Gray items – recently completed
Blue items – will be addressed later in this meeting
Red items – status requested at this point in this meeting

Board Member Nancy Frase (President)

Completed: Set the agenda and request materials for the Oct 16 work session's agenda packet [from protocols]

Completed: Publish to the website the video and draft minutes from Oct 2 regular board meeting [from protocols]

Completed: Publish to the website the agenda for the Oct 16 work session [from protocols]

Completed: Identify a speaker or speakers for the 11/1 membership meeting (1 hr speaking time starting at 10am) [from 9/4 board meeting]

Ongoing: Liaison with the water rights attorney on behalf of SCRO [from 8/7 board meeting]

Ongoing: Fulfill responsibilities as liaison coordinator in relation to the SCRO-led facilitation of community efforts to gain access to water for cisterns [from 9/4 board meeting]

Due ASAP: Ensure SCRO's tax and BOI filings are up to date (last tax filing seems to be 2020) [from 8/7 board meeting]

Due ASAP: Create a draft administrative protocols document (add details to that document as they become known) [from 9/4 board meeting and 10/2 board meeting]

Due ASAP: Add to a future work session agenda the periodical reporting of the number of SCRO members [from 9/4 board meeting]

Due ASAP: Add to a future work session agenda the periodical reporting of the amounts paid for properties sold in the Ranches [from 9/4 board meeting]

Due ASAP: Facilitate the creation and publication of a local business directory on SCRO's website [from 10/2 board meeting]

Due ASAP: Address the "wonky" formatting of SCRO's website for mobile users (for example, the pictures of the board members are not aligned with the related biographies) [from 10/2 board meeting]

Due 10/9: Meet with new board member, Scott Cessac, for an orientation briefing [from 10/2 board meeting]

Due 10/9: Meet with Mike Powell and Scott Cessac to review their liaison responsibilities in the SCRO-Led Facilitation project [from 9/4 and 10/2 board meetings]

Due 10/9: Update website to reflect new board member (Scott Cessac) and the appointment of the new treasurer (Mara) [from protocols]

Due 10/14: Encourage SCRO members to invite neighbors to gather in small groups and share a camera for the 11/1 membership meeting on Zoom (maybe have small-group potluck right before or after?) [from 9/4 board meeting]

Due 10/14: Set the agenda and request materials for the Nov 1 membership meeting [from protocols]

Due 10/14: Request details about Ranch-giving potluck dinner from Mike [from protocols]

Due 10/16: Lead a discussion, during the October work session, on building permits [from 9/4 board meeting]

Due 10/16: Lead a discussion, during the October work session, on how membership meetings could be hosted in a hybrid format (Zoom and in-person simultaneously) [from 8/7 board meeting]

Due 10/19: Set agenda and request materials for Nov 6 regular board meeting [from protocols]

Due 10/23: Publish post-meeting artifacts (i.e., video, draft minutes) on website for Oct 16 board work session [from protocols]

Due 10/25: Publish pre-meeting artifacts (i.e., agenda) on website for Nov 1 membership meeting [from protocols]

Due 10/28: Request details about San Luis Tree Lighting social event from Mike [from protocols]

Due 10/30: Publish pre-meeting artifacts (i.e., agenda) on website for Nov 6 regular board meeting [from protocols]

Due 11/2: Set agenda and request materials for Nov 20 board work session [from protocols]

Due 11/4: Publish details about Ranch-giving Potluck Dinner on website [from protocols]

Due 11/8: Publish post-meeting artifacts (i.e., video, draft minutes) on website for Nov 1 membership meeting [from protocols]

Board Member Jo Way (Vice President)

Ongoing: Fulfill responsibilities as "public relations" liaison in relation to the SCRO-led facilitation of community efforts to gain access to water for cisterns [from 9/4 board meeting]

Due 10/16: Lead a discussion, during the October work session, on placing a limit on the number of non-local owners on the board [from 9/4 board meeting]

Due 10/16: Deliver a presentation and lead a discussion, during the October work session, on developing social connection within the Ranches [from 8/7 board meeting]

Due 10/16: Deliver a presentation and lead a discussion, during the October work session, on local economic development and growth [from 8/7 board meeting]

Due 10/21: Submit material for inclusion in the Nov 1 membership meeting's agenda packet, if any [from protocols]

Due 10/26: Submit material for inclusion in the Nov 6 regular board meeting's agenda packet, if any [from protocols]

Due 11/9: Prepare and send to Nancy a "handout" for the presentation on the annual budget for the agenda packet for the Nov 20 work session [from 9/4 board meeting]

Due 11/9: Submit any additional material for inclusion in the Nov 20 board work session's agenda packet, if any [from protocols]

Due 11/13: Along with Mara and Tina, change the bank account signatories (retaining Jo, removing Tina, and adding Mara) [from 10/2 board meeting]

Due 11/20: Deliver a presentation and lead a discussion, during the November work session, on local annual budget [from 9/4 board meeting]

Board Member Mike Powell (Secretary)

Completed: Send out advertising for Halloween Casual Night Out [from protocols]

Ongoing: On a weekly basis, pick up USPS mail from post office and distribute to other board members as appropriate [from protocols and 10/2 board meeting]

Ongoing: Fulfill responsibilities as "strategic planning" liaison in relation to the SCRO-led facilitation of community efforts to gain access to water for cisterns [from 9/4 board meeting]

Due ASAP: Meet with Nancy to review liaison responsibilities in the SCRO-led facilitation of community efforts to gain access to water for cisterns [from 9/4 board meeting]

Due 10/11: Host Halloween Casual Night Out [from protocols]

Due 10/21: Submit material for inclusion in the Nov 1 membership meeting's agenda packet, if any [from protocols]

Due 10/26: Submit material for inclusion in the Nov 6 regular board meeting's agenda packet, if any [from protocols]

Due 10/28: Finalize the details of the Ranch-giving Potluck Dinner on Nov 22 [from protocols]

Due 11/9: Submit material for inclusion in the Nov 20 board work session's agenda packet, if any [from protocols]

Board Member Mara Rodriguez-Walters (Treasurer)

Completed: Work with Tina to see if you (Mara) would be a good fit for the office of treasurer [from 9/18 work session]

Ongoing: Fulfill responsibilities as "storage & transportation" liaison in relation to the SCRO-led facilitation of community efforts to gain access to water for cisterns [from 9/4 board meeting]

Due ASAP: Work with Steve to refine overlapping liaison responsibilities pertaining to the water access project [from 9/18 work session]

Due ASAP: Compile a member welcome packet to be presented to the board for review, which may be presented in sections or stages; Steve recommended modeling our member welcome packet after the Westcliffe area's welcome packet provided by Custer County [from 10/2 board meeting]

Due ASAP: Compile a member roster

Due 10/21: Submit material for inclusion in the Nov 1 membership meeting's agenda packet, if any [from protocols]

Due 10/26: Submit material for inclusion in the Nov 6 regular board meeting's agenda packet, if any [from protocols]

Due 11/9: Submit material for inclusion in the Nov 20 board work session's agenda packet, if any [from protocols]

Due 11/13: Along with Jo and Tina, change the bank account signatories (retaining Jo, removing Tina, and adding Mara) [from 10/2 board meeting]

Due 11/20: Lead a discussion, during the Nov 20 work session, on how the two-signature requirement could be met when a debit card is used for payment (if it is possible for SCRO to acquire a debit card) [from 9/4 board meeting]

Board Member Steve Navratil

Ongoing: Fulfill responsibilities as "filling stations" liaison in relation to the SCRO-led facilitation of community efforts to gain access to water for cisterns [from 9/4 board meeting]

Due ASAP: Work with Mara to refine overlapping liaison responsibilities pertaining to the water access project [from 9/18 work session]

Due 10/16: Deliver a presentation and lead a discussion, during the Oct 16 work session, on wildfire mitigation [from 8/7 board meeting]

Due 10/21: Submit material for inclusion in the Nov 1 membership meeting's agenda packet, if any [from protocols]

Due 10/26: Submit material for inclusion in the Nov 6 regular board meeting's agenda packet, if any [from protocols]

Due 11/9: Prepare a "handout" for the presentation on the proposed website-based user forum for the agenda packet for Nov 20 work session [from 8/7 board meeting]

Due 11/9: Submit any additional material for inclusion in the Nov 20 board work session's agenda packet, if any [from protocols]

Due 11/20: Give a presentation on the proposed website-based user forum during the Nov 20 work session [from 8/7 board meeting]

Board Member Eric Averett

Due ASAP: Establish a historical records committee with as many members as needed (as determined by Eric) to address the paper records and other contents of the storage unit, as well as a system for preserving future records [from 9/4 board meeting]

Due 11/6: Provide an update, during the Nov 6 regular board meeting, on the historical records committee [from 9/4 board meeting]

Board Member Scott Cessac

Ongoing: Fulfill responsibilities as "water rights" liaison in relation to the SCRO-led facilitation of community efforts to gain access to water for cisterns [from 9/4 board meeting]

Due ASAP: Meet with Nancy to review liaison responsibilities in the SCRO-led facilitation of community efforts to gain access to water for cisterns [from 9/4 board meeting]

Due 10/9: Meet with Nancy for an orientation briefing [from 10/2 board meeting]

Due 10/21: Submit material for inclusion in the Nov 1 membership meeting's agenda packet, if any [from protocols]

Due 10/26: Submit material for inclusion in the Nov 6 regular board meeting's agenda packet, if any [from protocols]

Due 11/9: Submit material for inclusion in the Nov 20 board work session's agenda packet, if any [from protocols]

Former Board Member Tina Squire

Completed: Work with Mara to see if Mara would be a good fit for the office of treasurer [from 9/18 work session]

Due 11/9: Prepare a "handout" for the presentation on the common land within the Ranches currently owned by Costilla County for agenda packet for Nov 20 work session [from 8/7 board meeting]

Due 11/13: Along with Jo and Mara, change the bank account signatories (retaining Jo, removing Tina, and adding Mara) [from 10/2 board meeting]

Due 11/20: Give a presentation on the common land within the Ranches currently owned by Costilla County during the Nov 20 work session [from 8/7 board meeting]

Wildfire Mitigation

Steve Navratil
August 25, 2025

From an earlier message I sent on 8/7/25:

I have found lots of valuable info so let me provide a few things. A good start here:

https://co-co.org/community-wildfire-mitigation-best-practices-toolbox/

Homeowner equipment:

https://code3water.com/

https://www.repackify.com/buy-ibc-totes/colorado/denver

https://duckduckgo.com/?t=ftsa&q=gas+powered+water+pump+wildfire&ia=web

https://www.harborfreight.com/2-in-212cc-gasoline-engine-semi-trash-water-pump-158-gpm-63405.html

https://www.harborfreight.com/100-ft-high-volume-watering-kit-with-adjustable-spray-nozzle-57222.html

I spent less than an hour and found a lot more than this but you get the idea. Each home in the ranches could effectively have their own fire truck for under $1,000, on site, and with some electronic PLC smarts, an autonomous system could run unattended using an off-grid power source. That, and common sense best practices outlined in the first link could keep a small fire from becoming huge. Of course a lot of homeowner training needs to be included.
It would really be good if SCRO could get a grant to help residents install a dedicated fire suppression system to protect their homes. It would also be a GREAT idea to build a demo unit and post videos of it being built and operated on the soon to be SCRO YouTube channel.
I would be happy to answer questions and also talk about taking a project like this and helping a local group to manufacture these. Maybe Trinchera Ranch would like to help since it's also a good thing for them.

End of document

Proposal: SCRO-Led Facilitation of the Management of the Water Access Crisis

By Nancy Frase
Updated 10/15/25

Background: Water access for refilling cisterns has been shut off, first by Sangre de Cristo Water Services, then more recently by the Fort Garland Water and Sanitation District. This has local residents – within the Ranches and outside of the Ranches – scrambling to find reliable and affordable sources of bulk water. Tensions between governmental agencies and the public have increased. Multiple residents have stepped into leadership roles to find and implement solutions. While solid strides have been made in finding solutions, the disjointed efforts are less effective in the long run than a coordinated effort would be.

8/7/25: During the regular SCRO board meeting, the board voted to immediately retain a water rights attorney.

8/12/25: SCRO retained a water rights attorney to assess long-term solution options.

9/4/25: During the regular SCRO board meeting, the board voted to accept this proposal. Liaisons were assigned.

Discussion

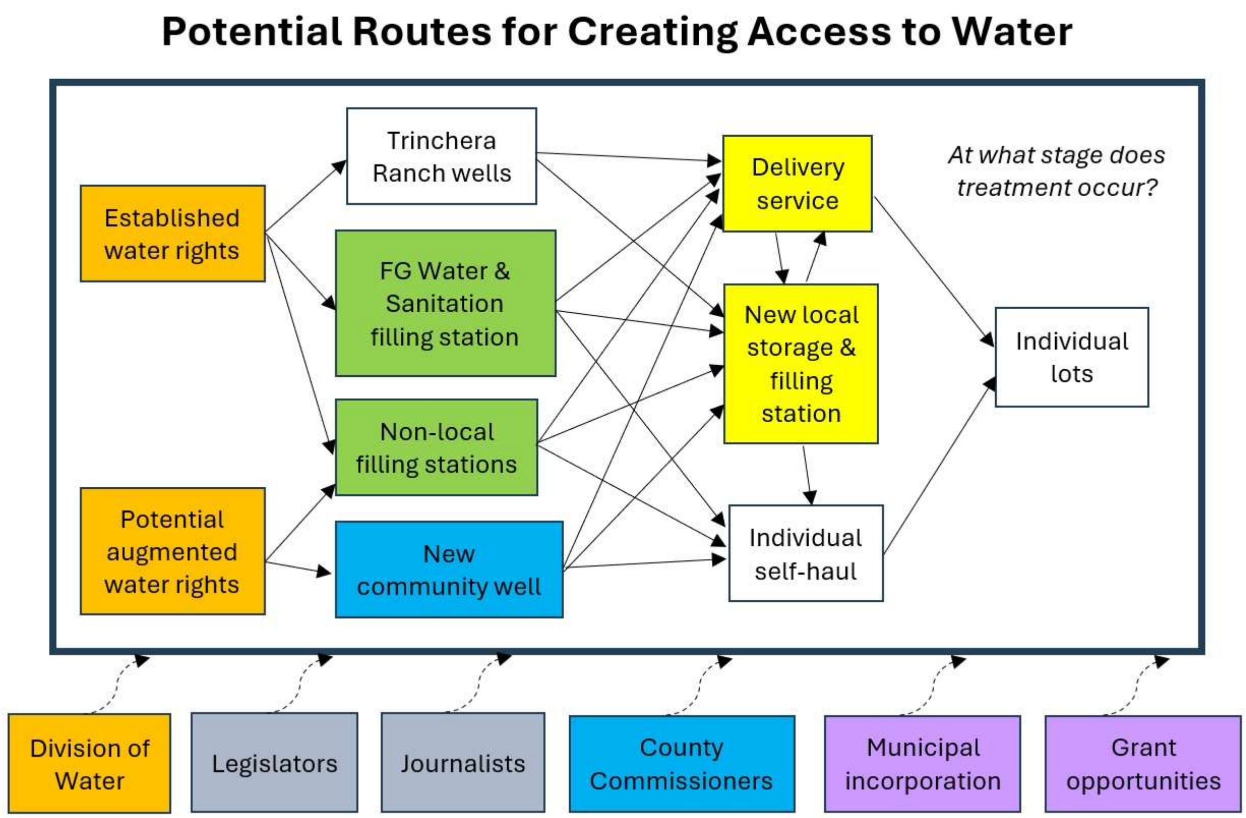
SCRO's attorney has not yet given us the "green light" to engage in any communication with Trinchera Ranch nor with Sangre de Cristo Water Services, Inc. However, our attorney has encouraged us to move into the roles being proposed here.

As I prepared this proposal, I kept imagining a huge jigsaw puzzle. Different community members and governmental leaders are each working on different parts of the puzzle. However, they are having trouble knowing what is happening across the "big picture." One person may have the puzzle piece that another person is looking for, but they are unaware of each other's circumstances. In contrast, someone standing back and looking at the entire puzzle might be able to identify the dilemma as well as a solution. I am proposing that SCRO take on the role of the "big picture" facilitator.

The following guidelines are recommended for the implementation of this proposed facilitation effort:

1. Strive for collaboration rather than aggression
2. Seek more to understand rather than to be understood
3. Support existing grassroots efforts
4. Launch new efforts only if necessary
5. All ideas deserve to be heard without interruption or judgement, and deserve to be understood in full
6. All people offering ideas, and the hard work of those people, deserve to be respected and honored
7. Healthy relationships are vital – protect them
8. Be clear about when you are operating as a representative of SCRO and when you are operating as a private citizen; adjust your language accordingly
9. Make no commitments on behalf of SCRO without the approval of SCRO's board obtained during a publicized board meeting
10. Be as transparent as you can be without divulging confidential information

It is not SCRO's place to judge whether any one idea is "good" or "bad," or to determine its chances of success. Rather, SCRO's responsibility would be to learn enough about everyone's ideas, knowledge, and experiences to figure out how the puzzle pieces might go together. Bottom line, our goal would be to piece together at least one – hopefully multiple – paths from the left edge of the diagram (below) to the right edge of the diagram. There will likely be short-term solutions, mid-term solutions, and long-term solutions. Furthermore, the viability of various potential solutions will be influenced by a multitude of public-centric entities, many of which are shown along the bottom of the diagram.



If each board member takes responsibility for a portion of the effort, the board can effectively facilitate the "big picture" as a team. I am proposing that each board member take on the role of a liaison, with each liaison (board member) handling one category of tasks (defined below). I am also proposing that, as SCRO president, my responsibility would be to coordinate the effort across the team of liaisons:

"Water rights" liaison (orange boxes) – Board Member Scott Cessac:

- Identify the existing water rights (ground & surface) that currently supply (or could supply) Trinchera Ranch wells, Fort Garland Water & Sanitation District (FGWSD), and non-local filling stations
- Attempt to identify any existing water rights (ground & surface) that could be reallocated (via an updated augmentation plan) to supply FGWSD, non-local filling stations, or a new community well

- Develop a comprehensive understanding of augmentation plans, in general
- Actively participate in a meeting scheduled and led by Board Member Frase with key players in the Division of Water Resources (DWR)
- After the meeting, establish and maintain a healthy (and hopefully friendly) relationship with the DWR; facilitate regular two-way communication with the DWR
- Keep Board Member Frase up to date on any developments on these fronts
- Provide regular reports on these fronts at the monthly SCRO board meetings

"Filling stations" liaison (green boxes) – Board Member Steve Navratil:

- Develop a comprehensive understanding of the functions and responsibilities of the Fort Garland Water & Sanitation District, and the resources available to them
- Actively participate in a meeting scheduled and led by Board Member Frase with key players at FGWSD
- After the meeting, establish and maintain a healthy (and hopefully friendly) relationship with FGWSD; facilitate regular two-way communication with FGWSD
- Attend FGWSD meetings and provide regular reports on those meetings to SCRO's board
- Develop and maintain healthy (and hopefully friendly) relationships with community members who have already been working to establish access to non-local filling stations; develop a comprehensive understanding of whatever information they are willing to share
- Develop a comprehensive understanding of: what non-local filling stations exist, which ones are currently selling bulk water, which ones have the option of selling bulk water but are not doing so, and the parameters and limitations associated with each of those stations
- Develop and maintain healthy (and hopefully friendly) relationships with the various non-local filling stations, including the ones who are not currently selling bulk water
- Keep Board Member Frase up to date on any developments on these fronts
- Provide regular reports on these fronts at the monthly SCRO board meetings

"Costilla County" liaison (blue boxes) – Board Member Eric Averett:

- Develop a comprehensive understanding of the functions and responsibilities of the Costilla County Board of Commissioners (CCBC) related to access to water, and the resources available to them
- Actively participate in a meeting scheduled and led by Board Member Frase with key players of the CCBC
- After the meeting, establish and maintain a healthy (and hopefully friendly) relationship with the CCBC; facilitate regular two-way communication with the CCBC
- Attend CCBC meetings and provide regular reports on those meetings to SCRO's board
- Develop a comprehensive understanding of the requirements for the potential development of a community well (technical, legal, fiscal, etc.)
- Identify potential locations for a new community well and the "pros" and "cons" of each
- Keep Board Member Frase up to date on any developments on these fronts
- Provide regular reports on these fronts at the monthly SCRO board meetings

"Public relations" liaison (gray boxes) – Board Member Jo Way:

- Develop and maintain healthy (and hopefully friendly) relationships with regional journalists and news outlets
- Work with the board to draft press releases
- Once the press releases are approved by the board, distribute them to the media
- Develop and maintain healthy (and hopefully friendly) relationships with regional legislators and other community leaders

- Leverage those relationships to open channels of communication with reluctant stakeholders and to enhance access to resources
- Keep Board Member Frase up to date on any developments on these fronts
- Provide regular reports on these fronts at the monthly SCRO board meetings

“Storage & transportation” liaison (yellow boxes) – Board Member Mara Rodriguez-Walters:

- Develop and maintain healthy (and hopefully friendly) relationships with community members who have already been working to establish the delivery and/or storage of water; develop a comprehensive understanding of whatever information they are willing to share
- Identify existing and potential commercial delivery services (excluding Sangre de Cristo Water Services, Inc. because our attorney has not yet given us a “green light” to engage in discussions with them)
- Develop and maintain healthy (and hopefully friendly) relationships with those delivery services without “stepping on the toes” of the community members identified above
- Develop a comprehensive understanding of the requirements for establishing regular deliveries either to a central location near Ft Garland or to individual lots (i.e., what are the operating parameters of the various delivery services)
- Develop a comprehensive understanding of the requirements for establishing a new local storage and filling station (technical, legal, fiscal, etc.)
- Identify potential locations for a new local storage & filling station
- Keep Board Member Frase up to date on any developments on these fronts
- Provide regular reports on these fronts at the monthly SCRO board meetings

“Strategic planning” liaison (purple boxes) – Board Member Mike Powell:

- Develop and maintain healthy (and hopefully friendly) relationships with community members who are striving to incorporate our local area into a municipality; develop a comprehensive understanding of whatever information they are willing to share
- Develop a comprehensive understanding of the requirements for municipal incorporation
- Research what is involved in establishing and operating a 501(c)(3) and how the 501(c)(3) might legally fund projects identified and spearheaded by SCRO (which currently is a 501(c)(4) corporation)
- Develop and maintain healthy (and hopefully friendly) relationships with community members who are exploring grant opportunities for community projects related to water, wildfire mitigation, emergency services, etc.; develop a comprehensive understanding of whatever information they are willing to share
- Identify grant sources that would be relevant to our community
- Develop a comprehensive understanding of grant writing/implementation so that you possess the skills needed to liaison with a grant writer and/or program manager (should we hire one)
- Keep Board Member Frase up to date on any developments on these fronts
- Provide regular reports on these fronts at the monthly SCRO board meetings

SCRO Board Membership Eligibility & Representation – Presented by Josabeth (Jo) Way, VP

Some community members, including full-time residents, seasonal residents, and non-resident landowners have expressed interest in serving on the Board.

As the Board seeks to strengthen relationships and address issues that directly affect the community, it is important to prioritize participation from full-time residents. Local owners are more directly impacted by day-to-day concerns such as water supply, road conditions, theft, squatters, and fire mitigation. They also have greater opportunities for in-person connection, which is an important element of leadership and representation.

The recent shift to virtual board meetings has expanded opportunities for non-local owners to contribute. This brings clear benefits, including broader involvement, access to professional expertise, and support for the small number of local owners willing to serve. The current Board President, for example, resides in northern Colorado—four hours from the Ranches—yet has been able to participate effectively through remote access. At the same time, this shift has raised concerns that local residents could lose influence in decisions that impact them most directly.

Each year, the committee should evaluate the level of interest from members and determine an appropriate balance of representation. It is recommended that non–full-time residents be limited **to one or two seats** on the Board. This ensures local voices remain central while still creating space for non-local owners to participate.

Building Social Connections

SCRO COMMUNITY

Presented by Josabeth (Jo) Way, VP

Work Together

Community Days

Workshops

1. Why Social Connection Matters

Stronger trust → makes it easier for the Board to lead and gain support.
More involvement → more volunteers, more ideas, shared ownership.
Healthier culture → less division, more collaboration.

2. Our Opportunity as a Board

In past years, Board visibility was limited.
This year, the Board is active, present, and engaged.
How we communicate and connect now will set the tone for the future.

3. Principles for Building Relationships

Listen First – Approach concerns with curiosity, not defensiveness.
Show Up – Be visible at community events, workdays, and informal gatherings.
Communicate Clearly – Share updates on what's being done and why.
Respect All Voices – Full-time, seasonal, and non-resident members each bring value.
Focus on Common Ground – Highlight shared priorities (roads, water, fire mitigation, safety).

4. The Role of Social Media

Social media can build or break community trust.
Board members are often perceived as speaking for the Board, even personally.

Guidelines:
Avoid divisive or critical posts.
Clarify when speaking personally.
Share updates that are constructive and informative.
Promote connection, not conflict.

5. Practical Ways to Strengthen Community Bonds

Board visibility: "Coffee with a Board Member" drop-ins, rotate attendance at gatherings.
Open channels: Post-meeting updates (short and friendly, not just technical).
Recognition: Thank community volunteers publicly.
Inclusion: Offer small roles for people to get involved without long commitments.
Transparency: Explain the why behind Board decisions, not just the what.

Ways the Board Can Build Social Connection

- Work Together: Host community clean-up days, fire mitigation projects, or small road/trail improvement efforts.
- Gather Socially: Organize potlucks, BBQs, coffee with the Board, holiday events, or outdoor movie nights.
- Share Knowledge & Skills: Offer workshops (fire safety, water conservation), swap days (tools, seeds, books), or family activities like hikes or scavenger hunts.
- Create Traditions: Welcome new owners with a packet, highlight residents in newsletters, or celebrate community milestones.
- Improve Communication: Send quarterly updates, run photo contests, or keep a suggestion box open for feedback (email).

Local Economic Development & Growth – Presented by Josabeth (Jo) Way, VP

Community Needs as Catalysts for Economic Development

A key principle of successful rural development is starting with real community needs. Addressing essential services not only improves quality of life but also creates opportunities for local businesses, tourism, and civic engagement. The following is a thought to show there are needs that could turn into a business idea that solves a problem.

Example: Fort Garland Drinking Water Station

- Current Challenge: Residents must travel to Alamosa to fill 3–6 gallon jugs of drinking water, which is inconvenient, costly, and time-consuming.
- Proposed Solution: Establish a local water filling station in Fort Garland.

Economic Development Opportunities from This Initiative:

1. Local Jobs:
   - Staffing and maintaining the station can provide employment opportunities for residents.
2. Supporting Small Business Ecosystem:
   - A water station can attract complementary businesses nearby, such as cafes, convenience stores, or artisan food vendors.
   - Example: Similar projects in rural Colorado have paired community hubs with farmer's markets or local craft spaces, increasing foot traffic and spending.
3. Tourism & Regional Visitors:
   - Visitors passing through Fort Garland for water services may also explore local shops, historic sites, and eateries, injecting new revenue into the local economy.
4. Community Engagement & Ownership:
   - Residents can participate in planning and advisory committees, strengthening civic infrastructure and ensuring the project meets community needs.
   - Example: The Huerfano County community energy project combined renewable energy initiatives with citizen input, creating a stronger sense of ownership and pride (Huerfano County launches new conservation projects aimed at saving people money).
5. Leverage Grants & Funding:
   - Projects that address basic infrastructure and community health needs can qualify for USDA Rural Business Development Grants, Colorado Rural Jump-Start, or private foundation grants (e.g., El Pomar Foundation).
   - Framing the water station as a community wellness and economic development project makes it more competitive for funding.
   - Example: Fremont County secured grants for infrastructure projects that simultaneously supported business growth and community engagement. (coloradosun.com)

How to Use This Idea as a Launchpad for Local Economic Development

1. Start Small, Scale Later:
   - Launch a pilot water station project to demonstrate feasibility, community demand, and economic benefits.
2. Create a Multi-Use Community Hub:

    - Pair the water station with space for local vendors, a small café, or informational kiosks about Fort Garland's cultural and natural attractions.
3. Engage Stakeholders Early:
    - Include residents, local businesses, and county officials in planning to ensure the project meets real needs and builds buy-in.
4. Document Impact:
    - Track usage, economic activity, and community satisfaction to strengthen applications for additional grants and to guide future projects.

Conclusion:
By turning the water station need into a community-driven economic development project, SCRO can simultaneously solve a practical challenge, generate local revenue, and create a model for future initiatives—building a foundation for broader rural economic growth.