



PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN
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*'Now we have a common enemy —
the Eastern Slope interests.'*

KEN BAKER
Upper Arkansas
Conservancy District

City, conservancy board meet on river questions

By PETER ROPER
The Pueblo Chieftain

Pueblo city officials and representatives of the Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District met behind closed doors Tuesday to try to reach a settlement in the dispute over the city's claim for recreational water rights in the Arkansas River through the Downtown.

No settlement was reached after three hours of discussion, and both sides agreed to meet again on April 8 to review technical information about the river flow.

Even so, participants said the discussions appeared to make progress toward some agreement in the future, according to City Manager Lee Evett.

"I think the feeling around the table was that we all had a better understanding of the issues and concerns that were represented," Evett said following the meeting.

The city was represented by Council President Mike Occhiato and Councilman Randy Thurston, along with Evett and attorneys for the city. The Southeastern district was represented by General Manager Steve Arveschoug and officials from Fountain and Colorado Springs. Aurora officials also took part in the meeting. They also are among the groups that have filed objections to the city's claim for recreational water rights in the river.

The city has requested a minimum flow of 500 cubic feet per second in the Downtown stretch of the river during the summer months and a minimum flow of 100 cfs during the winter.

Southeastern officials have said they are committed to providing a minimum flow, but the city's claim for water rights could interfere with the future plans of the other cities to conduct water exchanges using storage in the Pueblo reservoir.