

WCRC Minutes

September 1, 2004

Intro of members: Leigh Ann Vradenburg, Watershed Coordinator; JB Alexander, Creede; Don Dustin, Creede; Jim Mietz, SLV RC&D; Jim Matush, Creede; Marvin Reynolds, CSU Coop. Ext.; Zeke Ward, Creede; Les Dobson, USFS; Kathleen Reilly, CDPHE

Approval of minutes: Leigh Ann said that a suggested change to the August minutes was to note that Chuck Barnes as vice chairman presided over the meeting in Zeke's absence. Motion to approve the revised August minutes made by JB Alexander; second made by Don Dustin. Motion carried.

Additions/corrections to the agenda: John Parker's clean up discussion was moved from New Business A to the beginning of the meeting. A discussion of engineering for hydroelectric was added as Old Business E. A discussion of a new clean up day was added as New 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.

John Parker Clean Up: John Parker said that he estimated that they were half done with the clean up. They have used over 440,000 gallons of water on the site for dust management. He said that the contaminated material was being piled near the north end of the property. The pile will be toed into an existing bench with a low grade so that it will not be an eyesore. It will be covered with one foot of clean soil and revegetated. The clean soil will come from on-site or from property across the highway to the north. There is a ditch at the north end of the property to divert run-on around the reclaimed area. The culverts under the highway are to the east and west of the pile and will not affect the pile.

Coordinator's Report: Leigh Ann said that she had followed up with the treatment system that Mark Walker had mentioned at the August meeting. The company is Oil Trap and they propose an electrical treatment similar to the Powell system the WCRC previously tested. Leigh Ann shipped Oil Trap 5 gallons of Nelson Tunnel water. They will provide the initial analyses, process the water, and conduct final analyses at no cost to the committee. They should have the results to Leigh Ann in a couple of weeks.

Leigh Ann said that she had met with the subcommittee about the Nelson Tunnel feasibility study. Don Dustin had developed a Scope of Work, which has now been finalized. Leigh Ann said that the grant does not start until October 1, at which time she will begin discussions with McLaughlin to make sure that he can work with the Scope.

Leigh Ann said that she had the final word from Hecla and they were not interested in a Targeted

Brownfields Assessment of the mill site by the EPA. Hecla will hire an independent contractor to do an assessment this fall. She said that she would keep in touch with them to be involved in the process and keep the ball rolling. JB said that more assessment needed to be done on the floodplain.

Leigh Ann said that the options for wetland mitigation were not promising. She was having difficulty acquiring initial design assistance without compensation. She said that she had one last contact that she was working with. Les said that the Forest Service is doing a wetland mitigation project for those destroyed in the Highway 160 construction project. He suggested that we contact the appropriate person to see if we could do any along Willow Creek, and he will get Leigh Ann the CDOT contact. Marvin suggested that we contact Scott Miller to see if he could give us some help. Leigh Ann said that she had spoken with Scott about Partners for Wildlife, but they could not work on a project that did not result in a net increase of wetlands. She said that she would contact Scott to see if there were other ways in which he could help. Zeke suggested that we contact NRCS to see if we could incorporate wetlands into our stream restoration design. Leigh Ann asked what issues there would be with water rights. Kathleen suggested that Leigh Ann contact Steve Vandiver with the Division of Water Resources. Jim Matush said that he had seen an article in the Denver Post about Trout Unlimited's work with mine waste water clean up and he suggested that we look into it.

Leigh Ann said that she had received a grant announcement from Altria which can be used for project overhead and salaries. She said that she would apply for it if she had time by the September 30th deadline.

Leigh Ann attended a Mineral County Fairgrounds Association meeting a few weeks ago and had discussed with them the issues that several WCRC members had expressed about the partnership. The MCFA members had expressed their commitment to assisting the WCRC in any way. They had suggested that we contact them directly whenever we needed their help. Leigh Ann said that she was concerned that the county was counting their time constructing the arena towards their commitment for the clean up. Zeke said that he would talk to Danny to make sure that they knew that pledged time was separate.

Leigh Ann contacted RiverWatch to see if she could get the Windy Gulch data from this year because the Forest Service is interested in seeing if the Gulch is meeting agricultural standards. Les said that they had received a report from Homestake that said their data showed that they were meeting standards. Leigh Ann said that RiverWatch is trying to improve their system so that everyone can get their data more quickly.

Leigh Ann will be attending the Colorado NonPoint Source Forum, Colorado Watershed Assembly meeting, and Mountain Studies Institute conference this month. She will be presenting an updated poster for the committee. Kathleen said that the CWA membership dues for the committee would be \$50. Motion to use the Virginia Christensen funds to pay the \$50 membership dues to CWA made by Don Dustin; second made by Kathleen Reilly. Motion carried.

Leigh Ann said that her work sampling soil for John Parker had been going well and that she had put in nearly one week of time on that project in August. She anticipated that she would be working slightly less on it in the upcoming months because she had completed any initial soil sampling that had been needed.

Zeke said that he had been looking into the market for a concrete-type product made through the technology presented by Resonant Shock. He had talked to Jerry Brown with Rail America to see if they ever used concrete railroad ties. He said that they did. Concrete railroad ties cost about \$55 per tie. Keith Wier (Resonant Shock) said that they could make ties. Zeke calculated that we could make 750,000 ties from the Emperious Pile, which is 150,000 cubic yards. We would have to use about \$2.70 worth of cement in each tie. Zeke said that he would keep looking into it.

Old Business:

Coordinator Salary: Jim Mietz said that he had faxed Leigh Ann information about a grant available through the CWA that could be used for salary. He said that Mark Walker had also suggested that we apply for an EPA Regional Geographic Initiative grant this next round for salary. Zeke said that we would have money coming in the next couple of months from 319 that would go to Leigh Ann for work on the watershed management plan. He said that we also have the El Pomar money that we can use in the meantime for salary. Leigh Ann said that she believed that we should be looking into major donors. Jim Mietz suggested that we contact Judy Burell who has worked with the NRCS and grant writing. Kathleen asked if we had evaluated the potential for having membership dues for the committee. Leigh Ann said that she had discussed membership dues with Pat Munoz of River Network and with Marc Alston (EPA). Based on those discussions, Leigh Ann did not think that membership dues would be very profitable for the committee given the small community. Kathleen said that the CWA working with Senator Allert to get a fund for headwaters states that could go to watershed groups and be used for overhead. She said that Leigh Ann would probably find out more about it at the CWA meeting next week. Zeke said that our future options will be to approach the Rio Grande Water Conservation Board in January and to get a mill levy override. Leigh Ann said that in the near future that she would like to develop a plan for major donors. She had been reading the material provided by Pat Munoz, and said that we first needed to come up with a list of potential donors and a means by which we could approach them. She asked the committee members, especially the residents, if they could come up with a list of three or so potential donors. Don suggested that we approach the landowners on the Rio Grande below the confluence with Willow Creek. Jim Mietz suggested that we look into the South Fork Community Fund. Les suggested that we approach the mining companies because they are benefiting from the work of the committee. Zeke asked if this was the appropriate time to send a letter to the mining companies. Don suggested that we also look into approaching the homeowners associations around Creede. Kathleen said that she had heard about a fundraising project for the Lance Armstrong Foundation in which they sold bracelets. She thought that something like that might work for the committee. Zeke said that in the past we had considered slicing the rock cores that were stored at the Midwest and selling them to the tourists. Leigh Ann said that a sustainable organization should have secure funding for at least three years into the future, and that we have never really had a plan for more than one year out. Jim Mietz said that we should have a comprehensive fundraising plan. Zeke said that we should form a subcommittee to develop a fundraising plan.

Phoenix Park Rock Work: Les said that the Forest Service had hired Frontier Environmental

Services to do the work at the Outlet and that they would start in the next week or two. The road would be closed for awhile. He said that he had appropriated \$2,400 from the Outlet funds to move rock to block vehicular access to the south end of the Phoenix Park Mill Site. He said that this would not block the road, but block any off-road vehicles from driving into the reclaimed area. If more is needed then he would like the committee to use the 2003 reclamation funds for that site. Motion to use the 2003 reclamation funds to pay Frontier Environmental Services for rock work if necessary up to \$1,000 made by Kathleen Reilly; second made by JB Alexander. Motion carried. Les said that he had met some people that said there was a Geocache site near the Midwest. He was concerned that people might be in the buildings. Leigh Ann said that she would talk to the City about making sure that the buildings were not accessible.

Erdman Willow Leaf Report: Leigh Ann said that she had a draft of Jim Erdman's report on the willow leaf study. She had made copies for anyone interested in reviewing it. Jim will be at the October meeting to discuss the final product.

Fairgrounds Soil Standards: Leigh Ann said that she had been discussing the fairgrounds VCUP with Mark Walker and he wanted vegetation performance evaluations. Leigh Ann said that she would be contacting the reveg subcommittee about reviewing the plan she came up with and helping with vegetation transects in the future. Marvin said that he or the NRCS people would be able to help with any vegetation surveys.

Engineering for Hydroelectric: Jim Mietz asked if we were interested in pursuing the hydroelectric study through ICAST since the Nelson Tunnel study will only evaluate hydroelectric power production potential on Nelson Tunnel water. Leigh Ann said that at the August meeting we had decided to wait because we did not have an urgent need for the study because one had been done in the 1990's. We also do not have the funds at this time to provide the \$1,000 cost. She said that she would not have time to locate money for the study because her top funding priority was salary. Zeke agreed that we have enough to do right now and that we should wait for the results of the Nelson Tunnel study.

New Business:

Windy Gulch Funding: Leigh Ann said that she had talked to Brian Hyde about the Windy Gulch project that had been proposed to the Colorado Watershed Protection Fund. Those selected to receive the grants had not been announced yet. Brian had mentioned that there might be additional funds available, but there was a time restraint. Leigh Ann had discussed the timing with Kelley Thompson and decided that the project could not be engineered and constructed by next summer, even if the funds were available. Leigh Ann said that Brian had urged the committee to pursue additional sources of funds, since if awarded, the grant would likely not provide the full amount needed. Zeke and JB suggested that we look into FEMA to see if there are funds available for prevention. Leigh Ann asked if we might also want to approach the business owners because they would benefit from a revised floodplain map. Leigh Ann said that the City might also apply for Department of Local Affairs Mineral Impact funds.

Clean Up Day: JB said that we might look into doing another creek clean up day while the

weather was good and the creek was low. Leigh Ann asked if we might want to do it on a weekend to attract more local residents to participate. She said that the problem with that would be getting the City or County crews to help. She said that she would talk to them about working on the weekend. She said that we also needed to decide where we were going to clean. She would contact everyone by email.

Other:

JB said that it might be worthwhile to do further study, potentially with willows, along the stretch of the Rio Grande in which we know there to be a contaminated seep. Leigh Ann said that she had given all of our data regarding the seep to Andrew Ross (CDPHE). He had said that we had done our part to show this additional source and that we did not need to do any additional investigations at this time.

The next meeting will be October 6, 2004.

Meeting Adjourned 4:45 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Leigh Ann Vradenburg