

WCRC Minutes

August 7, 2002

Intro of members: Jim Matush, Creede; JB Alexander, Creede; Chuck Barnes, Creede; Erik Sandvik, Creede; Leigh Ann Vradenburg, Watershed Coordinator; Laura Coppock, USFWS; Mark Walker, CDPHE; Zeke Ward, Chairman WCRC; Kelley Thompson, AgroEngineering; Scott Randall, URS; Frank Bassett, Creede; Don Gant, Creede; BJ Myers, Mayor of Creede; Mark Rudolph, CDPHE.

Approval of minutes: No corrections to the July minutes were suggested or submitted. Motion to approve the July minutes made by JB Alexander; second made by Erik Sandvik. Motion carried.

Additions/corrections to the agenda: Chuck Barnes wanted to add a discussion of administrative fees for RC&D as recommended by Jim Mietz- so added as New Business Item G. JB Alexander wanted to add a discussion of the Nelson Tunnel- so added to his discussion in New Business Item C.

In-Kind: Forms were provided in hard copy for volunteers to track time and other expenses. Leigh Ann encouraged monthly submission of these forms so that records could be kept current. JB Alexander and Jim Matush submitted forms.

Coordinator's report: Leigh Ann Vradenburg informed the committee that she submitted an article describing the WCRC for the Colorado Watershed Assembly publication, the "State of Colorado's Watersheds" Report. The publication will be available in September and will feature watershed issues and legislation of the previous year, as well as project summaries provided by watershed groups.

The WCRC was not selected for the CF Industries National Watershed Award, but Leigh Ann wanted to thank those who wrote letters on our behalf.

Leigh Ann showed the committee the Biological and Groundwater Monitoring Summary Reports that she had been working on. She invited review and comments on the documents. She is currently working on the surface water report, and a report of waste pile sampling will follow once the remaining samples are collected.

The Colorado Division of Minerals and Geology will have \$32,000 to match our Section 319 grant money for reclamation projects in 2002.

Leigh Ann asked if anyone was having trouble opening or reading file attachments. Laura Coppock suggested saving files as .rtf and everyone should be able to open and read them with no problems.

Leigh Ann informed the committee of discussions in her conference call with Jim Herron (CDMG), Bob Kirkham (CGS), Dan Brennecke (Weston Solutions), Judy Bolis (MFG/Sheppard Miller), and Bruce Wielinga (MFG/Sheppard Miller) about the Solomon wetlands. Judy and Bruce, based on the information the Dan, Jim, and Bob provided, believed that the wetlands could be re-started by providing an easily-digested organic source such as sugars or alcohols. Judy and Bruce have worked in high altitude/ cold climate systems, and believed that their experience could apply to the Solomon system. Laura Coppock asked if they had provided publications regarding their work, such as that in Butte, Montana, which demonstrated persisting effectiveness of the systems for metal retention. Leigh Ann said that she was only provided with 1-page summaries of their projects, but no full reports. Leigh Ann was under the impression that they did not have any long-term case studies in the high altitude/ cold climate systems because the systems were either taken out of operation or not followed up on. Scott Randall and Laura Coppock emphasized that we should get demonstrated effectiveness of their work through reported case studies. Zeke said that conducting a feasibility study would benefit the committee and provide transferable information if the wetlands were re-started. We have the opportunity to create a case study because we have historical data and the groundwork for collecting more data. We will have to deal with permitting issues. JB Alexander asked about problems with odor and the wetland reaching capacity for metals. Zeke said that these questions should be answered by a feasibility study. Zeke asked what sources of money were available to fund this feasibility study and future efforts in the wetlands. Scott Randall suggested the CDMG. Leigh Ann will seek out sources of funds before we make any decisions. JB asked what other options there are for metal removal. Scott suggested contacting Tony Mudder, who is known in the field of mine waste treatment. Erik suggested looking for a report from the projects in Silverton since they are further along in the clean-up process. Laura suggested looking on the USGS website. Zeke suggested that everyone could gather information on treatments before the next meeting and Leigh Ann would coordinate this effort. Erik volunteered to look on the web. Laura indicated that she might be able to designate some funding from UWFWS for sampling. Treatment options for the wetlands will be an agenda item in September.

Old business:

Agro-Engineering: Kelley Thompson distributed copies of the Tec Memo 2: Alternate Mitigation Strategies. This report is also available on their website, <http://www.agro.com/Services/SpecialProjects/willowcreek.html>

Zeke said that in the interest of time, Kelley could go through the report now, and that we could have further discussion when interested parties had had the opportunity to read the document. Leigh Ann will be the contact for comments on the report. BJ Myers said that the city was going to do some work in North Creede, such as provide a small water treatment plant and install a waste water main to the leach field. She wants to coordinate the efforts of the City with those of the WCRC and AgroEngineering. The landowner in North Creede who has had flooding problems has an agreement with the City that he will purchase a new culvert and the city/county will install it. The City wants to know what the options are for that site. Zeke said that the WCRC would support Kelley's recommendations and help the city/county in whatever ways we can. He suggested that FEMA might be a source for funding. BJ said that she would discuss options with

Zeke later.

Kelley briefly discussed the site-specific options covered in his Memo. The agenda next month will address comments and prioritization of flood control measures following a focused TAC discussion.

New Business

CDMG Match: (Covered in Coordinator's Report above)

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USACE Scope of Work: Leigh Ann had previously provided email copies of the Scope of Work submitted by Eric Pease of the US Army Corps of Engineers regarding floodplain work. The purpose of the work is to determine if the Emperious Tailings pile is a threat to the environment, and the borehole(s) will show if the pile is in contact with the groundwater. Mark Walker suggested changing the screened area from 3' above and 7' below the water table, to 5' above and 5' below to allow for the water level to rise following this dry year. Leigh Ann related Jim Herron's email suggestion that they should also collect a sample of natural material from their borehole in the Emperious Tailings Pile. Walker suggested that if funds were available, we should request a 2nd borehole. Otherwise, we may be able to core the pile more next year. Walker also asked that the USACE keep the boreholes in drums for us to donate to someone who is developing ways to manufacture bricks from tailings. Laura suggested that a timetable for reports should be included in the Scope. For consistency, we should ask if ACE could use ACZ laboratories for analyses, or at least for QAQC, since they have been the lab for our sediment and some of our water sample analyses. Mark said that he would keep Hecla's lawyer informed of our decisions and actions on their property.

USGS Rio Grande Data: JB informed the committee that the flume at the Nelson Tunnel was reading 0.39', and he estimated that flow was between 215 and 220 gpm. He said that there was a severe leaking problem, and that only a portion of the water actually made it into the flume. He suggested that we look into resetting the flume or come up with another option for capturing the flow.

JB presented a chart of the data that the USGS collected in the Rio Grande on May 3, 2002. The four sites were described as: above Deep Creek, at Wason, above Spring Creek (near La Garita Bridge), and at Wagon Wheel Gap (near 4UR Bridge). Eleven samples were collected at each site (10 width-integrated and 1 composite). Parameters measured included flow, dissolved oxygen, pH, specific conductance, temperature, and dissolved zinc. One field duplicate and one blank were collected. Results showed zinc concentrations near zero above Deep Creek. Zinc profiles across the river showed that mixing was not complete at Wason, but was complete at the two downstream sites. Composite samples at the downstream sites provided a good representation of the concentrations, and the field duplicate confirmed the data. JB calculated zinc loads (lbs/day) at the sites as: 203 (Wason), 195 (La Garita), and 266 (4UR). These data indicate an increase in loading between the La Garita and 4UR Bridges. Leigh Ann verified with USGS that the samples were all run in the same analysis batch, to remove any error due to laboratory inconsistencies. JB, with the recommendations of the TAC, suggested that we try to determine the source of zinc in that stretch. In the next couple of weeks, we will conduct a field reconnaissance of the area to search for previously unrecorded inflows or other anomalies in field measurements of temperature, pH, and conductivity. Samples will be collected in Farmers Creek, Bellows Creek, Spring Gulch, and from the Rio Grande as necessary based on field

observations. These samples will be run for a suite of metals. We will wait to do more comprehensive sampling of the Rio Grande until next spring, as suggested by Rodger Ortiz (USGS). The TAC recommends that the WCRC does not reconsider the sampling proposed by Keith Lucey (USGS) in the July meeting. Zeke noted that there is a spot in the Rio Grande between the railroad and La Garita bridges that has open water year round, potentially indicating a warm inflow. He suggested that we take temperature measurements early in the morning to see if there are substantial temperature differences. Zeke will make the first step, which will be to secure to permission of the landowners to be on their property and to collect samples as necessary. Motion to sample at least 3 river and 3 creek sites and have the samples analyzed at the SDC lab made by JB Alexander; Second by Laura Coppock. Motion carried.

Leigh Ann read a statement submitted by Joe Burkett regarding deadlines for written comments on the proposed 2002 303(d) listings. Zeke said that Leigh Ann would compose a letter for submission that will include a discussion of our recent data, mixing issues, loading not related to Willow Creek, and implications for our TMDL development.

USGS Rio Grande Low Flow Sampling Revisited: There was no further discussion other than the TAC recommendations noted above.

Brownfields Targeted Site Assessment Money: Leigh Ann informed Mark Walker that she had been contacted by Tom Pike (EPA) regarding site assessment options for Willow Creek. Mark said that he had already recommended future sites to the committee and that things were on hold for now. Mark said that he would contact Pike and inform him that CDPHE was available to do site assessments as needed by the WCRC.

NPS Workshop: Leigh Ann is currently arranging for presentations and attendance at the Nonpoint Source Monitoring Workshop and the Colorado Watershed Assembly meetings in September.

Administration Fees: Leigh Ann stated that the fees requested by RC&D have been factored into the accounting and that they only need to request payment. Chuck Barnes believed that RC&D needed a written statement for their records. Zeke said that he would be talking to Jim Mietz soon, and that he would have him call Leigh Ann.

Airport Corner: Mark Walker said that the subcommittee would convene to review that grading plan submitted by John Parker. Mark stated that the subcommittee might need to act soon, and asked that they have permission to act on behalf of the committee. Motion to authorize the subcommittee to act in the best interests of the WCRC regarding the Airport Corner project made by Chuck Barnes; Second by JB Alexander. Motion carried.

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Final Items:

The next meeting will be September 4, 2002.

Meeting Adjourned 4:58 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Leigh Ann Vradenburg