

WILLOW CREEK RECLAMATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

Wednesday, April 4, 2007

1:00 PM, Creede Town Hall

Present: Zeke Ward, WCRC Chairman and Mineral County Commissioner; Mark Walker, CDPHE (Colorado Dept. of Public Health and Environment); Jeff Graves, CDRMS (Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety); Les Dobson, USFS (US Forest Service); Tom Malecek, USFS (US Forest Service); Bob Kirkham, Consultant (Alamosa); Don Dustin, Creede; JB Alexander, Creede; Jim Matush, Creede; Merl Jennings, Creede; Carishma Gokhale-Welch, Monte Vista; Kelley Thompson, Monte Vista; and Ali Morse, WCRC Coordinator.

Approval of minutes: There were no corrections to the March minutes; the motion to approve them was made by JB and seconded by Don. Motion carried.

Reports:

Coordinator's Report

Ali reported that the VCUP application for MCFA (Mineral County Fairgrounds Assoc.) had been approved and the wetlands mitigation and monitoring plan required by USACE (US Army Corps of Engineers) was in the process of being completed.

Don and Ali identified the seep at Wagon Wheel Gulch, took photos, and GPS coordinates. Don had noticed white rings on nearby rocks. Merl made the motion to have the white rings analyzed, Mark seconded it, and the motion carried. Mark also made a motion to request a CDPHE sampling point at La Garita Bridge, Merl seconded, and the motion carried. Les reported that water samples taken at Windy Gulch exceeded agricultural standards for zinc (2000 ppb). The USFS will write a letter to Homestake. Thanks to Jeff Graves and EPA's Bill Schroeder, WCRC received 250 ml nitric acid at no cost.

Ali and Zeke attended the CWA (CO Watershed Assembly) Mining Subcommittee in Leadville, which highlighted Good Samaritan legislation. Ali met with Mike Gibson (Rio Grande Basin Round Table) who confirmed that several WCRC projects were eligible for SB 179 funding. Merl made a motion for the TAC to identify a project right away, Mark seconded, and the motion carried. Steve Yochum is making corrections to his stream restoration report and expects it to be completed by mid-May. He sent the committee four copies of his "Summary of Conditions."

The single use copyright contract (\$100) from the Colorado Preservation Inc. is still being drafted. Regarding other financial matters, the Pine River Valley/Merchants and Miners Bank has offered WCRC a free checking account. Don made the motion to switch our checking to their Creede branch, JB seconded, and the motion carried. The employees of all branches are available for clean-up activities, willow planting, etc. The MSA SCSR's were returned for cash and the check is being processed. The \$150 membership renewal in the Colorado Riparian Association pays for their newsletter, reduced fees at their conferences, and riparian education. JB made the motion not to renew the membership, Don seconded it, and the motion carried. Finally, Ali informed the committee that all "extras" (coffee, cookies, lunches for TAC, long distance calls, etc.) have been paid by her, with no expense to the committee. She added that an article on WCRC was recently published in *Creede Magazine*.

Chairman's Report

Zeke reported that the samples from the Emperious pile were sent to Professor Michael Grutzeck of Penn State University and the postage was paid by the developers of the Village at Wolf Creek. He also stated that he visited EPA's new office in Denver and met with Mike Wireman and others.

Old Business:

Internship

Two well-qualified applicants from Adams State College are available for the summer internship. Merl, Don, and Zeke offered to interview them before the end of this week. The \$5500 is still available for DRMS and the USFS bunkhouse can be rented for \$135/month.

Adopt-a-Highway

Our application was accepted for the area between mile marker 20 and 21. A safety video and CD on meth lab paraphernalia must be viewed. CDOT will install the sign and provide vests and trash bags.

Tom Schillaci video

Tom submitted an invoice showing the total value of his video to be \$3,044.18 and asked to be reimbursed his out-of-pocket expense of \$1,006.68. Kelley suggested submitting the invoice to Kathleen Reilly as part of the evaluation of the Nelson Pilot Dewatering Project's 319 grant money.

New Business:

New Director

Carishma Gokhale-Welch shared her educational and professional background, and answered the committee's questions regarding availability, etc. She is willing to come to Creede once/week and work the rest of the time from her home in Monte Vista. Merl made the motion to hire Carishma at \$32,000/year, Don seconded, and the motion carried. Merl then made a motion to hire Kelley as needed, per Kelley's availability, within the budget, and with the coordination of the new Director. Don seconded and the motion carried.

Commodore

Zeke read a memo from Mike Wireman. The EPA will write a letter to Ben Poxson stating that the Nelson Tunnel discharge is the most significant source of metals to Willow Creek and the Commodore waste pile is unstable, a risk to the citizens of Creede, and a source of metals to Willow Creek. EPA will ask Poxson to cooperate with EPA and WCRC with remediation and stabilization, using Emergency Response and authority under Superfund to stabilize the waste pile, if necessary. The EPA is also prepared to list the Nelson Tunnel on the National Priorities List. The EPA added that it will be sensitive to the historical preservation value of the site. Because CDRMS and CDPHE monies earmarked for the Commodore upper flume replacement, sediment basin excavation, and levee construction serve as USFS match money for the Last Chance project, Les requested that the state funding remain in place until we know of the EPA's plans and we receive bids for the Amethyst work.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 PM; the next meeting will be May 9, 2007 at 1:00 PM, with a TAC meeting preceding it at 10:00 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ali Morse