

WCRC Minutes

October 6, 2004

Intro of members: Leigh Ann Vradenburg, Watershed Coordinator; JB Alexander, Creede; Don Dustin, Creede; Jim Mietz, SLV RC&D; Zeke Ward, Creede; Kathleen Reilly, CDPHE; Jim Erdman, USGS Emeritus; Jeff Graves, CDMG; Win Wright, Southwest Hydro-Logic; Bob Kirkham, Consultant; Mark Walker, CDPHE; Steve Russell, NRCS; Cindy Villa, NRCS; Jim Herron, CDMG

Approval of minutes: There were no suggested changes to the September minutes. Motion to approve the September minutes made by JB Alexander; second made by Don Dustin. Motion carried.

Additions/corrections to the agenda: Steve Russell suggested a discussion of the meandering stream design be added as Old Business E.

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 said that she had attended the Colorado NonPoint Source Forum and the Colorado Watershed Assembly meetings in Glenwood Springs at the beginning of September. She said that these meetings were especially relevant to the activities of the WCRC at this time because the NPS meeting covered watershed planning and the CWA meeting addressed funding issues for watershed groups. Leigh Ann said that she and the WCRC had been recognized at the NPS forum with an Honorable Mention for NonPoint Source work. She said that this was quite an honor and that she was proud to be recognized. Leigh Ann said that the CWA had released their annual State of Colorado's Watershed Report. This report covered the issues affecting Colorado water and watershed groups in the last year. It also featured 1-page summaries of the work of watershed groups throughout the state. Leigh Ann said the WCRC was featured in the report. Leigh Ann presented her updated poster and tri-fold brochures at the CWA meeting. She said that agency people could have her remaining brochures and that she could print more if they were needed.

Leigh Ann attended a conference at the Mountain Studies Institute in Silverton at the end of September. Zeke also attended and presented on a board of watershed group chairmen/coordinators. Leigh Ann displayed the current poster and gave a presentation with Karl Hermann (EPA) regarding the history of the WCRC and the assessment work that the EPA was doing. Leigh Ann thought that these presentations were well received.

Leigh Ann applied for the Altria grant that was mentioned at the September meeting. Eligible expenses under this grant included project overhead and salaries. Leigh Ann applied for \$20,000, \$16,000 of which would go toward her salary. She thought that we would hear on selection in November.

A second creek clean-up day for this year was held in September. Leigh Ann said that there were 13 volunteers and the City again provided a dump truck and backhoe for the effort. The focus was once again the area of the floodplain downstream of the flume. They hauled metal and other trash to the dump and made piles of wood for the county to burn. Don said that the other day five piles were burning. He said that there was a light rain that day, and that the piles did not burn all the way down. He did say that things looked better and that they had burned the pile near the railroad bridge that had been an eyesore. Leigh Ann said that Ben with the City had said that they would get out and clean up some of the remaining stuff if they had the time. Leigh Ann said that pictures or an article would be in the Mineral County Miner this week. She said also that an article on the Forest Service clean up at the Outlet would be in the paper.

Leigh Ann said that she had talked to Bob Tridle from Hecla about the assessment on the millsite. Bob had said that they had contracted Spectrum to do the work and that they were finishing up the Scope of Work this week. He hoped to be able to get a draft of the SOW to the WCRC next week for review. They welcome any comments or suggestions from the committee, but it is hoped that Spectrum, due to their experience with the Voluntary Clean Up Program, will be knowledgeable of the process.

Leigh Ann said that she had received a letter that week from the Ben and Jerry's Foundation. Leigh Ann had previously sent them a letter of intent and a synopsis of a grant proposal. The letter from the foundation said that the WCRC and the proposed project were eligible for funding and that a full grant proposal would be accepted. The Foundation board meets monthly, so there is no particular deadline for the proposal. Leigh Ann said that she would like to get to it over the winter.

Leigh Ann received an email from Sabrina Forrest indicating that the EPA had received a draft report on the soil at the Silver Moon Trailer Park, but that the EPA was reviewing the report for another draft. They are still waiting on the bioavailability data. Keith Siddel and Sabrina had been communicating about setting up a meeting to discuss the results with the park residents. They were hoping to set up a meeting around the first of December. Keith had expressed that the meeting would be for the residents, not the general community or the WCRC, although Leigh Ann thought that she was invited as a representative.

The WCRC was selected to receive \$18,000 from the Colorado Watershed Protection Fund to do the Windy Gulch flood control project. Leigh Ann said that Brian Hyde with the Colorado Water Conservation Board had also identified a source of approximately \$20,000 through the severance tax funds that could go toward the project. The estimated cost of the project was close to \$60,000, and Leigh Ann asked the Committee if they had any ideas for the remaining funding. Mark suggested that a Community Development Block Grant through DOLA might be appropriate. Win suggested that the Bureau of Reclamation might have funds. Leigh Ann asked if we should go ahead and talk to the City about sponsoring a grant to DOLA, whether for CDBG or Mineral Impact funding. Zeke said the City council would be meeting on October 12, and since he had already planned to attend, he could make the request. Steve suggested that a way to cut costs for the project might be to install a smaller culvert with a low water crossing.

Old Business:

Fundraising Plan: Leigh Ann passed out a document that she had prepared that detailed her duties and the upcoming projects of the Committee. The document also indicated the secure and potential funds for the Coordinator salary. Zeke said that we would likely approach the Rio Grande Water Conservation Board again in January to request \$16,000. He said that the Board had expressed that they would like to see us get funding from other sources, but that the Mineral County Commissioners had always been very supportive of funds coming back into the County for the purposes of supporting the WCRC. Mark suggested that we ask for more if that is going to be our only way to access tax money for our project. Steve suggested that we might also be able to approach the San Luis Valley Water Conservancy District for funds. Kathleen agreed with Mark, but said that we should take into account how our requests have been received. Mark added that maybe we could request \$16,000 as before, with an additional \$4,000 for developing other income options. Jim Mietz asked if we showed the Board evidence of our work or other deliverables. Leigh Ann said that last year she had written a letter to the Board ahead of time indicating our current and upcoming projects. She had also delivered a PowerPoint presentation at the meeting. Win suggested that we link our funding request to a particular deliverable that the funder would be interested in, such as water quality data. JB asked why the Board would benefit from our work. Zeke said that our efforts regarding sedimentation, flood control, and stream channelization would be of interest to the Board. Leigh Ann said that we need a fundraising plan so that we do not just "get by" with the funding that we have and end up in the same predicament at the end of next year. Kathleen agreed that the situation was critical and that we need a long-term fundraising plan. She said that she had had a conference call the day before to discuss funding and to identify if there were any sources of federal or state money that could be available in the short term. She listed five options that were possibilities: 1) using money from the Brownfields grant if I managed the clean up at the fairgrounds; 2) using money from the new 319 grant for watershed plan development; 3) talking with Brian Hyde about the potential for severance tax funds through the Colorado Water Conservation Board; 4) talking with Deb Downs from DOLA about the availability of mineral impact money for salary; and 5) seeing what the RC&D had available. Jim Mietz said that they were struggling with funding right now. He suggested that we write more into grants for project administration since the RC&D only takes 5% and programs such as 319 allow up to 10% of the cost to go to administration. Mark said that the State money that would be going toward the Brownfields grant has fewer strings than the Federal money, and that it might be easier to use that money for my coordination of the clean up. Mark also said that consultants must implement the clean up. Steve asked why we are waiting until January to approach the RGWCB. Zeke said that he had been told that would be the appropriate time so that they could budget it in for the year. Kathleen said that the Colorado Watershed Assembly was supporting a funding initiative from Congress for headwaters states in the Rocky Mountains. Senator Allard is supportive of the initiative. Jim Mietz said that the finance committee should meet soon and suggested Thursday in Alamosa at 9:00am. Steve said that he could not make the meeting but suggested two things: 1) we could approach the RGWCB at the October meeting to ask for \$1,000, and 2) create a group such as the Friends of Willow Creek, which could donate to the WCRC. Mark suggested that we get a feeling from Hecla and Homestake as to whether or not they could donate to the WCRC without a concern that it would increase their PRP status. Cindy suggested that we contact the repertory theater to see if they had any ideas for fundraising. Jim Mietz said that we should look into funding through the Enterprise Zone. Zeke said that we had to have project status for that. Bob suggested that we look for donations from people on the river in South Fork. Don Dustin suggested that we approach the homeowners associations and that they should be registered with the state or the county. Bob said that we might apply for a small grant from the San Luis Valley Rural Electric Cooperative.

Nelson Tunnel Feasibility Study Planning: Leigh Ann said that she had talked with Jim Herron and Mike Wireman about the feasibility study on the Nelson Tunnel treatment. Mike said that he would like to wait on the project until after the December meeting when he would be there and we could invite McLaughlin to discuss it. Mike and Jim are considering applying for an EPA Consolidated Funding Process grant to finish the dewatering/source control study.

Erdman Willow Leaf Report: Jim Erdman said that they had discussed the report at the TAC. He was sending out the report for review and to evaluate the possibility of publication. Leigh Ann said that she could put it on the web. Mark said that another major decision had been to do a summary report of all of the floodplain/groundwater work.

Fairgrounds Data/Standards: Leigh Ann said that she had collected all of the soil samples for the fairgrounds. She had analyzed them for XRF and found that all of the sites on the floodplain and middle bench were contaminated above commercial standards for lead. She had sent the samples to the lab for SPLP, but did not have the data back yet. She said that she still needed to come up with a vegetation monitoring plan for the VCUP and asked Steve Russell if he could help. Mark said that there was a plan for a clean up site in Crested Butte that he could send to Steve to work with.

Meandering Stream Design: Steve said that the local NRCS office that had been working on the stream design for the floodplain was busy with cost share projects that had priority over our non-cost share design. They were sending the design to the NRCS regional team. He said that the proposed date for draft design was April 2005.

New Business:

2005 319 Grant / Last Chance and Amethyst Dumps: Leigh Ann said that the Forest Service was planning to do an Engineering Evaluation Cost Assessment for the Last Chance in 2005, with construction in 2006. Les Dobson had previously discussed this with the committee and had gotten an informal commitment from the WCRC that they would use their 2005 319 request to do a concurrent project on the Amethyst. Leigh Ann said that the plan was to have CDMG do the engineering so that construction could start at the same time as the Forest Service. Zeke asked if the WCRC was ready for this project. Jim Herron said yes, that he and Jeff would be able to do the design. Leigh Ann said that timing this project with the Forest Service was beneficial since the partnership could act as leverage to get funding on both sides. Jim Herron added that the CDMG could provide the match for the 319 grant. He said that the current design that he was working on was an open flume through the waste pile with run on controls. Zeke asked who the landowners were. Jim said that the Poxsons were the owners of the Amethyst. Leigh Ann said that the WCRC needed to decide whether or not to do this project now because she had to make a presentation to the 319 mining subcommittee on October 20. Motion to use the 2005 319 grant request for the Amethyst reclamation made by JB Alexander; second made by Don Dustin. Motion carried.

501(c)(3): Leigh Ann said that she thought we should evaluate the pros and cons of getting our own 501(c)(3) status. We also needed to see if there was free legal help with the process. Zeke

said that should be part of the discussions with the finance committee. Don Dustin suggested that we contact Janelle Kukuk. Kathleen said that the finance committee would come back to the November meeting with the pros and cons.

Other:

The next meeting will be November 3, 2004.

Meeting Adjourned 4:07 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Leigh Ann Vradenburg