

## WCRC Minutes

October 1, 2003

**Intro of members:** JB Alexander, Creede; Leigh Ann Vradenburg, Watershed Coordinator; Zeke Ward, Chairman WCRC; Jim Matush, Creede; Erik Sandvik, Creede; Jim Mietz, SLV RC&D; Marvin Reynolds, CSU Cooperative Extension; Chuck Barnes, Creede; Don Gant, Creede/ Trout Unlimited; Les Dobson, USFS.

**Approval of minutes:** Motion to approve the August minutes was made by JB Alexander; second made by Don Gant. Motion carried.

**Additions/corrections to the agenda:** Don Gant will give an announcement from Trout Unlimited following the Coordinator's Report.

**In-Kind:** Forms were provided in hard copy for volunteers to track time and other expenses. Leigh Ann encouraged monthly submission of these forms so that records could be kept current.

**Coordinator's Report:** Leigh Ann indicated that she had spoken with David Gregory of the US Army Corps of Engineers regarding funding available under the Restoration of Abandoned Mine Sites (RAMS) Program. David said that the funding was not yet secured for next year, but he wanted to put in a request for Creede if we had any potential projects. A projected amount available to us was \$25,000. This money could only be used for characterization, and the work would be completed by the Corps. Leigh Ann had suggested underground work and soil characterization in the floodplain. David had said that he would check on the applicability of the underground work. Zeke suggested that characterization at the mill site on Creede Resources property might also be appropriate.

Leigh Ann and Zeke will be giving presentations at the Colorado Riparian Association meetings on October 9. Leigh Ann will be attending the full conference with trips to Bonanza and Summitville sites.

Leigh Ann and Zeke will be updating the County Commissioners at their meeting on October 6. They will be thanking them for the past in-kind donations of county equipment and man-hours, and will be requesting \$1,000-\$1,500 cash in their next budget cycle.

Leigh Ann will be presenting at the City Council meeting on October 14. She will be discussing her recent conversations with the Colorado Water Conservation Board and the US Army Corps of Engineers regarding potential projects in Creede.

Leigh Ann set up a petty cash account at Community Bank in Creede with a \$1,000 donation from Brian Lees. For now this account will be used for expenses that must be paid up front rather than after reimbursement 30-60 days later. The account will then be reimbursed.

Jim Herron plans to go underground to measure water levels sometime in October. Leigh Ann will keep interested parties informed of the schedule.

Leigh Ann and Jeff Graves (CDMG) discussed with McCollum's Excavating the possibility of improving the Nelson Tunnel flume area. This work will include excavation of a basin/trench to direct flow into the cutthroat flume. The flume will also be reset with concrete. McCollum's has estimated that this work will cost approximately \$3,000. Leigh Ann asked whether we should request part of this payment from the City because they have a water right based on the measured flow at the Nelson. JB and Zeke indicated that there might not be funding available from the City due to a tight budget at this time. Motion for WCRC to spend up to \$3,000 of Section 319 money for Nelson Tunnel flume improvements made by JB Alexander; second made by Mark Walker. Motion carried.

Don Gant indicated the Trout Unlimited was supporting Sharon Lance for the 2004 Budweiser Conservationist of the Year award. He has ballots for anyone interested in submitting a vote.

Ron McLaughlin: (Moved up due to Ron's availability) Zeke and JB described to Ron potential ideas for piping and treating water from the Nelson Tunnel. One idea was to pipe the water down to the hatchery for treatment. Benefits of this would include power production from hydropower and the use of heat to warm water for the hatchery. Roughly, this would involve 22,000 feet of pipe with a 600 foot drop. Ron suggested that 6" pipe would work. Leigh Ann said that she had looked into the treatment systems from Powell Water. Scott Powell had suggested a 500gpm unit that would cost ~\$556,000. Decanting ponds would be necessary for clarifying. This unit could last around 30 years with operation and maintenance costs ranging from \$30,000-60,000 per year. Scott is available to bring a 1L/min unit for demonstration purposes. Zeke indicated that we are investigating the marketability of metals. Ron said that he had designed treatment systems for Homestake and Eagle Mine, and that all systems are different. Zeke suggested that with the Powell unit, it might be possible to treat the Nelson Tunnel and city sewer water at the same time. Ron did not recommend treating sewage and mine water together because the different nature of the contaminants greatly increased the complexity of treatment system design. Zeke asked Ron what his approach would be for determining feasibility of our piping ideas. Ron said that he would conduct a feasibility study that would provide alternatives, give his judgment on the best approach, and discuss the cost/benefits of the preferred alternative in terms of treatment and uses for hydropower and heat. Ron estimated that a feasibility study would cost \$10,000-\$20,000. After the feasibility study, the project would enter the pre-design level. Mark suggested that Ron put together a proposal and scope of work. Zeke indicated that this material would be used for submissions to funding sources. Motion for Ron McLaughlin to prepare a proposal and scope of work for a feasibility study to evaluate Nelson Tunnel piping alternatives made by Chuck Barnes; second made by JB. Discussion: Leigh Ann indicated that we needed to assess the status of hatchery ownership and obligations/allowances under Creede's lease agreement. Zeke appointed Leigh Ann to follow up on those issues and to keep in touch with McLaughlin. Motion carried.

## **Old Business:**

Reclamation update: Leigh Ann said that reclamation was complete at the Phoenix Mine, Phoenix Park Mill Site, Gormax Mine, and Midwest Mine. McCollum's Excavating was currently finishing the Park Regent, and work should be complete by Saturday, October 4. Everything had gone well, and Les and/or Leigh Ann were on site throughout the project. So far the construction had cost \$57,000, and the second bill was anticipated to be similar given all of the work added to the original bid. Leigh Ann said that she would be giving Thomas Phillips, reporter for the Mineral County Miner, a tour of the project on Thursday for an article in the paper. Leigh Ann also indicated that the Forest Service might be able to provide informational signs for the Midwest and Phoenix Park Mill Site. She hoped that we might also use 319 money to fund their designer to produce one for the Park Regent. These signs would provide site histories, historic photographs, and a description of the reclamation work.

Geophysics comparison report: Leigh Ann indicated that she had approached Kelley Thompson with Agro Engineering to prepare a summary report of the geophysical studies (electromagnetic and natural potential) and the relevant well data. Motion to approve Kelley Thompson to prepare a summary report for the geophysical report made by JB; second made by Chuck Barnes. Discussion: Mark asked if we were committed to prepare such a report. Zeke said that when we initially decided to fund both types of studies, it was with the understanding that the derived information could be provided to others. Leigh Ann indicated that Kelley would be able to provide a draft for review by the next meeting. Motion carried.

## **New Business:**

Creede Resources update: Leigh Ann read a letter from Bob Tridle (Creede Resources) indicating that at their October meeting they would be evaluating their current workload and staff availability for working on a reclamation plan for the Emperious tailings pile. He will be in contact with us after that discussion.

Gareth Davies schedule: Leigh Ann indicated that Gareth was planning to be in Creede October 15 to begin work. His proposal for groundwater velocity studies came under the \$8,000 appropriated at the September meeting. Leigh Ann will keep the volunteers informed if Gareth requires any assistance.

2004 Vision: Leigh Ann listed potential projects and funding sources for 2004 on a display board. These ideas had been thoroughly discussed in the TAC; Leigh Ann provided a synopsis of their conclusions.

**319-** A grant proposal will be prepared to request funding for development of a watershed plan. Leigh Ann displayed the 9 characteristics of a watershed plan as identified by the EPA. She said that this was not only an essential document in the eyes of funders, but that it would also give the committee a firm idea of where they were going and how they were going to get there. It would also provide a forum for community input.

**US Army Corps of Engineers-** Following a visit from Army representatives and Brian

Hyde with the Colorado Water Conservation Board, Leigh Ann suggested that committee pursue a restoration project for the area above the flume. The sponsor (grant applicant) for this project would need to be the City. This project would accomplish several objectives: 1) improve the levee directing water into the flume so that the floodplain could be reassessed in the future; 2) replace the debilitated wooden structures with low-maintenance, more permanent ones to improve function and stability; 3) allow for improvements to riparian areas and incorporation of parking and skating areas. The Army will provide all of the initial design and engineering. Construction will be done at 65/35 cost share. One benefit is that the assessed value of the land counts towards the 35%. Other in-kind as well as cash donations are also applicable.

**CDMG and RGI-** Work would continue through these funding sources for the underground investigations and pumping.

**Forest Service-** In 2004 the Forest will be reclaiming the Outlet Mine site. The Committee will participate where appropriate. The Forest will be designing reclamation alternatives for the Amethyst and Last Chance sites in 2005. The Committee approved of this schedule and will determine their level of involvement and financial contribution in the future.

**Brownfields-** The WCRC will be working with the Mineral County Fairgrounds Association to develop an application to Colorado's Voluntary Clean Up Program, with a subsequent application for Brownfields Clean Up funding in December. Discussions will continue with Creede Resources regarding clean up of their property.

**Other-** Sources such as El Pomar, Rio Grande Water Conservation Board, and Mineral County will potentially be used for overhead, coordinator salary, and other projects as they arise.

Zeke indicated that he would like to pursue discussions with the Forest Service regarding fire management, their acquisition of cleaned-up lands, historic preservation, and the potential of a repository on the Forest. Les indicated that these discussions could occur in the near future. Motion for 2004 Vision for funding sources and projects to become the WCRC plan of work made by Chuck Barnes; second made by JB Alexander. Discussion: Zeke added that ongoing efforts not previously detailed would be included. Motion carried.

The next meeting will be November 5, 2003.

Meeting Adjourned 4:30 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Leigh Ann Vradenburg