

WCRC Minutes

April 6, 2005

Intro of members: Leigh Ann Vradenburg, WCRC Director; Zeke Ward, WCRC Chairman; Jeff Graves, CDMG; Jim Mietz, SLV RC&D; Les Dobson, USFS; Mark Walker, CDPHE; Steve Yochum, NRCS; JB Alexander, Creede; Bob Kirkham, Consultant; Jim Matush, Creede; Kelley Thomson, Agro Engineering; Don Dustin, Creede

Approval of minutes: No revisions to the minutes were proposed. Motion to approve the March minutes made by JB Alexander; second made by Don Dustin. Motion carried.

Additions/corrections to the agenda: A discussion of the Windy Gulch project was added as Old Business C.

JB suggested that Don Dustin be added to the Technical Advisory Committee. Leigh Ann told Don that the TAC was optional, but that she thought it could benefit from his knowledge. Motion to invite Don to be on the TAC made by JB Alexander; second made by Jim Matush. Motion carried.

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 submitted a grant to the Ben and Jerry's Foundation for operational support and overhead. She has a phone interview with the Foundation review board on April 13th.

Leigh Ann said that she registered for River Rally as discussed and voted upon at the March meeting. She applied for a \$300 scholarship, but has not heard the results yet. The Rally will be held May 21-23.

Leigh Ann said that she applied for a scholarship to attend the Brownfield conference in Denver in November. She was not sure when scholarships would be awarded. She said that she had also talked with Mike Wireman about she and Zeke presenting during a session hosted by Region 8.

Leigh Ann informed the committee that they had been awarded the two Section 319 grants that had been applied for. She reminded the committee that these grants were to reclaim the Amethyst waste rock pile and to complete the pilot dewatering test at the Nelson Tunnel. She needs to complete the Project Implementation Plans by April 29th and it is likely that funds will be available in late summer to begin.

Leigh Ann worked with Don and JB to compose a follow up letter to Powell Water Systems requesting additional information on the process used and the costs. She had not heard back yet.

Leigh Ann said that she had finally scanned all of the historic reports and they were now available on the web. She said that some of the pictures were not as good as she would like. She was not able to access the Denver Public Library photo archives at her Monte Vista office because of the firewall, so she used scanned versions of copies. She said that they still were clear, but not as nice as some of the new images.

Leigh Ann said that she had picked up an application for the spring round of the Virginia Christensen Trust Fund. She said that this money had been very important to the committee over the last year because it covered outreach expenses such as phone, email, web hosting, brochure printing, poster development, travel to conferences, etc. She suggested that the committee apply again. She said that this year's River Rally and Brownfields conferences were important to attend but would put a strain on the current budget, even with scholarships. Zeke said that the committee had made a practice of indicating on the VCT application that we would accept a lesser amount if necessary. Motion to apply for \$3,000 with the provision that we would accept less if necessary made by Don Dustin; second made by Mark Walker. Motion carried.

Leigh Ann said that she was trying to schedule a re-veg subcommittee meeting. She said that Steve Russell would be retiring in July, so she was taking over the coordination of the subcommittee. Steve Yochum suggested that she keep Pat Davey, who is a plant specialist on the stream restoration team, in the loop. Jim Mietz suggested that Jim Erdman might also be involved.

Leigh Ann said that the Committee had received some press in the Big Thompson Watershed Forum newsletter. She said that the newsletter sometimes featured other clean up efforts around the state, and she was asked to submit a summary of current activities.

Leigh Ann had talked to Bob Tridle to check the status of the Hecla millsite assessment. Bob had said that the assessment report was in final draft form and that it would be a couple of weeks before his company had the opportunity to review the final. Spectrum, who conducted the assessment, was currently working on Voluntary Clean Up Plan for the millsite. Mark said that he had urged them to separate the millsite from the floodplain in terms of assessment and clean up because the two sites were drastically different.

Leigh Ann said that she was working on the contracting with American Geological Services for the fairgrounds project. She said that AGS had been hired to be the consultants, but that they also were interested in bidding on the heavy equipment work. She said that she had talked to Mike Wireman and Dan Heffernan with the EPA Brownfields program about any conflicts of interest. They had said that there were no rules against AGS bidding on the heavy equipment work, but that the MCFA should do what they could to remove AGS from the bid development, solicitation, and selection process to keep everything fair. Don asked why the project was

separated into consulting and heavy equipment. Zeke said that this was done because the VCUP was not finalized, and a consultant needed to be brought in to complete the clean up design. There were too many unanswered questions and too many ways to approach the project to expect the consultants to bid on the entire project. Additionally, it would have been difficult for the MCFA to compare so many different approaches. Leigh Ann said that she had discussed the separate bidding with several people and everyone had agreed with her approach. Mark and Don suggested that the reclamation plan developed by AGS should be as clear as possible with a grading plan in the VCUP so that they would not have an unfair advantage in bid development. Don also suggested that if AGS were selected for the heavy equipment work, that the WCRC should be involved in the confirmation sampling, so that there would be an objective party involved. Mark said that CDPHE had approved the \$40,000, and that it would be easier for them to pay for certain line items in the clean up budget.

Leigh Ann read a letter from Tetra Tech regarding their proposal of additional services on the fairgrounds clean up through coordination with the EPA Office of Superfund Remediation and Technology Innovation (OSRTI). Mark and Jeff said that this was something that was discussed during the conference call with Tetra Tech to select the consultant on the project. Leigh Ann said that OSRTI could be used to bring additional and innovative technologies to factor into the clean up. Zeke said that the MCFA would not be interested in any modifications to the project if it could end up delaying the process. Leigh Ann said that she felt that American Geological Services could handle the job that they were hired to do, and that bringing in Tetra Tech at this point would negate some of the purposes of hiring AGS. Mark said that we could keep Tetra Tech's offer in mind if we ran into substantial problems with our current approach. Zeke said that Leigh Ann should reply to Tetra Tech and say thank you for the offer, but at this time we see the project as straightforward and we should be able to complete it with the technical assistance of AGS and our current funding.

Leigh Ann read a memo from Jim McLaughlin, who is working on the Nelson Tunnel feasibility study. Jim suggested that the Committee might consider trying to capture more of the groundwater in the Nelson Tunnel / Commodore area for treatment. He thought that it would result in greater load reductions if they could treat 600 gpm rather than 300 gpm. Leigh Ann said that she had told Jim that this might prove difficult due to the sharp elevational drop. Bob said that the vein also crossed the creek in that area. The committee agreed that this was an approach to keep in mind, but for the purposes of the feasibility study, we should stay with the original 300 gpm. JB said that we should do more sampling along West Willow to try to locate some of the inflows of contaminated water below the Nelson. Mark suggested that we use the conductivity meter as we did along the Rio Grande to act as an indicator of changing water chemistry.

Leigh Ann said that she had developed a 2004 Financial Report with expenses, revenue, and balances. The expenses had been broken down to show the funds going to salary, phone, internet, travel, office supplies, etc. She gave copies to the Committee.

Leigh Ann showed the Committee a map of the Big Thompson watershed that was an artist's rendition. She said that although the Big Thompson was a much larger watershed, that it might be something to keep in mind for Willow Creek. She said that it would be neat to have a map with the mine sites, the creek, and town.

Old Business:

May water sampling- sites: Leigh Ann said that the high flow water sampling event was scheduled for Thursday May 5. Mark said that he would not be able to make a sampling on Thursday, but that he might be able to make it on Tuesday. Don said that Leslie would not be able to help on Thursday, but that Tuesday might work for her. He thought that the same schedule would likely apply to Carol Pierce. Leigh Ann said that she would change the sampling event to Tuesday. Leigh Ann said that she wanted to discuss changes to the sites to be sampled. She said that she would like to incorporate the previous sites of WW-K and WW-L, so that we could get better data around the Last Chance and Amethyst sites. Leigh Ann suggested that we might eliminate the Rio Grande sites this year because high water would make sampling difficult and we do not necessarily need the data for the TMDL. Zeke said that the CDPHE was taking samples at 4UR, so we could get that data if we were interested. Steve said that the CDPHE data should be available through STORET. Leigh Ann had prepared summary tables of the 2003 and 2004 data with a brief written summary. One thing that she had noticed was the strong discrepancy between RiverWatch and Sangre de Cristo metal results. Leigh Ann said that the TAC had discussed these data and had developed the following recommendations: 1) we would purchase a standard to be submitted with the samples; 2) we would use a 3rd lab for a selection of the sites; and 3) we would standardize the field procedures for all split samples. Motion to incorporate these recommendations into the QAPP/SAP and approve the necessary expenditures for the additional samples made by Mark Walker; second made by Don Dustin. Motion carried.

Stream restoration/ gauge: Steve Yochum passed out the final version of the NRCS Working Plan for the stream restoration project. He said that the NRCS has a Soil Survey Lab that has agreed to do sampling and analysis of soil in the floodplain. The down side of this sampling would be that it would stretch out the timeline on the project by 9-12 months. He said that as part of the sampling that they would dig pits and sample every foot in depth. They would likely also sample any water encountered in the pits as well as stream water. The locations of the pits would be determined in June or July during field trips. He said that they would also sample 30-40 other areas in the top meter. He asked the Committee what they thought would be appropriate analyses to conduct. The Committee suggested zinc, cadmium, copper, lead, and nickel. Mark suggested that leachability should be determined, and he suggested the Synthetic Precipitation Leaching Procedure (SPLP), which simulates acid rain. TCLP is a more rigorous leachability test that could be used. Steve said that they would need the services of a backhoe. Zeke said that the City or County would be able to dig the holes. Mark suggested that they might also analyze for cation exchange capacity, percent total organic matter, and nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. Jim Matush suggested that they mark the sites. JB said that they might select some of the pit locations to confirm the results of the electromagnetic and natural potential studies. Steve said that he would have a crew in the field the week of July 4th. Ben Davis (City Maintenance employee) said that their backhoe could dig 18 feet deep. Steve said that this effort would extend the project into a 2-year rather than 1-year timeframe.

Steve said that he would be working with JB to install the water monitoring device on West Willow that afternoon. He said that it would take readings every 15 minutes for 202 days. He said that it needed to be recalibrated once per month. It measures pH, conductivity, dissolved oxygen, depth, and temperature. Leigh Ann said that she and a few of the local volunteers could go along with Steve in May to learn how to do everything. They might coordinate it as part of the TAC meeting.

Windy Gulch: Kelley said that he had been doing some additional surveying for the Windy Gulch project to determine the culvert needs. He had calculated that a 10'x3' box culvert would pass a 50-year flood, and that a 1' headwall could be used to pass a 100-year flood, using Homestake's estimates of flow. JB asked if the culvert could pass heavy trucks. Kelley said that the culvert walls would be 10" and were designed for heavy loads. Kelley said that if we reanalyzed some of the flood estimates, we might be able to come up with a lower, more accurate number. Mark asked if we might run into problems with our funding sources if we changed the design of the project. Kelley said that we currently have two concerns: 1) that we will run into bedrock trying to dig low enough to install the culvert, and 2) that the water and sewer lines will be in the way. Zeke said that there was anecdotal evidence that the current culvert was sitting on bedrock. Mark asked if it might be helpful to dig a test pit. Zeke said that we could also ask around to see what people know of the bedrock and lines there. Kelley said that to unload as well as install the culvert, we would need a crane. He said that there was a 25-ton crane in Monte Vista that could be rented for \$1,000. Leigh Ann asked if there was a crane in Creede with the log home business. Don Dustin said that he would talk with Dick DePriest of D&D Construction to see what size crane he might have available. Kelley said that if we did not run into problems, we might be able to expand the project to address the drop structures on Willow Creek, which also pose a flood hazard. Kelley said that we would also need to take out the pumphouses. Leigh Ann said that she would work with Kelley to check into the bedrock and line issues.

New Business:

Surface water data from 2003 and 2004: Leigh Ann said that she had already covered what she wanted to discuss under her Director's report.

Re-veg planning: Leigh Ann said that she had already covered what she wanted to discuss under her Director's report.

CWA membership: Leigh Ann said that we needed to renew our annual membership to the Colorado Watershed Assembly. JB asked what we received as a member. Leigh Ann said that the CWA held a conference each year that she attended and learned from. She said that they also have training sessions for watershed coordinators. Motion to approve the \$50 membership made by Don Dustin; second made by JB Alexander. Motion carried.

2005 319 grants: Leigh Ann said that she had given the update on the 319 grants, but that she would like Les to give an update on the Forest Service funding for reclamation at the Last Chance. Les said that he was trying to leverage the fact that we received the 319 funding to get the Forest Service funding. He said that we were not competing as well as some other areas, potentially because there is not a human health hazard. Les said that we have demonstrated that we get the work done, so hopefully we will get the money. Mark asked if there would be money available from a project in Ophir that was cancelled. Les said that he did not know.

Other:

Don asked if we were going to have another clean up day. The Committee decided that it might be better to wait until later in the summer. Don also suggested that we put up a display board at the Taste of Creede on Memorial Day weekend. He thought that we could talk to Eloise Hooper or Pat Richmond for more information.

The next meeting will be May 4, 2005.

Meeting Adjourned 4:07 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Leigh Ann Vradenburg