

WILLOW CREEK RECLAMATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

Wednesday, December 5, 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); Les Dobson, USFS (US Forest Service); JB Alexander, Creede; Jim Matush, Creede; Rex Shepperd, City of Creede; Steve Russell, RGHRP, (Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project); Jim Mietz, SLV RC&D (San Luis Valley Resource Conservation and Development Council); Rick Inman, SLVREC (San Luis Valley Rural Electric Cooperative); Merl Jennings, Creede; and Carishma Gokhale-Welch, WCRC Director.

Approval of minutes: No changes were proposed. Merle moves to approve November minutes, JB seconds. Motion carries.

Additions/corrections to agenda: “Mark Walker: railroad right of way” and “Jim Mietz: SEED park” were added under new business.

Reports:

SLV REC, Rick Inman

At the recent REC board retreat, the board discussed different options for alternative energy in the Valley. Rick reported that hydropower in Creede is feasible, that REC wants to be a partner in this project, and can raise funds to get it started. Jim Mietz mentioned looking at the entire Rio Grande system. Rick commented that there are no transmission lines in place where there are reservoirs and that if REC gets into something big, Tristate would be involved. He also reported on solar energy possibilities for REC in the Valley. Les suggested making the EPA aware of REC’s interest and partnership in hydroelectricity in Creede.

Director’s Report

Carishma met with Steve Vandiver to discuss WCRC’s 2007 grant from the Rio Grande Water Conservation District (RGWCD). Steve was glad to hear the progress that WCRC has made in 2007. Carishma offered to make a change in the accounts so that all expenses other than salary would be credited back to the RGWCD account held at SLV RC&D (using WCRC petty cash); Steve agreed. Carishma reported that the petty cash account would have to be debited by \$884.88. JB moves to debit WCRC petty cash account, and credit RGWCD account, Rex seconds. Motion carries.

The Committee agreed that the Director’s mileage expenses not covered by a specific grant would be paid out of WCRC petty cash, and that the Director could spend up to \$200 for work related expenses before requiring a motion from the Committee.

Carishma received an inquiry from Casey Resources, a consulting firm for Creede Resources. They would be willing to pay WCRC to rent the XRF machine for use at the Mill site. The Committee decided that they could use our XRF machine free of charge.

Fall water sampling was carried out on November 20 at six sites with the help of seven volunteers. Carishma delivered the samples to the EPA lab on November 23.

Carishma completed the final EPA RGI grant report, financial, and other forms and submitted them to the EPA. The EPA RGI grant is now closed.

Carishma met with Amanda Bassler to discuss the WCRC prospectus. Zeke reported that The Hitchcock Foundation is still interested in supporting WCRC in producing a prospectus. Carishma also reported that the December 4 Pueblo Chieftain published an article about WCRC.

Chairman's Report

Zeke reported on his recent trip to Dallas to speak to the Wason Ranch board of directors. There are six people on the board (five were present at the meeting), and 16 shareholders. Zeke updated the board on WCRC's past and most recent accomplishments. Some of the board members seemed surprised to hear about EPA's proposed listing of the Nelson Tunnel, and also to learn that CERCLA action creates a bar to the citizen-initiated suit. A Wason Ranch board meeting is scheduled for early December where the suit will be discussed, among other things. Mark Walker inquired if Zeke had the opportunity to talk about the piece of paper which mentioned that Wason has settled with the mining company. Zeke said that Antoine Frank settled, but it appears that his property was the Wason Ranch property at the time.

Old Business:

Five Mines Project

Carishma reported that she would like to close out the five mines project in 2008. The only work remaining is to make interpretative signs at the mine sites. Les volunteered to assist with the signs. The committee decided that the signs should reflect the significance of the site, partners who helped clean up, the history of the mine, reclamation efforts, and before and after pictures.

Stream Restoration

Carishma thanked Kelley for his assistance with the Non-point source (NPS) grant due in January. An abstract was submitted on November 30 to get feedback and comments from the NPS Technical Alliance Committee. Steve Yochum emailed inquiring about progress made regarding the establishment of a plant nursery to develop revegetation for stream restoration. JB mentioned that it would be useful if the location of a nursery could be delineated. Steve Russell suggested identifying possible donor sites for willow. Similar to revegetation at the Outlet mine site, willow stakes could also be used. Kelley discussed the water quality data, and talked about quantifying possible improvements to water quality. Rex moves the TAC to further discuss water quality issues, revegetation, and stream restoration, Steve seconds. Motion carries.

New Business:

Railroad right of way:

Mark Walker inquired if the Committee wanted to make a recommendation to the City about a one-mile railroad right of way for adverse abandonment. Zeke reported that the City wasn't soliciting comments, but that if they wanted samples taken, WCRC could assist since the rock piles might be contaminated. Mark made this inquiry since CDPHE has been asked to comment on the matter.

SEED Park, Jim Meitz

Jim handed out information about the RC&D SEED Park, which is to be an industrial park focused on jobs, agriculture, forestry, energy, and recycled waste, among other things. Based on the discussions from the community meeting on December 1, a consultant is putting together a report that will include ten business plans based on priority and results of the meeting. RC&D is aiming for the Park to be energy independent.

Adjourn:

JB moves to adjourn the meeting, Merle seconds. Motion carries. The next meeting will be on January 9, 2007 at 1:00 PM, with a TAC meeting preceding it at 10:00 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Carishma Gokhale-Welch