

## WILLOW CREEK RECLAMATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

Wednesday, February 7, 2007

1:00 PM, Creede Town Hall

**Present:** Zeke Ward, WCRC Chairman and Mineral County Commissioner; Kelley Thompson, Agro Engineering; Don Dustin, Creede; JB Alexander, Creede; Tom Schillaci, Durango; Jim Matush, Creede; Jeff Crane, CWA (Colorado Watershed Assembly); Merl Jennings, Creede; Ed Vita, Creede; Les Dobson, USFS (US Forest Service); and Ali Morse, WCRC Coordinator.

**Approval of minutes:** There were no corrections to the January minutes and the motion to approve them was made by Don and seconded by JB. Motion carried.

### **Reports:**

#### Coordinator's Report

WCRC received the VCUP (Voluntary Cleanup) application for the MCFA (Mineral County Fairgrounds Association) from Mark Arnold, which is currently being reviewed. The 404 permit from USACE (US Army Corps of Engineers) is a nationwide permit and requires a wetland mitigation and monitoring plan. It is not clear at this point what that entails and if professional help is needed to complete this requirement. Ali will follow up on several messages she has already left with USACE.

Ali attended the RGBRT (Rio Grande Basin Round Table) meeting with JB and Zeke, and later met with Mike Gibson (RGBRT, San Luis Valley Water Conservancy District, and Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project) to discuss collaboration of river monitoring, grant efforts, potential dirt hauling from Rio Grande Reservoir dredging, etc.

In lieu of the VISTA position (which required training during the Nelson pilot dewatering test), Ali has initiated discussion with professors at Adams State to develop a paid summer internship. This would be a full-time position with a stipend of approx. \$250/week, and housing included if necessary. She has also inquired at Creede Schools to take advantage of their work/study "co-op" program. After much discussion, JB made the motion to proceed with the summer internship and co-op programs and not pursue VISTA. Don seconded and the motion passed.

At the RGWCD (Rio Grande Water Conservation District) Board meeting, Ali's request for \$20,000 to help pay the Coordinator's salary was granted. Chris Landry from the Center for Snow and Avalanche Studies in Silverton gave a presentation on the effects of dust on snow. Ali spoke with Chris about bringing his informative presentation to Creede, piggybacking with a WCRC presentation, perhaps during the Gem and Mineral Show this summer.

Ali suggested that a home office would be best for her long term, with meeting space and storage maintained at the Town Hall. She researched all-in-one printers and came up with a couple she thought would work best for WCRC's current and future use. Merl made a motion to continue research and purchase a printer for under \$500. Don seconded and the motion passed. Ali also said Ed had looked at her IBM computer and recommended an extra gig of RAM. Kelley made the motion to upgrade the IBM 1 gig of RAM, Merl seconded, and the motion passed. Ed talked about switching our Verio web hosting to something more reasonably priced. The discussion was tabled until the next meeting.

Ali discussed the difficulty in getting funds available to pay Ken and Bob for their work on the Nelson pilot project. There have been delays with CDPHE, EPA, DRMS, and SLVRC&D. There was a lengthy discussion about alternatives to RC&D, including filing for 501(c)3 status, partnering up with another

non-profit in Creede, and creating a separate bank account at RC&D where we could track our own accounting and sign our own reimbursement requests. Jeff said there were funds available through the National Forest Foundation to pay fees for becoming a 501(c)3. Zeke reminded the committee that we would need a board of directors and by-laws, but the main concern has always been liability. The 5% that RC&D charges pays for bookkeeping and annual audits; if we exceed \$500,000/year, it becomes financially feasible to think of alternatives. Zeke suggested we get sufficient donations, with no strings attached, so we can take care of day-to-day operations until grants cycle through RC&D. Jeff offered CWA as a pass-through fiscal agent, with \$20/hour for administrative fees. Zeke mentioned that RC&D was looking for another board member from Creede since the current one has been having difficulty attending their meetings. A few committee members expressed interest and will follow up.

#### Chairman's Report

Zeke said he had nothing to report.

#### **Old Business:**

##### Nelson Pilot Dewatering Project

Ali reported that the project is on schedule and the pumping will take place February 14. Seven people will be underground (3 from DRMS, 1 from EPA, Ken, Bob, and Ali). There will also be a volunteer stationed at the portal with a mine phone. Ali asked for volunteers to sign up for a 2-hour shift.

##### Rio Grande (CDPHE/WQCC)

It was decided to table this discussion for the next TAC meeting.

##### Email/web/fax/speaker phone

These items were already discussed in the Coordinator's Report.

##### Watershed plan

Ali said she was meeting with Mike Wireman to discuss the watershed plan February 16.

#### **New Business:**

##### Cleanup/tree planting

These items were discussed briefly. Ali suggested getting local students involved. No dates were set.

##### Water sampling/River Watch

Kelley stated we have approx. \$500 credit with Sangre de Cristo labs and said RiverWatch tended to be slow. This year's sampling sites should include work sites for projects this summer; Windy Gulch in spring; seven sample sites near the confluence of East and West Willow Creeks; and further characterization between Nelson Tunnel and the mouth of West Willow. Kelley made the motion to discuss this further at a TAC meeting next month. JB seconded it and the motion passed.

##### Fundraising plan

Due to lack of time, Zeke suggested that the fundraising committee give a progress report at the next meeting.

The next meeting will be March 7, 2007. The meeting adjourned at 4:10 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Ali Morse