

WCRC Minutes July 5, 2006

Intro of members: Zeke Ward, WCRC Chairman and Mineral County Commissioner; JB Alexander, Creede; Kathy Jennings, Creede, Merl Jennings, Creede; Don Dustin, Creede; Jim Matush, Creede; Phil Bethke, Retired USGS – Creede; Jim Mietz, SLV-RC&D; Jeff Graves, CDMG; Jim Herron, CDMG; Les Dobson, US Forest Service; Kelley Thompson, WCRC Director

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

Additions/corrections to the agenda: An item to finish the TAC discussion of the dewatering project was suggested to start the meeting. Revegetation was added to Reports. Lowflow Investigations was added to Old Business

TAC meeting and continuation of TAC meeting discussion

The TAC meeting included discussion of several topics related to the dewatering project. Zeke shared a “non-binding” letter of intent to sell the mining claims associated with the Commodore site that was signed by Ben Poxson. Wason Ranch dropped their lawsuit to avoid a dismissal by the judge due to a legal error. However, they have filed a letter of intent to refile the lawsuit. There was also discussion of the Good Samaritan legislation.

For the dewatering project, Kelley mentioned that we have about \$30,000 less than the estimated cost for the amethyst and dewatering projects. To meet the costs, Leigh Ann had indicated in the 319 grant application that we would get over \$130,000 from CDMG, but only \$101,000 is available from CDMG. We should be able to come up with in-kind to match the 319 funds, but we may be short on cash.

Jeff then provided a description of the dewatering project including recent water level data. There is about a 25 foot head difference between the upper mine pool above the Del Monte Winze and the middle pool below the Noname Winze. The pilot project will pump out of the Del Monte, and is designed to be able to judge if there is dirty water coming in at the intersection of the different veins. However, they probably will not be able to pump enough water in the pilot to be able to empty the pool, and there may be a significant collapse just upstream of the Del Monte before the Berkshire Shaft. Therefore, the pilot may only be able to give us information about how a full dewatering could go.

Possible redirection of the dewatering money for stabilization of the Commodore pile was also discussed in the TAC meeting. It looks like it may be very difficult to use 319 funding to work on the wooden flume due to EPA concerns about any water seeping around or through a conveyance structure into the pile. The EPA release desired by the CWCB also appears difficult. If 319 funds cannot be used, Zeke suggested we proceed with the dewatering project.

In the regular meeting discussion, Jeff asked the committee how the dewatering project work should be bid. Jim Herron noted that contracting labor as time and materials, as we’ve done in the past, would probably leave us too open and recommended a bid. Jeff noted that any bid protocols of the RC&D should be used. RC&D doesn’t have official protocols, but Jim Mietz thought that we should take a project of this size, with federal funds, to public bid. A different project option to drill into the veins above the pools from within the mine was also discussed.

For the Amethyst vein, we could drill about 50 foot down from the Commodore 5 level at the Park Regent to see if water was clean or dirty at that point. There would be significant problems to be able to drill with the bad air flow at the Park Regent, and it's uncertain if we could find a way to complete the project under OSHA and MSHA standards. However, if we did find dirty water, it may give us more information than the pilot study that a full scale dewatering to isolate water is not going to change things. Jim and Jeff will further investigate if we could do the in mine drilling, but Zeke asked Jeff to complete a scope of work to progress to a public bid for the pilot dewatering project so we don't lose the possibility of running out of time to do the pilot. The ownership of the locomotive may be an issue with the public bid, and Zeke will discuss with Ken Wyley the ownership of the locomotive. We will continue to look for sources of funding to work on the Commodore stabilization. An additional possibility is NRCS emergency funding.

Reports:

Director's Report:

Kelley mentioned that in July he will be traveling for a little over a week and will also have to work on several projects at Agro Engineering. However, he also mentioned that he only takes WCRC salary for time he is working for the WCRC.

Kelley also explained to the committee that he and his wife have been nominated for a position with the U.S. Peace Corps starting in September in Mexico. They are not sure yet if they are going to accept the Mexico opportunity, but other positions are also available that they may also consider. Therefore, we should probably start advertising the director position. Kelley sincerely regretted having to leave and any additional burdens that would be placed on the committee. But, he still thinks the committee and its goals are great and would potentially like to use future projects such as Nelson Tunnel treatment or in-mine controls for a PhD study project through the NSF, etc.

Kelley also discussed the request through 319 that we prepare all of the water quality data that we've collected for entry into the STORET database. Entry of data into STORET is required for all 319 funds. We've been keeping data results, but unfortunately the WCRC has not recorded other data information required for STORET such as detection limits, procedures, etc., so it's going to take some time to get the data ready. Kelley wanted to ask the committee if working on the data for STORET is as important as other priorities we have this summer. The committee acknowledged that requirements for 319 funding and future 319 funding are very important for the committee and thought he should work on it as much as he can with available time.

Re-vegetation Report:

Les went up the Phoenix Park mill site and thought the site was looking good after the recent rains and some grass is coming up. The willow plantings placed at the outlet site were also doing great and almost all had leaved out. JB also reported that many shrubs planted in the floodplain in the past two years were also doing good, particularly the dogwoods.

Old Business:

Bylaw Issues:

The bylaws currently on the WCRC website do deal with officer terms and actions for officers that do not attend meetings for some time. Zeke will still talk to Chuck Barnes about if he still wants to be involved with the committee. A nomination of Merl Jennings was suggested for the vice-chairman, but Merl had to leave the meeting just before the discussion. The committee will see if Merl would be interested in the vice-chairman position.

Lowflow Investigations:

JB brought up looking again for a natural seep responsible for significant zinc load near Wagonwheel gap. It was suggested that we see if the Rio Grande Headwaters group would be interested in helping look for a seep as it's a Rio Grande issue. Kelley will ask Mike Gibson. The TAC will further discuss a plan at the next meeting to investigate the seep in August or September. Kelley reminded the committee that Andrew Ross will be coming with Kathleen Reilly to either the August or September meeting, so it may be nice to have additional information about metal loads to the Rio Grande other than Willow Creek.

The next meeting will be August 2, 2006. Meeting adjourned at 3pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kelley Thompson