

WCRC Minutes

February 2, 2005

Intro of members: Leigh Ann Vradenburg, WCRC Director; Don Dustin, Creede; Zeke Ward, WCRC Chairman; Jeff Graves, CDMG; Chuck Barnes, Creede; Jim Matush, Creede; Jim Erdman, USGS Emeritus; Phil Bethke, ex-USGS; Jim Mietz, SLV RC&D; Les Dobson, USFS; Mark Walker, CDPHE; Russ Schnitzer, Trout Unlimited; Kathleen Reilly, CDPHE

Approval of minutes: Revisions- "Stephens" to "Steven"; Mike Wireman mentioned Amethyst fault on Steven and Ratte map, not Erdman; JB mentioned there were several areas to sample springs in Dry Gulch, not a couple of areas. Motion to approve the revised minutes made by Chuck Barnes; second made by Don Dustin. Motion carried.

Additions/corrections to the agenda: Zeke added a discussion of potential conflicts of interest with his role as County Commissioner as Old Business E. An update on the willow leaf publication was added as Old Business F.

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 and Zeke had given a presentation to the Rio Grande Water Conservation Board on January 18th. She had given them an update on what the WCRC accomplished in 2004 and what was planned for 2005. She thought that the presentation was very well received, and the Board had approved the \$17,000 that was asked for. The presentation also resulted in an article in the Valley Courier about the WCRC. Leigh Ann said that she had several copies of the paper if anyone wanted one. She said that she was pleased with the accuracy of the report.

Leigh Ann said that she had been in communication with Frank Satterlee of Powell Water Systems regarding treatment of Nelson Tunnel water. Frank had met with Jim McLaughlin, who is working on the Nelson Tunnel Feasibility Study, to discuss a treatment procedure. Frank had spoken with Zeke about the previous water samples that had been treated with the Powell process, but still came up with elevated metals concentrations. Frank said that, because of the high conductivity, the treatment of the water should be different from that originally proposed. Frank had processed a new water sample and sent the resulting water to the WCRC. Leigh Ann asked if the committee was interested in having the samples analyzed and how we should pay for them. She said that there were four samples, one raw and three from different treatment techniques. Phil suggested that we should have our local lab analyze them, and ask Powell to pay for the analyses. Don said that we should definitely analyze them for the sake of having the data to evaluate the efficiency of the treatment method. He suggested that we might keep the data for ourselves, and tell Powell that we would give them the results if they paid for some of the analyses. Les said that Forest Service characterization challenge cost share agreement money could be used to pay for the analyses. Motion to have the Powell System treated samples analyzed made by Don Dustin; second made by Kathleen. Motion carried.

Leigh Ann said that she had received most of the surface water data from RiverWatch for the 2003 and 2004 sampling events. She said that she was still missing the Nelson and Solomon Tunnel data, as well as some of the duplicate and blank data. She said that she was concerned that the Sangre de Cristo metals duplicates did not match up very well with the RiverWatch data, especially for aluminum. Phil asked if our Sampling and Analysis Plan had provisions for how to deal with analytical problems. Leigh Ann said that she thought the SAP said that the data would be flagged, but there was no resolution on the lab's part. Leigh Ann said that once she had all of the data and was able to put a summary together, then the TAC could discuss the results and follow up. Motion for the TAC to discuss the QAQC of the data made by Phil; second made by Chuck Barnes. Motion carried. Mark said that we might want to evaluate the use of the RiverWatch lab. Jim Erdman said that he had used pH paper to test the pH of the creek and found it to be around 5.5. He said that he had checked his paper with Sangre de Cristo lab. He said that this was not the same as the near-neutral values that the committee reported for the creek in their surface water report. Leigh Ann said the committee always followed appropriate calibration and checking procedures with their meters. Additionally, there were different standards, meters, and personnel involved in the various sampling events, so that it was not likely that there was a problem or question of the data. Motion for Jim Erdman to be on the TAC made by Chuck Barnes; second made by Jim Mietz.

Leigh Ann said that she would be presenting to a Biology 2 class at Sargent High School on February 3. She said that she would be giving a presentation that covered a brief history of the committee and focused on the biological sampling that has been done. She said that she would also cover biological monitoring in general. She had prepared a Jeopardy-type game for them to play at the end of the presentation. She said that she hoped this would be a good outreach tool that could be used at other high schools, as well as with adult groups.

Leigh Ann said that she had a summary of the current snow pack data from the NRCS for general information in case anyone was interested. She said that all of the areas surveyed were >100% of average. The SNOTEL site at the upper Rio Grande indicated the snow water equivalent was 226% of average.

Old Business:

Nelson Tunnel flume: Jeff said that on Tuesday, they had installed a flume inside the mine at the Bachelor so that flows inside could be compared with those at the flume outside of Nelson Tunnel. He said that he had read 224 gpm following installation. Leigh Ann said that she had checked the outside flume that morning and it read 235 gpm.

Funding for Nelson Tunnel sample shipping and supplies: Leigh Ann said that the committee had approved monthly sampling of the Nelson Tunnel at the January meeting, but that there was no discussion of how the shipping and supplies would be paid for. She said that she thought there would be sufficient filters and other sampling supplies for the 12 samples, but that it had cost \$40 that morning to ship the samples overnight to the lab. Zeke suggested that some of the committee members from the Denver area could carry the samples back next time. Les said that Forest Service characterization funds could not be used to pay for the sample shipping. Leigh

Ann said that surface water was a task that was still included in the 319 purchase order for remaining characterization, but that the funds under that task had already been expended. Kathleen said that it would be ok to move funds from another task to surface water if necessary.

Assessment review: Leigh Ann reminded Zeke and Les that the EPA would like to have reviews of the assessment report within a week or two. Mark asked what the purpose of the report was. Leigh Ann said that the report compiled data for the entire watershed from multiple sources into a comprehensive summary document. This report will act as the cornerstone for the watershed management plan. Les said that he had an issue with how the limited scope of the WCRC's work was criticized. Leigh Ann said that she had commented on that in the previous draft, and suggested that Les address it in his review. Mark said that he wanted to review the report. Leigh Ann said that she would tell him how he could access the report on the web.

Finance subcommittee update: Kathleen said that the finance subcommittee had met that morning to discuss a strategy for raising funds for administration and operation of the committee. She said that they had come up with four things that the subcommittee members would work on for the next meeting. The first was to look into the Colorado Watershed Assembly to see if there was the possibility of hiring a grant writer to write similar grants for several organizations. The second idea was to talk to Kay Wyley about her experience with fundraising for the theater. The subcommittee came up with a list of several specific questions for Kay. The third idea was to look into creating a group for supporters, such as a "Friends of Willow Creek". The fourth idea was to look into a mill levy or special sales tax for the committee. Kathleen said that the focus was on developing a diversity of funding sources for the committee. The subcommittee will report back on their progress at the March meeting.

Conflict of interest: Zeke said that he had looked into issues about a conflict of interest with his position as county commissioner. He said that the law states that a conflict of interest only applies when someone stands to benefit financially personally. He said that there would not be a conflict with committee business because he is a volunteer. He said that if the committee ever became a 501(c)(3), however, then he would probably not be on the board. He said that he could always excuse himself if there was a question of a conflict.

Erdman update: Jim said that he had come across a potentially interesting article cited in the Colorado Riparian Association's Green Line newsletter. The article concerned the increased survival rate of rooted versus non-rooted willow cuttings for the restoration of montane willow communities. Jim also said that the willow leaf report would be a USGS Open-File Report, and that it was currently in draft form. He said that he needed to get a reference to support the discussion about zinc toxicity to fish, and asked if Russ might be able to help with that. Russ said that he should be able to come up with one. Jim said that he was looking forward to further investigations in the substation draw. He thought that a field trip in the spring would be useful to identify if there was evidence of the Amethyst fault continuing and surfacing in the area. Phil said that he had hiked up there and the fault was not obvious. Mark said that he thought Creede Resources would be very interested in any information that might indicate a groundwater contamination source other than the Emperius Pile.

New Business:

Trout Unlimited: Russ Schnitzer introduced himself as the Western Field Director for Trout Unlimited. He said that the mission of TU was to conserve, protect, and restore cold water fisheries and their watersheds. As part of this, they have expanded their scope to address abandoned mine land restoration projects. Their approach is to raise awareness, advocate for Good Samaritan legislation, and draw from the experience of watershed groups. Russ said that they would like to play an active role in AML projects. He said that Carol Russell with the EPA is currently working as a technical advisor to TU. Zeke said that the WCRC is very interested in Good Samaritan legislation as a way to conduct clean up and get around some of the liability. Russ encouraged the committee to let him know whenever we have projects or tours so that he can encourage the local chapter to get involved.

Underground report: Leigh Ann said that she had an underground report that Jeff had prepared for 2004. Leigh Ann said that such reports were necessary for the EPA grant, but that they also provided a valuable summary of what was accomplished each year. She had copies for anyone that was interested and said that it was on the web.

Other:

The next meeting will be March 2, 2005.

Meeting Adjourned 3:25 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Leigh Ann Vradenburg