

## WCRC Minutes

December 7, 2005

**Intro of members:** Zeke Ward, WCRC Chairman and Mineral County Commissioner; JB Alexander, Creede; Merl Jennings, Creede; Bob Kirkham, Geologist and Consultant; Jeff Graves, CDMG; Les Dobson, US Forest Service; Tom Malecek, US Forest Service; Marvin Reynolds, CSU Cooperative Extension; Kelley Thompson, WCRC Director

**Approval of minutes:** No corrections to the November minutes were proposed. Motion to approve the November minutes made by JB; second made by Merl. Motion carried.

**Additions/corrections to the agenda:** The committee agreed to move the Forest Service Reports to the first item of business.

### Reports:

#### Forest Service – Potential Wetland Mitigation and Report:

Les introduced district ranger Tom Malecek. Tom explained that CDOT's plans for future road construction on US160 called for removing or damaging about 1-1/2 acres of wetlands. This area of wetlands would have to be replaced, although not necessarily on the South Fork of the Rio Grande. The Forest Service would favor using wetland mitigation to reclaim an impacted area rather than replacing an undisturbed area of native vegetation on the South Fork, and they thought that the Willow Creek floodplain could be a good candidate for reclamation. Zeke presented a historical perspective of the possibility as well as potential opportunities for wetland mitigation in the stream channel reconstruction or in the northeast corner of the fairgrounds property using Creede's treatment pond effluent, and the possibility to treat storm water from Creede or the fairgrounds site. The potential for wetlands banking was discussed. Bob mentioned the possibility of using the Solomon wetlands for mitigation area, but the committee was unsure if treatment wetlands would qualify. CDOT would probably have to install the wetlands in the season that the road construction was completed, and this would probably be before the stream restoration project could be initiated. The committee agreed to pursue potential wetland mitigation in the floodplain, and, because of timing, the most likely location appeared to be on the fairgrounds property near the treatment ponds.

Les also presented a report on other Forest Service activities. Kelley spread most of the remaining compost piles at the Midwest Mine, and Les seeded the site and used a 4-wheeler to integrate the seed into the compost. He also ran the 4-wheeler on the seeded compost at the Phoenix Mill Site. The 4-wheeler appeared to work well, and the committee will evaluate the success of the revegetation in the summer. The Forest Service also completed an engineering evaluation of the Last Chance dump. The Forest Service has the \$19,000 available for the work at the Amethyst, and Les is looking for money for the Last Chance.

#### Director's Report:

On November 13, Merl and Kathy Jennings, and Jim and Doolie Matush, attempted to drive into the Commodore 3 level buildings but were turned back. Kelley was able to walk up from the Commodore 5 level and presented photos of the conditions of the roofs of the Commodore 3 and 4 level buildings. The Commodore 4 level buildings are in much worse shape than the Commodore 3 level buildings. At the Commodore 3, the roof on the small tram room is collapsing as well as the stairs and supports on the north of the building; but the main roof is complete and the structure generally appears to be OK. At the two Commodore 4 level buildings, major portions of the roofs are off, many of the rafters are rotting, and the buildings would probably not support new roofs or snow loads. Much of the interior wood is deteriorating, but the timber frame structures are still holding. Zeke recommended trying to bring in experts in historical preservation, and designation of the site as a "Most Endangered Historical Place" may facilitate

experts and funding.

Before Thanksgiving, Kelley took Mike McClure to look at the potential excavation work around the wooden flume on the Commodore 5 level. At that point, there was about a foot of ice in the grizzly area. Following Mike's hunting trip and Kelley's Thanksgiving trip, there was at least 2 feet of ice. Mike felt that dealing with this ice would be too difficult, so the plan now is to try to do the work in March or April after the ice melts but before high flows.

Kelley and Jim Matush had planned to take low-flow water samples before Thanksgiving. However, after discovering that the pH meter wasn't working, Kelley sent the meter in to be repaired and delayed the sampling in the hope of getting the meter back. However, the meter could not be repaired, so Kelley took water samples and flow measurements shortly after Thanksgiving. Samples were collected from eight sites. The samples from up and downstream of the Phoenix Mill were sent to Sangre de Cristo Labs as well as water for lab pH and anions. The remaining samples for metals were sent to the EPA lab.

For the Windy Gulch project, Kelley surveyed the elevation difference between the city tank and community center. The elevation difference indicated that only between 15 and 23 psi would be available at the community center when the tank was empty and near full even without a leaking pipe. Therefore, he investigated the potential to run a new water line from the upper tank system. It would be possible with a pressure-reducing valve, but cost estimates indicated that this would be cost prohibitive. Therefore, Kelley is still pursuing a plan to replace the water line to stop the leak that is somewhere upstream of the new culvert.

Kelley presented several thank you notes that had been prepared and the committee agreed on the need for each of the letters. Committee community members signed the letters.

#### **Old Business:**

##### Potential Floodplain Work

Kelley had started to work on an application for an EPA wetlands grant due on December 20 that would have to be administered through the City. The main purpose was to meet the data needs identified by Steve Yochum; hiring of a wetlands/riparian expert, collection of soil samples, and installation of a grid of water table monitoring wells. However, Kelley had not been able to get a clear commitment from Creede Resources that they would allow the soil and water table data collection on their property. The committee directed Kelley that the grant activities should only be executed with clear permission and contribution from Creede Resources.

##### Nelson Treatment Feasibility Study

The Nelson Treatment Feasibility Study grant had unexpectedly expired, but Kelley was close to getting an extension. Comments from Kelley and Jim Herron still needed to be integrated into the report, and Jim had made several suggestions that indicated additional work such as evaluating hydropower from West Willow Creek rather than the Nelson Tunnel due to clogging from metal precipitates. Kelley asked the committee if they would like McLaughlin to evaluate any other treatment or project options such as in-mine measures. The committee directed to Kelley to have McLaughlin integrate comments but then wrap up the final report.

##### Nelson Pilot Dewatering

Jeff and Jim Herron spent a long day underground evaluating air flows for the dewatering project. They found good airflow in the Main Drift. They did not have as good of airflow as they had hoped in the Del Monte Raise, but the flow should be sufficient. It is clear that the dewatering will have to be done in cold months for sufficient airflow. However, water in the drain ditch froze while they were underground, and they decided that if they tried to complete the work that still needed to be done for the project this winter, they might create a big ice problem in the tunnel. Therefore,

they decided that rather than do the project this winter, they would like to finish bid documents this winter, complete underground work this spring or summer, and do the dewatering in the fall and winter of 2006/2007.

**New Business:**

pH meter

The committee's pH meter suddenly stopped working for no known reason. Kelley sent the meter back to WTW for evaluation, but they said the motherboard was bad and, as it was an old unit, they no longer had replacement boards for our model. The unit's warranty had also expired. Unfortunately, the committee needs a pH meter for several upcoming tasks. Merl made a motion and JB seconded to buy a new pH meter. Kelley will check into the possibility of using the 319 Characterization grant to buy a new meter.

The next meeting will be January 4, 2005. The meeting adjourned at 4:00 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelley Thompson