



COLORADO

**Colorado Water
Conservation Board**

Department of Natural Resources

Arkansas Basin Education Action Plan 2021-2023

1. Basin Educational Vision/Goals:

The Arkansas Basin Roundtable (ABRT) PEPO Workgroup will undertake a structured public relations effort to improve engagement with key stakeholders in the basin's water planning process and to enhance communication with diverse audiences regarding the purpose and progress of the water planning process in the Arkansas basin. Additionally, PEPO will elevate public awareness of and support for the Arkansas Basin Roundtable, the Colorado Water Plan update, the CWCB, and other local, regional and statewide water initiatives across the basin.

To these ends, multiple defined audiences will be addressed with targeted messages delivered using appropriate communication tools, from produced video segments to social media; from news releases engaging media coverage to print handouts and face-to-face interaction at conferences, festivals, etc.

In addition, the Workgroup will continue to engage with existing partners and foster relationships with additional entities in the education and outreach space in the basin to convene an education and outreach collaborative.

We estimate active engagement with 200 individuals via Roundtable events and place-based learning events in year one, and 500 in year two. Additionally, we will work to create mass media placements in various newspaper, radio and tv slots in multiple basin communities.

2. How is the Basin structured to implement the EAP? (List of Individuals/organizations Implementing EAP):

The Arkansas basin formed its PEPO Workgroup in early 2021 to conduct the basin's PEPO activities. Members of the Workgroup at the time of this writing are Roundtable members Paul Fanning, Chris Woodka, Terry Scanga, Matt Heimrich, Bob Hamel, Julie Knudsen and Mark Shea. Katie Helm with the City of Fountain and Carol Ekarius with the Arkansas River Watershed Collaborative also serve, and contractor Alli Schuch of Watershed Connections, LLC serves as our PEPO Coordinator.

o How will programs be assessed/monitored?

Traffic on ABRT's website and Facebook account will be monitored for activity.

Participants at educational events will be tracked, and when possible given assessments to gauge their learning and level of engagement.

Audience numbers for media outlets that carry PEPO-released information will be collected from those media outlets.

Surveys and focus groups will gauge knowledge levels of various stakeholder groups.

○ **What are the key metrics that you use to track engagement?**

In addition to the raw numbers of impressions generated by the above activities, the assessment and survey results can be evaluated to measure the impact of programs.

Also key will be the number of individuals involved in place-based learning activities such as Creek Week activities.

Numbers of handouts and educational tools (such as shower timers, pet waste bags or native plant seeds) distributed at events will be tracked.

Website and social media tracking will include number of followers, likes, shares, and page visits.

Critical issues currently in the basin that need to be addressed over the EAP planning period?

See Addendum A for BIP Goals and Revisions. This document defines basin issues to be covered in PEPO activities.

○ **How would you design your programs to target these issues?**

The PEPO Workgroup will work with project proponents to define the audiences that need to understand their projects and the specific information that needs to be communicated. Place-based learning will be designed to provide participants with education that relates directly to the water systems in their areas and examine how those issues are connected to basin-wide and statewide water issues and that fosters behavior changes leading to a healthier watershed.

3. Identify the audience the EAP will be targeting:

The PEPO Workgroup identified several stakeholder groups, the types of messaging appropriate for each group, and some potential communication vehicles for carrying those messages:

Messages

Roundtable	Decision Makers	General Public	Media
Meeting schedule/agenda	Solicit projects	Water Law	Water law
Project updates	Funding opportunities	Water operations	Water operations
BIP updates	Project updates	Roundtable progress	
Legislative/Regulatory info.	Water law	Ark Basin Forum Creek Week	
Colo. Water Plan updates	Ark Basin Forum	General water education	

Vehicles

Roundtable	Decision Makers	General Public	Media
Live, in-person	Email	Website (w/videos)	News releases
Email	“Coffee chats”	News releases	Targeted email/in-person messages
Website	Website	Social media	
Social media	Social media???	Ark Basin Forum	
	Ark Basin Forum	Water festivals	

		Educational tools, handouts	
	Ark Basin Education Collaborative	Creek Week Cleanups	

What new group (stakeholders/general public) are you hoping to engage?

Given the Governor's focus on equity, diversity, and inclusivity we will work to engage underserved populations in the basin. This may include working with community centers, Boys and Girls Clubs, schools and other partners.

- 4. Budget: How will \$6,500 be spent? If possible, please include if your basin is using other funding sources to implement the EAP. (Please create table or attach an excel spreadsheet with EAP submittal) See Attachment - Draft EAP Budget 2021-2023**

Addendum A

Arkansas Basin Goals

Storage Goals

1. Continue to develop storage opportunities within the Basin
 - a. Work with the State Engineers Office of Dam Safety to identify storage facilities that can be renovated due to aging infrastructure, restored due to loss of storage from sedimentation or fill restrictions, or enhanced for additional storage.
 - b. Support funding, including grant contributions where appropriate, for storage restoration and expansion projects.
 - c. Investigate storage needs on a subregional basis and align with planned projects
 - d. Protect the ability to store water in reservoirs located outside of the Arkansas basin that provide transbasin supplies to the basin.
2. Develop alluvial and designated basin aquifer storage in gap areas within the Basin.
 - a. Quantify alluvial storage opportunities in the sub-regions of the Basin, Upper Ark, Huerfano/Purgatoire, Fountain Creek and Lower Ark, beginning with locations identified in CWP Technical Update Storage memo.
 - b. Develop a feasibility study and action plan for aquifer storage focusing on the needs and opportunities in different sub-regions, differentiating between “holding” storage and “recharge” storage.
3. Promote multiple uses at existing and new storage facilities.
 - a. Support rehabilitation efforts with WSRA funds if the project includes environmental and recreational attributes.
 - b. Engage Colorado Parks and Wildlife and other stakeholders in project discussions.
 - c. Work with stakeholders in the basin to identify and encourage opportunities to create storage for multiple purposes and participants.

Municipal Goals

1. Meet the Projected Municipal Supply Gap in each subregion within the Basin.
 - a. Characterize current water supplies by subregion and future supply vulnerabilities.
 - b. Support projects that will help maintain existing supplies, including better management of supplies that are vulnerable and protecting basin imports.
2. Support regional efforts for cost-effective solutions to local water supply gaps.
 - a. Provide the opportunity to build partnerships to support small communities’ ability to pursue projects and address infrastructure challenges.
 - b. Support projects that increase efficiency on current supplies, and the ability to move water to where it is needed.
3. Reduce groundwater dependence for municipal users.

- a. Promote tools to help manage groundwater resources.
 - b. Characterize groundwater supply vulnerabilities in the future with respect to both quantity and quality.
 - c. Develop strategies to address groundwater vulnerabilities, including identifying emergency supplies.
4. Develop collaborative solutions between municipal, agricultural, and E&R users of water, particularly in drought conditions.
 - a. Recognize relationship with Ag goals and renewed focus on broadening partnerships.
 - b. Document lessons learned from existing Ark Basin ATM projects and provide recommendations on programmatic elements for ATM success.

Agricultural Goals

1. Sustain a productive agricultural economy in the Basin that sustains viable rural, agricultural-based communities.
 - a. Quantify economic potential/vulnerabilities under the five planning scenarios.
 - b. Support efforts that maximize productivity while making the most efficient use of ag water supplies.
2. Provide augmentation water as needed to support increased farm efficiencies.
 - a. Support augmentation projects that allow increased efficiencies (transition to sprinklers, canal and reservoir linings, smaller storage at key locations).
 - b. Help establish long-term sources of augmentation water and end reliance on municipal excesses and year-to-year leases
3. Support the development of viable rotating fallow and/or leasing programs between agriculture and municipal interests to address drought and provide risk management for agriculture.
 - a. Convene a committee to research and discuss lessons learned from existing programs and make recommendations for future programs.
4. Sustain recreation and environmental activities that depend on habitat and open space associated with farm and ranch land.
 - a. Quantify the value agricultural lands bring to habitat and recreation.
 - b. Look at current multi-purpose projects and identify successful strategies that support both ag and E&R functionality.

E&R Goals

1. Maintain or improve native fish populations, restore habitat for fish species, and maintain or improve recreational fishing opportunities.
 - a. Continue to support the preservation of native fish species.

- b. Continue to support the Voluntary Flow Management Program (VFMP), and refinement of the program for fisheries.
 - c. Support and help maintain the Gold Medal status of the Arkansas River.
 - d. Support collaborative stream management plans in high-priority watersheds.
 - e. Support the maintenance of current access areas for fishing to protect riparian habitat and help identify opportunities for additional public access to fishing areas.
- 2. Maintain, or improve boating opportunities, including rafting, kayaking, and other non-motorized and motorized boating.
 - a. Continue to support and refine the VFMP for instream boating, including stream gaging and forecasting technology.
 - b. Support the maintenance of current access areas for boating, including safety considerations.
 - c. Help identify opportunities for additional public access to instream and flatwater boating areas.
- 3. Maintain or improve aquatic, riparian, and avian habitat (including wetlands) that would support environmental features and recreational opportunities.
 - a. For all Ag and M&I projects, consider the opportunities to E&R and look for multiple benefits.
 - b. Support the maintenance, improvement, and/or restoration of these habitats.
 - c. Monitor the provision of water to the John Martin Reservoir wetlands.
 - d. Support the maintenance, improvement and/or restoration of wetlands throughout the basin.
- 4. Maintain, improve, or restore watersheds that could affect environmental and recreational resources.
 - a. Identify watersheds with important environmental and recreational attributes and/or critical water supply infrastructure and encourage proactive forest health protection and improvement activities in those watersheds.
 - b. Support and collaborate with ARWC to develop strategies and solutions.
- 5. Improve water quality as it relates to the environment and/or recreation.
 - a. Support efforts to reduce contaminants and improve water quality issues in the Upper Arkansas River (mine tailings) and Lower Arkansas River (salts, selenium), as well as sedimentation from fire impacted areas.

2021-2023 ARKANSAS BASIN ROUNDTABLE PEPO EDUCATION TO ACTION BUDGET

Tasks	Description	Hours	Rate	Request Amount
1	Meeting representation and support for Roundtable, local, and statewide water-related organizations	80	\$ 50.00	\$ 4,000.00
2	Develop and impliment communicaiton strategies	50	\$ 50.00	\$ 2,500.00
				\$ 6,500.00

Other Funding Sources

Water Supply Reserve Fund Grant
(submitted 5/2021 pending approval)

Ark Basin Roundtable	\$15,000.00	
Statewide Account	\$10,000.00	
PEPO Workgroup	\$2,820.00	(in kind)
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	\$27,820.00	