

**Willow Creek Reclamation Committee Minutes**  
**October 4, 2006**  
**1:00 PM, Creede Town Hall**

**Intro of members:** Zeke Ward, WCRC Chairman and Mineral County Commissioner; JB Alexander, Creede; Ken Wyley, Creede; Jeff Graves, CDRMS (Colorado Dept. of Reclamation Mining and Safety); Jim Matush, Creede; Chuck Barnes, Creede; Les Dobson, US Forest Service; Don Dustin, Creede; Steve Payton, Creede; Ken Swinehart, Creede; Ali Morse, Creede.

**Approval of minutes:** No corrections to the September minutes were proposed. Motion to approve the September minutes made by Don; seconded by Chuck. Motion carried.

**Additions/corrections to the agenda:** Ken Swinehart's presentation on aerated autoclave concrete (AAC) was added.

**Reports:**

Director's Report:

Kelley was out of town on vacation and unable to attend the meeting, so Zeke gave the Director's report. He stated that Hecla gave a \$1500 check to WCRC. Zeke took Paul Glader and Phil Wolff (Paul's boss) on a tour through the mining district. They discussed what was needed to have the land transfer move forward, including clean-up agreements. Chuck mentioned that the city council has questions regarding liabilities that could occur, adding that they wanted to be indemnified. The new council is "letting the facts set in." Zeke is hopeful of the outcome.

Wason Ranch refiled their intention to sue. Les received a call from one of their attorneys and directed her to Kelley as much as possible; however, they did FOIA the Forest Service for some documents. They are gathering information in order to be more specific in their lawsuit.

Zeke reported on the Summit of Mining Communities in Leadville. The Committee was offered a VISTA volunteer for two years and Zeke said we were interested. It is a federally funded position for a recent college graduate who could assist the committee with grant writing, data entry, etc. The position would be part of the "Southwestern Colorado Watershed Team" and serve as an additional resource. We would need to provide a desk, phone, and computer.

The Committee needs to submit a report on monies spent from the Virginia Christensen Fund. The report is due October 20, 5:00 PM and Zeke will email Kelley to get the necessary info.

Zeke was invited to the federal EPA Brownfields Conference in Boston November 13-15, 2006. Zeke requested that expenses be paid by the EPA.

**Old Business:**

Forest Service Grant:

Les reported that the Last Chance/Amethyst Mine grant of \$250,000 is extended to September 2007. Seeding was done at Phoenix Park and the outlet where there was disturbance from the excavator. Nelson Creek is flowing; the spring source is flowing again and looks good. It appears to be surface or shallow subsurface water, coming out from the road, about 4-5 gpm.

### Commodore Preservation Effort:

Ken Wyley attended the Creede Mining Heritage meeting where the liability of taking ownership of Commodore 3, 4, and 5 was discussed. A Letter of Intent was received from Ben Poxson to donate the Commodore to the Committee. They will look at excluding the mineral liability and include surface rights only. Zeke stated that a source of Level I and II (Phase I and II Site Assessments) monies could be a state Targeted Brownfields Assessment Grant. Interim ownership while the clean-up is being done should also be discussed. The ownership passes to a non-profit and the Land Trust would qualify.

### Director Hiring:

The Hiring Subcommittee met and made the recommendation that Ali Morse be hired as the new Director of WCRC. Chuck moved to accept the Subcommittee's recommendation, commencing "as soon as possible." Don seconded and the motion was carried. Zeke will call SLVRC&D to budget information. Projects that Ali can get started on immediately are grant writing and a bibliography.

### Commodore Stabilization:

Jeff reported that the flume was still in bad shape, with a higher flow than last year. Kelley's design would eliminate a refix in the future and involved open concrete channels. If recast concrete was used, Jeff estimated it would take one month to complete. The cost for materials is approx. \$75-100,000 and labor approx. \$100,000. Total cost is estimated at approx. \$200-250,000. Excavation would be required, along with creek diversion during construction. Jeff suggested that debris should be picked up as there is a lot of trash at the entry and the Upper Grizzly is completely plugged with rocks. Jeff volunteered to oversee the clean-up, adding that a track hoe would be needed.

Ken stated that two hinges need to be rewelded/replaced at the portal and the gate by the road is falling off. He estimates work can be completed in one day, perhaps using the County's welder.

### Stream Gauge Station:

Zeke reported that Homestake left a transducer and data logger.

### Dewatering Project:

Ken submitted a cost estimate and quote for approx. \$40,000 with insurance included.

### **New Business:**

#### Aerated Autoclave Concrete (AAC):

Ken Swinehart reported that mine tailings can be used to manufacture AAC. As a building material AAC has numerous advantages. It is 1/5 the weight of concrete block, is fire resistant, has an R rating comparable or better than wood, can reduce heating costs by 30-50%, is used extensively in Europe, and is resistant to mold and bugs. Ken has been in touch with Professor Michael Grutzeck at Penn State University who offered to complete a month-long feasibility study for Creede, utilizing two undergrads and a graduate entrepreneur, at a cost of \$5,000. The study would determine if the tailings south of Creede contain enough silica (>60 wt %). Since Hecla owns the property, Don wondered if Hecla might be willing to fund the study. Other questions were brought up regarding distance from the market, leachability studies, energy costs, and sulfide/sulfate content.

The next meeting will be November 1, 2006. Meeting adjourned at 2:45 PM

Respectfully submitted,  
Ali Morse