

WCRC Minutes January 4, 2006

Intro of members: Zeke Ward, WCRC Chairman and Mineral County Commissioner; Jim Matush, Creede; Merl Jennings, Creede; Mae Jennings, Creede; Jeff Graves, CDMG; Les Dobson, US Forest Service; Steve Yochum, NRCS; Kelley Thompson, WCRC Director

Approval of minutes: No corrections to the December minutes were proposed. Motion to approve the September minutes made by Merl; second made by Kelley. Motion carried.

Additions/corrections to the agenda: A topic of the February meeting was added to New Business and Steve Yochum also presented a report under Old Business.

Reports:

Director's Report:

Kelley mentioned that he had submitted an application for an EPA wetlands grant. The grant would pay for wetland delineation, Army Corps permitting, a wetlands/riparian expert, soil characterization, and a grid of monitoring wells. Creede Resources has not given permission to collect soil and water data on their property given the current lawsuit situation, but activities could be centered more on Wason or Fairgrounds properties if the Creede Resources situation does not change. The committee should know if they get the grant in March.

Kelley purchased a new WTW pH meter similar to the WTW unit that broke using the 319 characterization funds that expired on December 31.

Kathleen Reilly did not authorize purchase of a streamgauge with the grant funds. Although Kelley tried to relate the gauge to seasonal metal load evaluations, Kathleen stated that Laurie Fisher and others were concerned about long-term maintenance and did not see the relevance of the gauge to TMDL or water quality characterization issues. Les was still evaluating if the gauge could be purchased in part or in whole using the remaining Forest Service characterization money. Several options were discussed and Steve mentioned that he would probably prioritize a float gauge for ice-free measurements with pH and conductivity sensors before a gas bubbler to be able to take winter flow measurements. Steve and Kelley will further evaluate options and pricing and coordinate with Les. Merl will help Steve and Kelley get into the gauge house.

Les asked Kelley about recent contacts related to the Wason lawsuit. Kelley had just met with lawyers representing Chevron who were interesting in learning more about major sources of contamination in the watershed including the Nelson Tunnel. A lawyer from an insurance company for Homestake was looking for additional information about the Equity Mine. Kelley was going to pass on additional information to the Chevron lawyers. The need to be able to pass on the draft USGS Kimball report was discussed, and Kelley will contact Briant Kimball about potential finalization of that report.

Old Business

CDOT Wetland Mitigation:

Both Zeke and Kelley had talked with Paul Jankowski of CDOT regarding potentially placement of mitigation wetlands in the Willow Creek floodplain. Zeke discussed with him the potential of wetlands integrated into the stream restoration or on the fairgrounds property. Due to timing issues, the fairgrounds property was looking as the most likely option. Zeke also discussed the potential for wetland banking. Paul discussed with Kelley the possibility of either direct

construction of the wetlands by a CDOT contractor or payment to the WCRC who would be responsible to construct the wetlands, monitor them for a period of at least 5 years, and be responsible to fix the wetlands if vegetation growth was not sufficient. For direct construction, CDOT would need a fairly concrete plan for the wetlands by spring to include in bid documents and would have to be constructed in 2006 or 2007. For the payment option, there was some concern about WCRC funding if the wetlands had to be rebuilt. Zeke noted that the WCRC and fairgrounds might actually prefer being responsible for the wetlands installation as this could be integrated into the cleanup construction activities. The committee agreed that they were currently open to both the direct construction or payment possibilities.

Kelley sent CDOT with several maps and photos of the area, and provided the committee with a potential layout for a wetland area on the fairgrounds property. Kelley had mentioned to Paul that the fairgrounds may like to move a current portion of wetlands on their property, and suggested to Paul that, in the case of direct construction, CDOT could potentially incorporate the moved wetland area into their constructed area. Les did not think we should make this a requirement for CDOT to have to construct a larger area to include the fairground wetlands. Kelley explained that this was only his personal suggestion and that the fairgrounds association would need to define their own requirements for direct construction issues.

February Meeting:

For the February 1 WCRC, Zeke discussed the need to have representatives from Creede Resources and Casey Resources at a TAC meeting. The committee decided to have a TAC meeting starting at 9:30 am. Max Dodson of EPA Region 8 will be at the meeting, and Kelley invited Leigh Ann to come to the afternoon meeting. Zeke and Mike Wireman will present a seminar to local real estate professionals concerning liability issues related to the sale of patented mine claims either the evening before or the evening of the WCRC meeting.

Steve Yochum:

Steve brought up several issues related to the floodplain work. Steve found a set of historical aerial photos starting in 1938 that the Forest Service took of the floodplain. Zeke was interested in seeing the progression of the Emperious tailings in the photos. Steve will scan and reference the photos. Steve also presented several members of the committee with DVDs of 1-meter color aerial photography that the NRCS collected for all of Mineral County this summer. Kelley will finish georeferencing the aerial photography that he took of the floodplain and will prepare a spreadsheet of well level data for Steve within the next couple of weeks.

New Business:

Commodore Endangered Historic Place Designation:

Kelley and Zeke mentioned that the Commodore district did make the 2006 list of Colorado most endangered historic places with Colorado Preservation, Inc; although the committee is instructed to not release the information to media until the February announcement. A crew from the Denver CBS channel was scheduled to visit the site on Friday, and Zeke and Ken Wyley will be there as well as Jeff Graves, Jim Herron, and Loretta Pineda of CDMG. The designation opens up significant additional opportunities for expertise and funding for the Commodore district. Zeke will be attending the Saving Places conference on February 8, 9, and 10.

The next meeting will be February 1, 2005. Meeting adjourned at 3:00 PM

Respectfully Submitted,
Kelley Thompson