

## WCRC Minutes

August 4, 2004

**Note:** Chuck Barnes, WCRC Vice President, presided over the meeting in Zeke Ward's absence.

**Intro of members:** Leigh Ann Vradenburg, Watershed Coordinator; JB Alexander, Creede; Don Dustin, Creede; Mark Walker, CDPHE; Chuck Barnes, Creede; Erik Sandvik, Creede; Jim Mietz, SLV RC&D; Jeff Graves, CDMG; Jim Matush, Creede; Melvin Blair, Creede; Jim Erdman, Crestone; Marvin Reynolds, CSU Coop. Ext.; Ed Baltzer, Walsh Environmental

**Approval of minutes:** Motion to approve the July minutes made by JB Alexander; second made by Don Dustin. Motion carried.

**Additions/corrections to the agenda:** A discussion of the ICAST hydropower proposal was added as Old Business B. A discussion of Mark Walker's electroconductivity information was added after the Coordinator's Report.

**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 informed the Committee that she had spread grass seed on all of the 2003 reclamation sites except for the Gormax Mine. At the Phoenix Park Mill and the Midwest she had used an ATV and harrow to work the seed in. She confirmed that the harrow was not damaging to the existing vegetation before she began. She also created a 10'x20' plot at the Phoenix Park Mill site that had straw mulch. She had done this at the request of Les Dobson (USFS) to see if this made a difference in the germination success.

Leigh Ann had been collecting soil samples for John Parker during his cleanup project at Airport Corner. She had collected initial samples at residential zoned sites to determine the need for remediation, and she would collect samples after excavation to confirm that all contamination was removed. The XRF machine was working well. In July these efforts had added up to about 1 week of work. John Parker reimbursed the committee for Leigh Ann's time.

Leigh Ann was working on the EPA paperwork for the Consolidated Funding Process and Brownfields grants. This paperwork was due in the next week and would be necessary to get the funding in order.

Les Dobson had previously told Leigh Ann that the Forest Service was beginning the project at the Outlet Mine. They had the site showing on July 30, and contractors have until mid-August to

submit bids. The start date will be at the end of August and the project is expected to be completed by the end of September.

Leigh Ann said that she was preparing the application paperwork on behalf of the City to submit for an EPA Targeted Brownfields Assessment. She said that she was talking with John Galbavy from Hecla to make sure that everyone was on the same page. She said that Hecla still had some concerns about the process and she would be talking to them again next week. Mark Walker asked if Hecla would be more comfortable if the TBA were being done by CDPHE. Leigh Ann said that she was not sure.

Leigh Ann had received a draft letter from JB to submit to Powell EC regarding the results of the water analyses from their treatment system.

The newsletter that Leigh Ann presented at the July meeting had been printed and distributed in Creede. Leigh Ann had put copies at the post office, San Juan Sports, Rio Grande Angler, City Hall, and the Chamber of Commerce kiosk. Jim Mietz suggested that she could put one in the RC&D newsletter.

Mark Walker said that he had met a vendor from Washington state that also dealt in electroconductivity water treatment. Mark had discussed the Powell results with the vendor and he had been concerned with the pH of the water. The vendor recommended a pH adjustment prior to treatment. He offered to run Nelson Tunnel water through their treatment system. We would need to send them 3 gallons. Mark will give Leigh Ann their contact information. Mark also has cost data for their system.

### **Old Business:**

Coordinator Salary: Leigh Ann informed the committee that she had 1 month of guaranteed funding left. She was looking to the committee to give her some ideas for funding sources. The finance subcommittee said that they would try to meet soon. Mark suggested that they apply for EPA Regional Geographic Initiative funding in the fall specifically for salary. Leigh Ann said that she was considering looking to private donors in the Creede area. She had some contacts for ideas and techniques for approaching large donors. Mark also suggested that the mining companies could be approached for a contribution.

Hydropower Proposal: Leigh Ann, Chuck, and Jim Mietz discussed a proposal from ICAST regarding a feasibility proposal for hydropower. The study would evaluate using hydropower to defray some of the costs for treatment of Nelson Tunnel water. This study would primarily be conducted by engineering students and would be completed by the end of the year. Leigh Ann said that this study would be similar to the one recently funded through the Consolidated Funding Process to be completed by McLaughlin Engineering. Leigh Ann read the goals in the McLaughlin proposal. She felt that the study through McLaughlin would be more comprehensive and that the committee should wait to see what came out of that before looking into the ICAST study. Jim Mietz wanted to make sure that the McLaughlin study would provide several

alternatives for hydropower location and uses. Don Dustin asked about the hydropower study that had been done several years before. Chuck said that the study was good, but that technology had improved dramatically in the last few years. Don said that the previous study probably gave us a good idea of the potential for hydropower, even if technology had improved the efficiency of the system. The committee agreed to wait on the ICAST study. Leigh Ann told Jim that she appreciated him bringing the ICAST proposal to them. A subcommittee of Don, Erik, JB, and Leigh Ann was formed to come up with a Scope of Work for the McLaughlin study. They will meet on August 17<sup>th</sup>, at which time Don will have a draft SOW for them to review.

### **New Business:**

**Erdman X-ray Diffraction:** Jim Erdman briefly discussed his previous work with metals concentrations in plant tissues as an indicator of contaminated groundwater. He had prepared a draft report for the committee regarding the results from the willow leaves that he had collected. He believed that there might be another contamination source on the hillside east of highway 149 and the Emperious pile. He had grabbed samples of soils in culverts near the substation on the highway. He had copies of the x-ray diffraction results from the soils to distribute to the TAC. He was particularly interested in the presence of jarosite, which is formed in low pH conditions, often in association with pyrite. He thought that given the potential for Leigh Ann to be unfunded for awhile that they should go ahead and distribute the original report and potentially present the soil data in a subsequent report. Leigh Ann said that if he was able to come up with a brief paragraph about the soil results that she could incorporate it into the report. Jim was interested in some drill holes in the Creede area. Erik will find to location of the drill holes and get them to Jim.

**TAC Items:** Leigh Ann said that she had talked to Anita Culp with the Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps was looking for a mitigation area for wetlands destroyed in the Horca area along the Conejos River. The mitigation wetland would be 6-8 acres in size and would need to be a willow shrub wetland. The committee would need to come up with a conceptual plan for wetland construction and an estimated cost. The Army Corps would then take the cost estimate and come up with a fee for landowners. The committee would be responsible for contracting the engineering and construction of the wetlands. Leigh Ann was told about a contractor that had done mitigation wetlands for the Telluride ski area. She thought that he would be a good choice because he had designed these wetlands in an area similar to Willow Creek. JB asked if the state had a wetlands person that could help with the design. Mark said that they did not have a person that did construction design. Marvin asked if there was a problem because we were not the landowners. He also asked how this would affect stream reconstruction that the committee was planning. Leigh Ann said that the Corps was looking for projects that would have public access. She thought that the floodplain areas either owned by the Mineral County Fairgrounds Association or Hecla would be good. This was because the intent of Hecla was to donate the land to the City. Jim Mietz asked how soon this would happen. Leigh Ann said that it would take approximately 2 years for the landowner funds to come in. Jim also asked if the NRCS had people that designed wetlands. Leigh Ann said that Steve Russell had recommended Partners for Wildlife in the San Luis Valley as wetland consultants. Marvin asked if the Corps could pay for the consultant up front for a preliminary design. Leigh Ann said no, that the committee had to come up with the design and she hoped that it could be done in the form of a proposal for future work. Jim Erdman said that the Corps had a strict definition of what the wetland would encompass. Jim Mietz recommended that we contact Scott Miller from Partners to see if they would be interested. Leigh Ann said that she would also talk to Ducks Unlimited, although she thought that they might not be interested because it would be outside of their valley focus area. Ed Baltzer said that Walsh Environmental would be interested in submitting a proposal. He suggested that the committee send out a letter to any potential consultants to see who might be

interested. The committee expressed concerns over standing water in wetlands and associated mosquito habitat. Leigh Ann said that there was a short time frame and that the Corps would like to have something by the beginning of September. Motion to pursue a wetlands mitigation project with the Corps and to talk to consultants to see who is available to bid made by Marvin Reynolds; second made by Erik Sandvik. Motion carried. Leigh Ann will continue discussions with the TAC by email.

**Other:**

The Committee asked if John Parker could come to the September meeting to discuss the work that he is doing for cleanup. Leigh Ann said that she would talk to him. Leigh Ann said that as far as she could tell, Parker was doing a good job on the clean up and making sure that the water truck was used to minimize dust. Mark said that Parker's intention for the commercial development was to not take anything away from downtown- i.e. that he wanted to keep the specialty, 1-of-a-kind shops downtown.

The next meeting will be September 1, 2004.

Motion to adjourn made by JB Alexander; second made by Don Dustin. Motion carried.

Meeting Adjourned 3:36 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Leigh Ann Vradenburg