

WILLOW CREEK RECLAMATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

1:00 PM, Creede Town Hall

Present: Zeke Ward, WCRC Chairman and Mineral County Commissioner; Don Dustin, Creede; JB Alexander, Creede; Merl Jennings, Creede; Rex Shepperd, City of Creede; Diann Gese, U.S. Forest Service; Erin Minks, Regional Representative, Congressman John Salazar; and Carishma Gokhale-Welch, WCRC Director.

Approval of minutes: No corrections to the March meeting were proposed. JB moves to approve the minutes from March 5, 2008, Don seconds. Motion carries.

Additions/corrections to agenda: "Spring Cleanup" and "Revegetation" were added under "Old Business", "Duck Race" was added under "New Business".

Reports:

Director's Report

Carishma and Don opened a bank account at the Miners & Merchants Bank, Creede. She also shared a letter from CDPHE informing the Committee that the 319 project proposal (stream restoration) has been accepted for funding. Prof. Benson, ASC had inquired about conducting a field trip with his students on April 5. Carishma will report to him that much of the area that WCRC works in is still inaccessible. She shared the WCRC water quality data with him, so Prof. Benson's students could use it for a class.

Chairman's Report

Zeke reported that the judge issued a 30-paged order, and dismissed the Wason Ranch lawsuit on Monday. He also denied the defendant's motion for legal fees, and rejected injunctive relief. The judge was very complimentary to the efforts of the WCRC working in conjunction with FS and EPA. In his opinion, it bars citizen initiated suits, as it fulfills the requirement of removal and restoration activities under CERCLA in an ongoing effort towards restoration. Zeke also reported that one of the Wason Ranch board members will try and attend the May WCRC meeting, and appoint a liaison to work with the WCRC.

Zeke informed the Committee that the City of Creede has met with Hecla, and that Hecla is still interested in donating land to the City. He also mentioned that the mining permit on Windy Gulch has been transferred to Hecla, who have also agreed to hire Water Management Consultants to continue the work that has taken place in the past.

TAC Report

The TAC recommends adding nine additional sample points to get baseline data before mining operations begin. The nine would include Miner's Creek at Hwy 149 and the Rio Grande, confluence of Rat Creek and Miners Creek, Rat Creek before it enters Miners Creek, Miners Creek above confluence, above Cowboy Johnson mine on Rat Creek, Upper/Middle Rat Creek, at road crossing on bachelor loop on Windy, above Allan's crossing, below Equity, and upstream of Last Chance. The TAC also recommended doing three samples at each point, except where high values exist (below NT), provided that WCRC can use the EPA lab for testing samples. Merl moves to amend the SAP, Rex seconds. Motion carries.

The TAC also discussed NT/Commodore pile listing comments that WCRC would be submitting to EPA. Don and JB agreed to meet with Carishma to compile a list of comments later in the week. The

TAC also briefly discussed Good Samaritan legislation with Charlotte Bobicki, Regional Representative, Senator Ken Salazar, and Erin Minks, Regional Representative, Congressman John Salazar.

Old Business:

Cleanup

It was decided to consider cleanup after the water recedes, and perhaps after the EPA has carried out the Emergency Response Program on the Commodore pile this year.

Revegetation

Carishma inquired about revegetation on the Amethyst site. The Committee decided to plant willows, similar to the Outlet Mine, along the newly constructed terraces. Diann Gese coordinated with Phil Reinholtz, and the willow cutting event was planned for April 18. It was decided that mushroom compost would be applied to the site later in the summer, before the rains.

Stream Restoration

Carishma followed up on the stream restoration project, and the committee discussed other possible sources of funding and possible next steps.

New Business:

Duck Race

JB inquired whether the Committee would like to organize the duck race this year, and perhaps have a float on July 4. Don reported that the Scouts might be organizing it, but if they aren't then WCRC could organize it.

Adjourn:

The meeting adjourned at 3:15 PM; the next meeting will be May 7, 2008 at 1:00 PM, with a TAC meeting preceding it at 10:00 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Carishma Gokhale-Welch