

## WILLOW CREEK RECLAMATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

Wednesday, July 2, 2008  
1:00 PM, Creede Town Hall

**Present:** Zeke Ward, WCRC Chairman and Mineral County Commissioner; Jeff Graves, CDRMS (Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety); Tawney Becker, SLV RC&D (San Luis Valley Resource Conservation and Development Council); JB Alexander, Creede; Merl Jennings, Creede; Don Dustin, Creede; Rex Shepperd, City of Creede; Mark Walker, CDPHE (Colorado Dept. of Public Health and Environment); Jim Matush, Creede; Steve Yochum, NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service); Laura Archuleta, FWS (Fish & Wildlife Service); Cindy Crist, NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service); Lora Hughes, RGCD/NRCS (Rio Grande Conservation District/Natural Resources Conservation District); Kevin Hintz, WCRC Intern; and Carishma Gokhale-Welch, WCRC Director.

**Approval of minutes:** No corrections to the June meeting were proposed. Mark moves to approve the minutes from June 4, 2008, Rex seconds. Motion carries.

**Additions/corrections to agenda:** "CDRMS report" was added under "Reports", "Director's salary" was added under "Old Business".

### **Reports:**

#### Director's Report

WCRC carried out a water sampling event on July 1 along East Willow, West Willow, Miners and Rat Creek, sampling 12-13 points in all. The volunteers sampling along Miners Creek also sampled a draining pipe approximately one mile from the fork in the road. The willows planted by WCRC volunteers earlier this year along the Amethyst mine site are doing very well. JB reported that there is new growth, and a lot of the cuttings survived spring high water.

The Project Implementation Plan for the stream restoration 319 grant has been completed and submitted to Kathleen. Carishma also submitted a request for a Targeted Brownfields Assessment for the river corridor to Mark Walker on behalf of the City of Creede.

Jim Meitz and Tawney Becker (the grant writer at RC&D) have offered to assist Carishma with writing a grant to be submitted to the Rio Grande Roundtable. Tawney has been successful in assisting other groups, including the Alamosa River Watershed restoration project. RC&D's fee is \$40 per hour, and the expenses for the last project were approximately \$2,200. The Committee felt that starting with 20 hours of Tawney's time would be more feasible. Mark moves to authorize Carishma to spend up to \$2,200 from WCRC checking account towards Tawney's fees, Merl seconds. Motion carries. JB abstained.

#### Chairman's Report

Zeke reported that the Wason Ranch lawsuit is still not a closed matter, since there is an appeal pending that was filed by their attorney. As there is still nothing official about it being withdrawn, Hecla is reluctant to conduct soil and water characterization on their property.

#### TAC Report

Steve Yochum emphasized the importance of re-vegetation for overall success of the lower Willow Creek stream restoration project. The TAC decided to identify five one-acre plots below town that would be suitable for nurseries. Rex moves to locate the five plots, Merl seconds. Motion carries. Steve and Laura agreed to help pick out the five plots. The TAC also recommends that the WCRC start the nurseries this season. Rex moves to task the WCRC to start the nurseries this year, Steve seconds. Motion carries.

Mark Walker acknowledged the request to carry out a Targeted Brownfields Assessment submitted by the WCRC on behalf of the City of Creede. Among other things, the TAC discussed the likely depth and nature of the tails in the floodplain based on Steve's measurements, and other historical data. The Committee suggested putting some wells on the east side of the highway.

Zeke reported that Hecla has offered to monetarily assist the WCRC with a biological assessment. Laura will investigate the lab and identification costs involved, and will report back to the Committee. The TAC recommendation to the WCRC is to pursue a second biological assessment in 2008.

#### CDRMS Report

Three pressure transducers and data loggers were placed underground during the NT dewatering project to monitor seasonal changes in the level of water underground. Jeff reported that the water levels in the upper mine pool have gone up four feet in four and a half months.

Tawney's report: Tawney presented her expertise with writing grants, the costs involved, and the likely timeline. RC&D charges \$40 per hour, and writing the grant should not take more than 55 hours.

Cindy Crist and Lora Hughes distributed handouts to the Committee about the various programs offered by the NRCS that could possibly be beneficial to the WCRC, including the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, and the Conservation Reserve Program.

#### **Old Business:**

##### Duck Race

The logistics of the duck race were discussed, and it was decided to meet at 2 PM on July 3 to help set up the booth for the duck race.

##### WCRC Celebration

Carishma passed on a save the date announcement for comments during the meeting. Once it is finalized, she will email it to WCRC partners, prospective funding agencies, and other watershed groups in the state. The agenda and venue are yet to be finalized.

##### Clean up

No action was taken at the meeting.

##### Director's salary

Zeke reported that the Hiring Committee had met with Carishma, and decided to give her a raise and a one time bonus for the increases in cost of living, and job proficiency. Carishma expressed her thanks to the WCRC. Rex moves to increase the Carishma's salary to \$34,000 per year starting July 2008, with a one time bonus of \$1,000, Don seconds. Motion carries.

#### **New Business:**

No new business topics were discussed.

#### **Adjourn:**

Rex moves to adjourn the meeting, Don seconds. The meeting adjourned; the next meeting will be August 6, 2008 at 1:00 PM, with a TAC meeting preceding it at 10:00 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Hintz