

## **WCRC Minutes**

**March 3, 2004**

**Intro of members:** Leigh Ann Vradenburg, Watershed Coordinator; Zeke Ward, Chairman WCRC; Jeff Graves, CDMG; JB Alexander, Creede; Chuck Barnes, Creede; Don Dustin, Creede; Les Dobson, USFS; Don Gant, TU and Creede; Mark Walker, CDPHE; Jim Erdman, USGS/Crestone; Ellen Stein, Mountain Studies Institute; Mike Wireman, USEPA; Jim Mietz, San Luis Valley Resource Conservation and Development

**Approval of minutes:** Intro of members- Les Dobson, USFS (not USEPA); Silver Moon/Soil Analysis- Don Dustin suggested that the minutes read "some metals" were above Colorado table value standards rather than focusing only on lead. Revegetation subcommittee- The March 12<sup>th</sup> meeting will be at the parking lot south of the sewage lagoons, not at NRCS office. Motion to approve the revised February minutes made by Don Gant; second made by JB Alexander. Motion carried. JB added that we might want to discuss rescheduling the re-veg meeting because there will likely be snow covering the plantings that we want to evaluate. Leigh Ann said that she would talk to Steve Russell about rescheduling.

**Additions/corrections to the agenda:** A discussion of Forest Service reclamation plans for 2005-2006 was added as Old Business B. A discussion of Soil Analysis was added as New Business E. A discussion of constructing our own lab was added as Old Business C.

**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.

Leigh Ann specifically recognized and thanked Don Gant and Don Dustin for their ongoing assistance in sampling the wells for the tracer.

**Coordinator's Report:** Leigh Ann told the Committee that she gave a presentation to the NonPoint Source Council February 17<sup>th</sup> regarding the current 319 proposal for development of a watershed plan. She said that the presentation went well.

Leigh Ann said that she had been working with the EPA on the watershed assessment project that was discussed at the February meeting. She was making sure that they had all of the data that the WCRC had generated. The EPA people have developed a list of questions that they want to answer with the report.

**Old Business:**

Solomon wetlands / intern / funding: Leigh Ann said that Bob Kirkham had worked with Ron Cohen of the Colorado School of Mines to find an intern for the Solomon wetlands project and apply to the Sussman fund to cover the intern's salary. The Sussman application was submitted February 20, and internships will be announced at the end of April. Leigh Ann read a summary from Bob indicating that the potential intern is Jennifer Bush, who is a first year graduate student working on a MS in Chemistry and Environmental Science. She will study the Solomon wetlands and make recommendations how to rehabilitate them. She will also research the literature on several other constructed wetlands, both ones that have successfully operated for many years and ones that failed after construction. Because the Sussman fund will only cover the salary, Leigh Ann is currently developing an application for a NonPoint Source Outreach and Education grant to fund field, laboratory, and other expenses Jennifer might have. The turn around time on these small grants is only 2-6 weeks. Mike said that he had been getting the ball rolling in terms of an Administrative Order on Consent (AOC) by having an attorney assigned to look into it. Mark asked who would sign the AOC. Zeke said that he had thought of several options: 1) the WCRC could incorporate, and then would be legally able to sign; 2) the WCRC could approach the San Luis Valley Resource Conservation and Development council to see if they would sign; 3) the WCRC could look into developing a special tax district with the two-fold benefit of generating a revenue stream to fund these types of projects and creating a legal entity which could sign. Mike said that as part of the internship, we should get an idea of the operating costs. Jim Mietz asked when the WCRC might be coming to the RC&D to discuss such an idea. Zeke said that it was a possibility after the intern work was completed and a final report was provided. Leigh Ann said that as part of the internship, a report was required by the end of September. Les indicated that the Forest Service has an administration site by Deep Creek that might be available as lodging for the intern. He will ask the District Ranger about the availability. Mike suggested that we invite Ron and Jennifer to a meeting as soon as the internship is approved. We also need to confirm if the samples will be analyzed at the School of Mines.

Forest Service 2005-2006: Les reminded the Committee that the Forest Service planned to reclaim the Outlet Mine site in 2004. He has requested \$30,000 for 2005 to develop an Engineering Evaluation / Cost Assessment for the Last Chance dump. He has also requested \$250,000 for 2006 to do the clean up at the Last Chance. He said that the Forest had already gone through the appropriate measures and had determined that they could clean up the Chance without seeking cost reimbursement from any parties. Les, Leigh Ann, and Jim Herron (CDMG) had previously discussed the potential for the WCRC to apply for 319 funding in 2005 to clean up the Amethyst and the private portion of the Chance. This would create a collaborative effort for the reclamation work similar to the one on the reclamation in 2003. The issue would be that the WCRC would have to come up with 50% of the project cost, which must be cash, from either 319, CDMG severance tax funds, or other sources. Mike suggested that we work with the Forest on the EE/CA so that it covered both the Chance and the Amethyst. Leigh Ann suggested that the WCRC make a motion to commit our 2005 319 grant application to engineering and clean up of the Amethyst and part of the Chance. JB (as the TAC chairman) said that the TAC thought that it would be efficient to work with the Forest so that both sites could be done. He said that we already know that those areas impact West Willow and that they will need to be cleaned up. Motion for the 2005 319 grant proposal to include the engineering and cleanup of the Last Chance and Amethyst dumps made by JB Alexander; second made by Mike Wireman. Mark expressed concern that by deciding this early, other potentially more important projects might not be considered. Zeke said that the WCRC would do what they could to work with the Forest and their timing of clean up; however, there was a possibility that the WCRC priorities could change before 2005. Les said that the Forest would likely proceed without the WCRC cost share because deferring the funding would mean a couple more years and potentially decrease the chances of getting money later. Zeke said when it comes closer to 319 application time, we will have to weigh our other projects to see if anything takes precedence over this opportunity to collaborate with the Forest. Mike said that there are two things to consider: 1) the Amethyst has to be dealt with, and 2) more focus on the WCRC as it develops means more responsibility to

deliver products. Zeke restated the motion to target the 2005 319 proposal to work in conjunction with the Forest Service on the Last Chance and the Amethyst. Motion carried.

WCRC Lab: Leigh Ann suggested that if the WCRC were going to consider building a lab, then several questions must be answered and many things must be done before she could consider writing a grant to fund a lab. She said for the purposes of starting off, the WCRC needed to decide on the level of lab that was wanted, whether it was a basic lab with only the necessities for doing our in-house metals analyses, or a full scale, certified lab that could run all of the WCRC's samples as well as those of the City water and sewage. She said that we also need to confirm the availability of the hatchery building as a lab location. Leigh Ann will talk to Brent Woodward (CDOW) to discuss the terms of the lease and the previous amendments requested by the City. Chuck indicated that he thought the CDOW was concerned about the City generating profit from the hatchery property. He thought that the City trustees would agree that the WCRC was an arm of the City, and that no profit would be made by either party in this venture. JB said that first we need to get the building infrastructure repaired and secured before we could build a lab. Zeke suggested that we come up with a cost for renovating the building. Zeke said that potential sources of lab equipment included the Summitville lab and EBay. Mike suggested that the lower level lab would be the most cost effective and realistic plan for the WCRC. Mark asked if regulators would buy off on data generated by us. Mike said yes, depending on the protocol followed and the intended purpose of the data. Leigh Ann asked if there were any local contractors who would donate to the WCRC a cost estimate to fix the hatchery. JB suggested Steve Lewis and Steve Jackson. Zeke also suggested Mike Kolisch. Chuck said the City trustees would support a lab if the appropriate information were given them, and that our process described today would be encouraging to them. Motion for Leigh Ann to discuss hatchery lease terms with CDOW, JB and Zeke to bring in contractors to provide estimates, and JB and Don to develop a wish list of basic lab equipment needs made by Leigh Ann Vradenburg; second made by Chuck Barnes. Motion carried.

### **New Business:**

Mountain Studies Institute: Ellen Stein, Executive Director for the Mountain Studies Institute (MSI), handed out brochures and fliers for an upcoming conference. MSI was started in 2002 and is located in Silverton, Colorado. She said that more information could be found on their website, [www.mountainstudies.org](http://www.mountainstudies.org). The State of the San Juans conference will be held September 24-26 to discuss regional efforts in natural resource protection, conservation, and research. Ellen said that she had put the WCRC on the agenda and hoped that we would be able to participate. One purposed of MSI is to support research and education in the San Juans and to build on previous research here. Their focus extends from biology to culture to history, in particular with reference to mining. MSI wants to serve as matchmakers for funders, researchers, and students. Chuck asked if they were doing any noxious weeds work. Ellen said that they had no research agenda at this point, but that they are starting a catalog of regional research needs. Ellen said that she would like to put a link to WCRC on the MSI website.

Underground update and expenses: Jeff said that he and Jim Herron would present options for dewatering at the April meeting. The expenses to be approved include dealing with blasting caps and unshot holes at the Del Monte, and potentially some other explosives at 19 Raise. Jay Parker, the certified guy who disposed of some other Commodore level explosives last year, would probably be hired again. Jeff estimated that it would cost \$1,000-\$1,500. Motion to approve expenditures up to \$2,000 for explosives disposal made by JB Alexander; second made

by Chuck Barnes. Mark asked if we should take this opportunity to survey for more explosives. Jeff said that there were explosives elsewhere in the mine, but that we only needed to focus on areas where people would be- on the Commodore 5 level. Zeke suggested that we could deal with the other areas with signage and barricades. Jeff thought that Jay could dispose of the explosives in June or July. He said that Ken and Jerry are currently getting the West Drift prepared for bulkheads. Mike suggested that we apply for more funding for the underground work through the 104(b)(3) program this upcoming fall.

EPA Visit: Zeke said that Max Dodson, Mike Wireman, and Chris Lehnertz came to Creede the previous week to see the area and discuss the Willow Creek project. Max is the Assistant Region 8 Administrator and Chris leads the Ecosystem Protection Program. Leigh Ann gave a PowerPoint presentation to the EPA group, and everyone had a whirlwind tour of the Commodore, Park Regent, Airport Corner, the lower floodplain, the hatchery, and the Silver Moon property. Mike said that this visit has generated Max's support on the Silver Moon and Hecla properties. Mike said that EPA's plan for the Silver Moon will be to work with CDPHE to do a detailed assessment of the soil and then to work with the owner on the clean up. He said the EPA would definitely not ask anyone to move, and that Creede should be commended for their commitment to keeping the people there. Mark emphasized that they will have to proceed cautiously because some people will want their yards cleaned also, while other will not want EPA to do anything. Mike agreed that the WCRC would have to be out front in this process to address any concerns of the citizens. EPA will also work with the WCRC, Hecla, and the City to discuss the lower floodplain.

Colorado Watershed Protection Fund: Leigh Ann said that the next round of grant proposals for the Colorado Watershed Protection Fund were due in April. This fund is made up of donations from the check-off box on the Colorado income tax form. There are two grant types, planning and project, which can be up to \$25,000 and \$50,000, respectively. There is a 20% match requirement. Leigh Ann asked for ideas for projects. Don Dustin suggested that it could go towards a lab. JB suggested that we propose a flood control project. Zeke said that it could be used to fund additional XRF/soil screening. Mike suggested underground projects such as dewatering. Leigh Ann said that the grants would be awarded at the end of September, so any projects that needed to be done earlier would not work. Mark agreed with JB that a flood control project would be good because we already have the initial engineering from Agro Engineering's report. Leigh Ann asked if the North Creede culvert would be the appropriate project. Motion to develop a grant application to provide flood control in North Creede made by Mark Walker; second made by JB Alexander. Motion carried.

Soil Analysis: Mark indicated that the State needs more data for the Mineral County Fairgrounds Voluntary Clean Up Application to be approved. He said that the TAC had discussed this need and the fact that the WCRC wants to know more about soils in the floodplain. Zeke asked if there was any money left over from the \$7,000 that MCFA received from the state. Leigh Ann thought that there should be at least \$2,000. Motion for the TAC to develop a proposal for the XRF sampling made by Mike Wireman; second made by JB Alexander. Motion carried. Mark said that the State also needs input from MCFA regarding build out of the site. Zeke said that a subcommittee was working on that, and the NRCS was developing a contour map. The MCFA subcommittee will locate structures on that map. He said that there would be some irrigation planned for the property. Mark wanted to make sure that the MCFA was in approval of cutting off some of the bench to use as a cap. He said we also need to find out if that is feasible because the material might be too coarse. Zeke said that we could have a discussion with MCFA and the TAC at the April meeting.

**Other:**

The next meeting will be April 7, 2004.

Motion to adjourn made by Chuck Barnes; second made by Don Dustin. Motion carried. Meeting Adjourned 4:31 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Leigh Ann Vradenburg