

WCRC Minutes
March 1, 2006

Intro of members: Zeke Ward, WCRC Chairman and Mineral County Commissioner; JB Alexander, Creede; Merl Jennings, Creede; Don Dustin, Creede; Stephanie Wood, Creede; Peter Calandrucio, Creede; Jenny Inge, Creede/MCFA; Jeff Graves, CDMG; Les Dobson, US Forest Service; Steve Yochum, NRCS; Cindy Villa, NRCS; Cynthia Crist, NRCS; Kelley Thompson, WCRC Director

Approval of minutes: No corrections to the February minutes were proposed. Motion to approve the January minutes made by JB; second made by Don. Motion carried.

Additions/corrections to the agenda: It was suggested to discuss the Flume Bridges item first. No other additions/corrections to the agenda were proposed.

Reports:

Director's Report:

Kelley spent much of February working on the soil samples for the Mineral County Fairgrounds Association (MCFA) site. In 2004, Leigh Ann analyzed composite samples from the top two inches of the site and found high levels of lead throughout the floodplain area. In late September 2005, samples were collected from depth intervals at 65 locations in an attempt to characterize the depth of the contamination. Unfortunately, high lead levels were found deeper than originally anticipated. Lead levels exceeded the residential lead standard to greater than 18 inches throughout much of the site. Generally, much of the surface, and several deeper pockets, exceed the commercial/industrial lead standard. It was originally considered that soil exceeding the residential standard would be removed from the floodplain and placed in a repository. However, we probably do not have enough Brownfields funds to remove that much soil. Kelley mentioned that Mark Walker is considering appropriate standards for direct contact and leaching issues. Leigh Ann found that for the surface samples with high lead, SPLP leached lead, cadmium, and zinc in excess of drinking water standards. Discussion followed, and Zeke and Jenny explained how buildings and pavers will cover and limit leaching in much of the site. It was felt that uses at the site will probably be more similar to the commercial rather than residential type exposures. Therefore, the committee generally felt that it would be adequate to remove particularly contaminated soils exceeding the commercial standard, and to try to implement structural and vegetative caps and covers to limit leaching.

Kelley looked into the application for the Five-Stars grant for wetland restoration. He was informed that the grant could not be used for any type of mitigation wetlands. Therefore, the grant could not be used to move the long string of wetlands at the MCFA site as that would be mitigation. However, Jenny brought up that the soil under the portion of wetlands that won't be moved must be cleaned, and thought the grant could be used to restore that portion of the wetlands. The application deadline is close, and Kelley will further consider an application.

Kelley mentioned that Casey Resources, the consultant for Creede Resources, would like to see a city master plan for the emperious tailings pile to help define a direction for a cap. Casey would actually like to see a large commercial development to provide an asphalt and building cap for the site. The committee has had the position of using a vegetative cap rather than developing the site. Zeke and Kelley will try to encourage the City Council meeting to develop a master plan from the city's perspective.

Kelley had been informed by Linda Davis with the Forest Service that there was some question if funds were still available from the 2001 Forest Service cost share agreement that was supposed to expire September 2006. He will hold on ordering the streamgauge from Sutron until it is sure that the Forest Service funds are available.

He was also informed by Kathleen Reilly that she discovered that the 2003 Reclamation grant had actually expired at the end of 2004, although we had charged some to it in 2005. She thought we could transfer remaining funds to a P.O., but we can't spend any of the funds until we write a scope of work for any remaining funds. Kelley mentioned we still may need to hydroseed the Midwest and Phoenix Park Mill sites and install an anoxic drain at the Midwest, but would like input from Jeff and Les if we need additional revegetation work on the other sites. Kelley also has to write a final report for the characterization grant, but has unfortunately not been able to spend much time on it to this point.

The EPA finished analyzing the 2005 water samples, and Mike Wireman had prepared a summary sheet for the data. Kelley noted during the flood on May 23, 2005, dissolved zinc was 53,200 ug/L at the lowest West Willow site (WW-A) compared to 3326 ug/L in May of 2000.

New Business:

Flume Bridges (discussed first):

Peter Calandrucchio and Stephanie Wood, who recently moved to Creede, described their Fabulous Flume Footbridge Project to the committee. The two are proposing a project to accept "blind" proposals for redesign of one of the flume footbridges. Community members will narrow the proposals to three finalists, and the city council will chose the best design. Peter and Stephanie will provide seed money and raise about \$10,000 to engineer and build the chosen design. There was some discussion about the need for a bridge to the gauge house at the top of the flume. We may be able to move the replaced bridge to the location. Steve recommended not allowing bridge designs to enter into the flume area itself and reduce flume capacity. Merl made a motion, and Jenny seconded, for the committee to produce a letter of support for the project as a way to bring attention to Willow Creek and the flume.

Floodplain Wells:

Kelley, Steve Yochum, Mark Walker, and Mike Wireman met with Paul Casey and Terry McGowan of Casey Resources in Denver. One topic of discussion was the installation of additional wells in the floodplain. Casey advised that Creede Resources may allow wells for water level measurements, but probably would not allow collection of Water Quality data. Steve developed a map of wells that could be installed with potential CDPHE Brownfields assistance money. After Kelley hears from the EPA on the wetlands grant application, which included money for even more wells in the floodplain, he will send a letter to Creede Resources requesting permission to install wells for water level measurement.

Nonprofit and Historic Preservation Efforts:

Zeke discussed the formation of the Creede Mining Heritage Preservation, Inc., a non-profit with the mission of historical preservation and environmental cleanup. A land trust is also being formed to potentially accept donation of the six mine claims containing the historical Commodore area buildings, and the non-profit would be the trustee for the land trust. They are trying to ensure that potential board members be protected from liability issues. If the non-profit can obtain at least an "intent to sell" for the claims, than they can apply for a state historical grant due April 1. The first efforts would be to stabilize the wooden flume and waste pile.

Potential Stream Cleanup:

JB raised the possibility of a spring stream cleanup. The committee agreed that the highest priority would be to remove debris above the Commodore. Debris removal is needed at the Amethyst grizzly and potentially between the Amethyst and Commodore. JB and Merl agreed to look at the stream once snow/mud conditions allow and develop recommendations for cleanup.

Potential Spring/Summer Vegetation Projects:

JB also raised the possibility of spring/summer revegetation projects. Les mentioned need for willow planting at the Outlet mine site. Cindy mentioned that fescues have been doing well in trials, and Zeke noted the potential for winter rye. Kelley mentioned that he would like to focus more on project sites than need revegetation rather than testing unless there are questions that still need to be evaluated. The revegetation committee will consider the possibility of revegetation projects and develop plans.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be April 5, 2006. Jim Erdman would like to present results from his willow study and the NRCS will present information on the WRP program at the next meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kelley Thompson