

WCRC Minutes

February 4, 2004

Intro of members: Leigh Ann Vradenburg, Watershed Coordinator; Zeke Ward, Chairman WCRC; Jeff Graves, CDMG; JB Alexander, Creede; Chuck Barnes, Creede; Jim Herron, CDMG; Don Dustin, Creede; Marcella Hutchinson, USEPA; Karl Hermann, USEPA; Tom Slabe, USEPA; Les Dobson, USFS; Bob Kirkham, Consultant, Alamosa; John Bruce, Creede; Don Gant, TU and Creede; Sarah Scott, Mineral County Public Health; Merle Knous, Creede; Martha Owens, Willow Creek Realty; Debra Wylesky, Creede; Clyde Dooley, Creede; Mark Walker, CDPHE (by phone)

Approval of minutes: Motion to approve the revised January minutes made by Jim Herron; second made by JB Alexander. Motion carried.

Additions/corrections to the agenda: A discussion of the Silver Moon / Soil Analysis (Agenda Item 7B) was moved up to 1:30.

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.

Coordinator's Report: Leigh Ann told the Committee that she, Mike Wireman, and Bob Kirkham had initiated another dye tracer in the floodplain wells as a follow up to the work that Gareth Davies started last fall. They injected dye into well 11 and were looking for it in wells 7, 8, 9, 10, 18, 19, and 20. She said that Don Gant had been helping her sample and that they had not noted the presence of dye in the wells yet.

Leigh Ann said that all of the grants that were planned in the 2004 Vision were now in, with the last one turned in January 30. She, and possibly Zeke, will be presenting the WCRC's proposal to the 319 Council on February 17th in Denver.

Silver Moon / Soil Analysis: Chuck Barnes noted that members of the City Council were visiting. Zeke provided some background by saying that there was a Public Hearing January 27th in which the Silver Moon was discussed. Of relevance to the WCRC were six random soil samples taken on the property from 0-4 inches deep. In several of those samples, levels of some metals were above the Soil Cleanup Table Value Standards of the Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment (CDPHE) for Residential land use. Chuck asked that if the property stayed zoned residential, would there be a grant for the City to buy the land and proceed to look into low cost housing. Zeke said that he had made several phone calls to determine options. In terms of cleanup the primary source of funds would be the Brownfields programs of the US Environmental Protection Agency and the CDPHE. Brownfields funding provides limited opportunities for private landowners, but is open to public entities such as the City or a housing authority. There are other sources of funds for redevelopment. Chuck noted that the City Council was meeting February 10th to consider the requested zoning change for the property. Zeke said that the WCRC would remain neutral on the zoning issue. Merle asked what the soil report meant. Zeke said that it

indicated that the soils on the property exceeded the Table Value Standards. Jim Herron added that it meant there was a potential human health issue. John Bruce asked what the standards meant. Zeke said that they indicated a problem that should be taken care of. Sarah Scott asked if the owner "should" or "must" cleanup the property. Zeke said that at this point there was not a compulsion for the current landowner to do the cleanup; however, there is a certain level of contamination at which the EPA could initiate an Emergency Response action. Martha Owens asked if high levels of contamination could be found anywhere, given the mining and flooding history. Zeke said that more samples were needed to find out the extent of the contamination. Martha asked about the steps to cleanup. Zeke said that a complaint to the EPA could initiate their interest in the site; however, there is the possibility that the property owner could do something now that the contamination is known. Don Dustin asked if the property owner could just do nothing. Sarah added if the buyer could purchase the property and still not do the cleanup. Zeke said yes, that neither the seller nor the buyer is compelled to clean up the land at this point. Merle asked if we had let the seller know of the contamination. Zeke and Leigh Ann had both spoken with one of the owners, John Payne, and had suggested that he contact the CDPHE for advice. Mark Walker said that the owners of the Silver Moon had not contacted him. JB asked about the arsenic levels being above the standards. Mark said that arsenic was controversial and that the range of acceptable levels was wide. Clyde Dooley asked that if the owner did not do anything, should someone else. Mark suggested that the focus be placed on lead. Based on the fact that only one of the samples was above 3,000 mg/kg, maybe the contamination was not widespread. Mark suggested further testing and the possibility that the City could recommend to the owner to work with the WCRC. Bob Kirkham suggested that we also look into the bioavailability of the lead. Mark noted that the samples from a similar situation in Rico, Colorado, had only 30% bioavailable lead. The less bioavailable an element is, the greater the acceptable level in the soil. Jim Herron thought that the levels of barium in the samples might indicate the source of the metals was waste rock from the Bulldog Mine. Bob Kirkham added that the presence of silver suggested that it was possibly crushed ore. Zeke said that it was common practice to gravel driveways with crushed ore and waste rock. Debra Wylesky said that this was the case at the Silver Moon because her father had helped to spread crushed waste rock and ore from the Emperious Mill. Zeke said that the WCRC was in the process of finding out details for doing quick, efficient, and low cost soil screening by using x-ray fluorescence (XRF). Leigh Ann said that there were two possibilities, renting an XRF machine or hiring a consultant. Mark suggested sending a few samples to a lab for verification. Merle said that the City could provide this information to the owner. Zeke indicated that we could also offer soil screening to other landowners. Don Gant asked if the soil around the ballfield had been checked. Zeke said no. Leigh Ann suggested that the WCRC host a public meeting to inform the community of this XRF service. Zeke said that we should plan to do the work after winter when the soils are exposed. Don Dustin asked if the XRF would be available to county residents. Zeke thought that the approach should be to address properties within the Willow Creek watershed and then to expand into the county. Les Dobson asked if this could expand under EPA and their Superfund authority. Mark said that in Rico, the cleanup was being done by the EPA at no cost to the homeowners. Leigh Ann said that she would develop cost estimates for XRF to present to the City Council at their February 10th meeting.

Old Business:

Re-vegetation subcommittee- JB indicated that the re-vegetation subcommittee would be meeting at the parking lot south of the sewage lagoons on March 12th to discuss plans for this year.

Rio Grande samples- JB said that the Committee was unable to collect samples from the Rio

Grande during the stream work on Wason Ranch.

New Business:

Karl Hermann- EPA San Juan Initiative Assessment Assistance- Karl handed out packets of the slide presentation that he had delivered to the TAC. He said that the EPA would be able to provide assistance to the WCRC in watershed assessment. This will involve identifying issues, assimilating and interpreting data, and presenting key findings. Zeke said that this assistance would be provided to the WCRC at no cost. Jim Herron added that this work would go towards that Watershed Plan that the WCRC would be developing this year. Zeke said that the TAC had made a resolution to pursue this offer. Motion for the WCRC to pursue working with the EPA in watershed assessment made by Chuck Barnes; second made by Jim Herron. Motion carried unanimously.

Solomon Wetlands Update- Bob Kirkham- Bob said that he had contacted Ron Cohen with the Colorado School of Mines regarding options for getting assistance in designing a plan to restart the Solomon Wetlands. The options for assistance are: 1) the WCRC could sponsor a research assistantship for a graduate student for one year at a cost of \$30,000-50,000; 2) the WCRC could hire a graduate student on an hourly basis which Ron could oversee for approximately \$3,000-\$4,000; 3) the WCRC could hire Ron as a consultant for his regular consultant fees (possibly totaling several thousand dollars); 4) the WCRC could take on an undergraduate through the EPICs program who would use the wetlands as their project; 5) the WCRC could take on a graduate student as an intern. The benefit of the intern option would be that the student's salary might be paid through the Edna Bailey Sussman Fund. The deadline for the Fund application is February 20th. The internship requires that the student take less than three months between May and September, and that a final report be produced by September 30th. Ron would contribute his time through the university. The WCRC would have to come up with money for the student's travel, lodging, meals, and lab equipment costs. Given the deadline, the WCRC would have to make a decision to pursue the internship today. Zeke provided some background by saying that the wetlands were a Section 319 pilot project. The WCRC is currently looking into an EPA Administrative Order on Consent (AOC) so that the project can be restarted. Therefore, the product of any work done on the site must be sufficient for an AOC. Jim Herron suggested that an EPA 319 small project grant might be available for approximately \$2,000 to help fund the student. Leigh Ann asked if there would be any reservations on the part of the School getting involved in an AOC. Bob said that Ron was aware of the AOC and that it was not a problem because the student's planning would be done prior to the AOC. Bob added that the WCRC's non-profit status might help in their chances of being funded. Jim Herron asked if Ron had suggested senior projects as an option. Bob said that he had not. Zeke asked what Bob thought would be the best option. Bob said that the internship would be the best if we could get our application in by the deadline. Zeke asked how many hours Bob would be putting into this project. Bob thought that he would work 40-50 hours. Leigh Ann said that there is \$2,000 in the budget that could go towards Bob's time if some other source of funding, such as the 319 small project grant, could be used for the student. Motion for Leigh Ann and Bob to work with Ron Cohen and apply for the internship made by Chuck Barnes; second made by JB Alexander. Motion carried unanimously.

Other:

Leigh Ann added that any assistance with well sampling would be greatly appreciated. Don Dustin indicated that he might be available to help.

The next meeting will be March 3, 2004.

Meeting Adjourned 4:22 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Leigh Ann Vradenburg