

WILLOW CREEK RECLAMATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

1:00 PM, Creede Town Hall

Present: Zeke Ward, WCRC Chairman and Mineral County Commissioner; Jeff Graves, CDRMS (Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety); Les Dobson, USFS (US Forest Service); Don Dustin, Creede; JB Alexander, Creede; Jim Matush, Creede; Erin Minks, Regional Representative, Congressman John Salazar; Joe McCann, Division of Water Resources; Charlotte Bobicki, Regional Representative, Senator Ken Salazar; Travis Smith, SLVID (San Luis Valley Irrigation District); Rio de la Vista, SLV WFAC (San Luis Valley Wetlands Focus Area Committee); Kelley Thompson, Agro Engineering, Merl Jennings, Creede; Jim Mietz, SLV RC&D (San Luis Valley Resource Conservation and Development); Phil Bethke, Creede; and Carishma Gokhale-Welch, WCRC Director.

Approval of minutes: No corrections to the August minutes were proposed. JB moves to approve minutes from August 1, 2007, Don seconds. Motion carries.

Additions/corrections to agenda: "Jim Meitz" and "Les Dobson" were added under Reports.

Reports:

Director's Report

Carishma attended the pre-training for Rural Philanthropy Days (RPD) in Alamosa. She asked the Committee for ideas for future projects that she could propose at the RPD event later this month.

She mentioned that she had discussed cleaning up debris along West Willow Creek with some of the Committee members. The Committee decided to come up with a plan for cleanup.

She also reported that WCRC could use the EPA lab to analyze fall water samples.

Carishma noted that September 2007 Newsboy (San Luis Valley REC newsletter) had an article on WCRC. Zeke reported that he had received several phone calls in response to the article.

Chairman's Report

Zeke reported that he had the opportunity to go to NM and discuss Good Samaritan legislation with the Senators. He also mentioned that Creede Resources/HECLA will be carrying out their VCUP starting this week.

Les Dobson:

Les reported that the agreement between WCRC and USFS for the Last Chance project expires at the end of this year, and needs to be extended. Kelley moves to extend the agreement, Don seconds. Motion carries.

Les noted that the willow cuttings that were planted in spring have done very well, and that the project was a big success. He handed out appreciation gifts to all the volunteers who helped with the event. Merle moves to thank the USFS for their assistance, and hard work, Don seconds. Motion carries.

Jim Meitz:

Jim recommended that to proceed with the hydroelectricity project, it would be beneficial to set up a taskforce. The Committee decided to setup a taskforce that would organize and develop the information needed to move forward on this project. Jim Mietz agreed to facilitate the taskforce, and JB agreed to help with coordination. Kelley mentioned that CDPHE does not have a permitting issue, and that

hydroelectricity in itself, would likely not be economical. It might be more practical to think of hydroelectricity in conjunction with water treatment, for improved water quality. Kelley is interested in participating in the taskforce, keeping Willow Creek in perspective.

Jim also reported that RC&D was pursuing a SEED (Sustainable Environment and Economic Development) park in the SLV, about 10,000 acres in area. Discussions regarding solid waste composting, and gasification are in progress. The goal is to have independent energy. He informed the Committee that a stakeholder meeting has been scheduled for December 1, 2007 at Adams State College.

Old Business:

Fall water sampling:

Since reclamation work is being carried out at the Amethyst and Last Chance mines, it was decided that water samples taken down stream from the work might not accurately represent metal loadings to the Creek. JB moves to take up to five samples along East Willow Creek, at the seep at the Mid-west, and other locations that are not affected by reclamation work, Jeff seconds. Motion carries.

Amethyst/Last Chance:

Jeff reported that work is currently underway, and that both contractors are on track. The stream channel has been widened, and terraces are being constructed. Work on the headwall will commence next week. Les reported that at the upper end of Last Chance, a small concrete foundation was exposed, and that Jack Morris was interested in it. The Committee decided that since the property belongs to Ben Poxson, Jack Morris should approach Ben Poxson if he wanted it.

WCRC video:

Carishma obtained guidelines for video production from Loretta. She handed those out to the TAC for their review and comment.

Commodore/EPA:

Zeke reported on the EPA community meeting on the proposed listing of the Nelson Tunnel and Commodore waste rock pile that took place on August 30. There is some skepticism about EPA's involvement, as well as concerns that listing these sites will harm voluntary support. The City of Creede has written a draft letter to the Governor. Zeke is going to present all the concerns raised by the Committee at the last meeting to County officials, who are also going to write a letter to the Governor.

Adopt-a-Highway

The Committee decided to schedule another highway cleanup day on September 29. It was decided to meet at City Hall.

New Business:

Travis Smith, San Luis Valley Irrigation District:

Travis gave a brief presentation about the Rio Grande reservoir, and mentioned that over the last 100 years, needs have changed. In 2002, the Board of Directors looked at the deficiencies of the reservoir, and the possibility of additional water storage. The main questions that have been asked are – is there potential for enlargement? What are the issues that have come up? What are the needs? Phase I has just been completed. In Phase II, among other things, non-consumptive needs, landslide issues, and wetlands issues will be investigated.

Travis' main goals were to update the Committee on the progress so far, and also to find out the needs of this group. Zeke mentioned that the biggest needs of the community are flood control, concession to

fisheries (sportsmen), and rafting. He also mentioned the additional benefit for the 303(d) list. Jim Meitz asked about hydroelectricity, and mentioned the possibility of recruiting Tristate's help, through REC. Potential sources for hydroelectricity are going to be investigated in Phase II.

Travis mentioned that they are trying the mirror what the Arkansas basin has in place, by consulting with major stakeholders, and trying to figure out their needs. Don inquired about the possibility of surplus dirt for WCRC's revegetation efforts south of town. Travis noted that while there maybe dredging of silt, there is likely no possibility of surplus dirt.

Dale commented that SLVID is open minded, and is looking at new ways of accomplishing their tasks in trying to find solutions for big problems.

Rio de la Vista:

Rio reported that the Rio Grande Interbasin Roundtable is carrying out a non-consumptive needs assessment, and that the Wetlands Focus Area Committee (WFAC) is also the Non-consumptive Needs Assessment Committee. The WFAC is in the process of compiling a list of resources, with specifics on the data available at different sources. She presented a handout that lists the various resources identified, along with the type of data available at each resource.

Adjourn:

Don moves to adjourn the meeting, JB seconds. Motion carries. The meeting adjourned at 3:30 PM; the next meeting will be October 10, 2007 at 1:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Carishma Gokhale-Welch