

WCRC Minutes

January 5, 2005

Intro of members: Leigh Ann Vradenburg, WCRC Director; Don Dustin, Creede; Zeke Ward, WCRC Chairman; Jeff Graves, CDMG; Chuck Barnes, Creede; JB Alexander, Creede; Jim Matush, Creede; Jim Erdman, USGS Emeritus; Karl Hermann; USEPA; Mike Wireman, USEPA

Approval of minutes: There were no suggested changes to the December minutes. Motion to approve the December minutes made by JB Alexander; second made by Mike Wireman. Motion carried.

Additions/corrections to the agenda: Mike suggested that we move up the discussion of Nelson Tunnel sampling so that it could be discussed before Jeff had to leave. He also requested a discussion of Mineral Impact funding in conjunction with the Nelson Tunnel discussion. Mike and Karl wanted to postpone a discussion of the assessment report until Zeke arrived.

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 the Committee had received \$500 from Creede Resources, Inc. (CRI). She read a letter from Bob Tridle that indicated that CRI would like to continue to support the WCRC with a donation for this year. She said that she would put the money into the WCRC account with RC&D. The Committee could decide to use the funds for refreshments in the future.

Leigh Ann said that during the next month she would be working on the Watershed Management Plan, the clean up planning at the fairgrounds, and the Ben and Jerry's grant. She reminded the Committee that they had been selected by the Ben and Jerry's Foundation to submit a full application for a grant. This funding source could be used for operational support.

Leigh Ann and Zeke will be giving a presentation to the Rio Grande Water Conservation Board on January 18th. They will update the Board on the activities of the Committee and request \$17,000 for Director salary.

The WCRC will be offering the 8-hr MSHA refresher course on January 11th at City Hall. The class will start at 8:00am.

Leigh Ann spoke with Eric Twitty about getting the historic reports in electronic format. All that

remains is the figures, which Eric will either recreate and scan, or copy the original pages. He said that he would have everything to Leigh Ann in three weeks.

Leigh Ann said that she was working with Brian Hyde and Kelley Thompson to get the Scope of Work ready for the Windy Gulch flood control project. She said that Brian was offering \$18,000 through the Colorado Water Conservation Board's Severance Tax funds and \$10,000 through their Flood Control Program. Leigh Ann said that this would be enough funding to do the basic project, and if the Department of Local Affairs Mineral Impact funding of \$20,000 also came through, then there would be enough money to expand or to deal with potential problems such as bedrock or utility interferences with digging.

Leigh Ann received a call from Ron Harrison, who was interested in writing a grant for the Creede school to do an environmental education project. Leigh Ann said that she had discussed several ideas with Ron, which had included a macroinvertebrate study. She thought that this would be of interest to the students and could provide data to the Committee.

Leigh Ann said that John Parker was still not finished with the clean up on his property. The problem he encountered was arsenic contamination at a depth of at least 30" on the western side of the property. He was talking with Mark Walker (CDPHE) about capping, rather than excavating, that area.

Mike Wireman, Sabrina Forrest (EPA), Mark Walker, and Leigh Ann had met with Keith Siddell and the residents of the Silver Moon trailer park a few days after the WCRC December meeting. Keith discussed the results of the EPA site assessment with the residents. He described his plan for initiating a housing authority that could take possession of the property. This would ensure that Creede maintained low income housing opportunities, and because the authority would be a non-profit, quasi-governmental entity, it would be eligible for clean up funding. Mike said that the EPA and the State would continue to work with Keith to come up with a clean up plan. Keith was already addressing dust issues with the road through the site.

Nelson Tunnel sampling and analysis/ Mineral Impact funding- Mike said that he and Leigh Ann had had a conference call with Andrew Ross regarding the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) development for the Rio Grande. Mike said that the EPA had met with the CDPHE and persuaded them to move the Rio Grande TMDL up on their list of priorities. Andrew had done monthly calculations to determine the load reductions necessary to meet Table Value Standards, but he needed more data from the Nelson Tunnel to determine what load could be removed there to meet the TMDL. Mike said that the WCRC should sample and take flow measurements at the Nelson monthly. The samples could be analyzed at EPA labs at no cost to the Committee. The WCRC has had an issue in the past with using the EPA lab because of the fear of cost recovery. Mike said that there would be no cost recovery for these analyses because this project would be for TMDL development rather than for a CERCLA project. He had already discussed this with Zeke, and Zeke was now in approval of using the EPA lab. JB asked if we would be able to review the TMDL prepared by the State. Mike said yes, that Andrew would send a letter of results that we could review. Mike said that there was still the remaining problem of getting accurate flow measurements, because some flow bypassed the flume. Jeff said that the problem with fixing or replacing the flume was that any corrections to the flow situation would require digging into the toe of the debris pile surrounding the collapsed portal. The problem with digging

was that, as a previous attempt had shown, the water was under pressure and could cause a moderate to severe blowout with a release of orange, contaminated water. Jeff said that there was the potential to measure flow underground, but that was not as practical to do monthly, and it still had some degree of error. JB asked if a tracer could be used. Mike said that was also labor intensive and might also account for flow that was not part of Nelson Tunnel discharge. Mike asked if CDMG could look at the flume situation again within the next month. Jeff said that he would talk to Jim Herron about getting some of their associates to look at it. Motion to authorize monthly Nelson Tunnel sampling with analysis by the EPA lab made by Chuck Barnes; second made by JB Alexander. Motion carried.

Mike said that he had talked with Mark Walker about pursuing Mineral Impact funds to address Nelson Tunnel treatment. These funds were managed by the Colorado Department of Local Affairs. Leigh Ann said that she had worked with the City of Creede to apply for these funds in December for the Windy Gulch project. Mike said that he and Mark would talk with some DOLA representatives this month about the potential for using some of the funds for the Nelson. Mike said that we also needed to do a comprehensive underground sampling of high and low flow. Jeff said that we had done such a sampling in April and November 2002. He said that the results were somewhat inconclusive because the water was pooled, but that it was evident that most of the water came in around the Berkshire.

Old Business:

Willow Report- Jim Erdman said that he was continuing to investigate a possible alternative source of contamination to the floodplain groundwater. Leigh Ann had distributed a compilation of emails between Jim and other scientists regarding these investigations. Jim said that this interest had started during his willow study when he had reviewed the well data and found MW17 somewhat anomalous. Because this well was across from a drainage, he decided to pursue that as a water source. He grabbed some stream sediments from the drainage in May, but found no water running. There was jarosite in the sediments, which suggested a pyrite source. He collected four more samples during the summer. These samples had very high levels of lead (700ppm). From maps by Steven and Ratte, Mike said that it was proposed that the Amethyst fault extended to the drainage area in question. Jeff and Mike said that the wells below the drainage, MW17 and MW18, had high metals, but not in comparison to those wells upstream in the floodplain. Jim said that the lead in the stream sediments did suggest the potential for contaminated water. Jeff asked how much of an effect the previous use of the prospect pits as a shooting range might have had on the presence of lead. Mike said that the drainage might be a pathway, but that it did not move much water. He suggested that water might be moving through a fan deposit instead of a fault. Jim said that he might sample currant bushes in and out of the lineaments in the summer to see if there were differing metal concentrations. He said that he had found choke cherry and circular areas of sedge that might indicate water sources. JB said that he knew of several places in Dry Gulch where springs could be sampled. Mike said that we could slip Dry Gulch samples in with the Nelson Tunnel samples for the EPA lab to analyze. Mike said that we should revisit sampling at a summer meeting. Zeke said that this would be of interest to us because even if it is a natural source, it might be easier to clean up than an anthropogenic source, and it might further us in meeting our TMDL. He said that it might also be of interest to the City because they are the intended recipient of the Hecla floodplain land. Mike said that he would include the Dry Gulch samples in his EPA lab request. Erdman said that he was still interested in locating the Todilto drill holes. JB said that he might contact Keith Siddell, who is the new landowner of most of that hillside area.

EPA Assessment: Mike and Karl Hermann presented two hard copies and one cd containing the EPA's interim final of the watershed aquatic resources assessment. They would like to get feedback from the committee. Mike said that there were two purposes for doing the assessment: 1) to help with preparation of the watershed management plan, and 2) to provide the Committee with a series of recommendations. Karl gave a PowerPoint presentation in which he covered the topics of each chapter and displayed some of the figures that were used in the report. Zeke asked if they had included the biological inventory of Mineral County prepared by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program. This inventory was done in the late 90's, and indicated such interesting things as the fact that rare plants were found growing in waste rock piles. Mike said that he would like to see the inventory. Mike went over the recommendations of the assessment, which were: 1) for the WCRC to become a permanent entity to guide watershed management; 2) to develop and implement a monitoring program; 3) to continue with remediation; 4) to conduct flood control projects; and 5) to do more work to restore wetland and riparian resources. Mike suggested that we find some funding to contract someone like Chris Hazen to do a conceptual design for floodplain restoration. Chuck reminded the Committee that the Creede Historical Society would like to have a copy of the final EPA Assessment Report for their library. Mike said that the EPA would like comments by the end of the month.

New Business:

LIDAR- Leigh Ann said that she had talked with Steve Yochum about the floodplain design that the NRCS was working on. Steve had said that he was interested in getting a LIDAR survey of the floodplain for his design work. LIDAR, which stands for Light Detection and Ranging, is a type of aerial mapping similar to RADAR, and can be used to create 2' contours of an area. He had approach Leigh Ann to see if the Committee might be interested in getting such a survey for a larger portion of the floodplain. Leigh Ann had suggested that Steve get a quote to conduct LIDAR for the lower watershed, to an area just above the mines. Leigh Ann said that the estimate for this work was \$20,000, and that Steve thought the NRCS might be able to provide \$5,000-10,000, depending on their budget. Don asked what the benefit would be. Leigh Ann said that she had talked with Les Dobson (USFS), and he had said that the Forest could benefit from such a survey if it could help them determine the volume of the Last Chance pile for reclamation planning. Zeke asked if the City would be interested in using it for a new plat map. Chuck said that the City was not pursuing a new plat at this time. Zeke said that he could see several other projects that would provide a greater benefit to watershed reclamation and management at this time than a survey. Motion to inform Steve Yochum that the WCRC would not be interested in a LIDAR survey at this time made by Zeke Ward; second made by Chuck Barnes. Motion carried.

Other:

The next meeting will be February 2, 2005.

Meeting Adjourned 4:35 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Leigh Ann Vradenburg