

WILLOW CREEK RECLAMATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

Wednesday, June 4, 2008
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); Jim Mietz, SLV RC&D (San Luis Valley Resource Conservation and Development Council); JB Alexander, Creede; Merl Jennings, Creede; Rex Shepperd, City of Creede; Erik Sandvik, Creede; Erin Minks, Regional Representative, Congressman Salazar; Mike Wireman, USEPA; Jan Crawford, Creede; Jim Loud, Creede; Wendy Naugle, CDPHE; Ed Innerarity, Wason Ranch; Gwen Christiansen, USEPA; Peggy Linn, USEPA; Briana Gunn, URS; Hays Griswold USEPA; Steven Way, USEPA; Mike Holmes, USEPA; Bill Sabatta, URS, Mark Walker, CDPHE (Colorado Dept. of Public Health and Environment; Matt Hildner, Pueblo Chieftain; Tim Bosco, URS; Clyde Dooley, City of Creede; Kevin Hintz, WCRC Intern; and Carishma Gokhale-Welch, WCRC Director.

Approval of minutes: No corrections to the May meeting were proposed. JB moves to approve the minutes from May 7, 2008, Erik seconds. Motion carries.

Additions/corrections to agenda: No additions/corrections to the agenda.

Reports:

Director's Report

Carishma introduced Kevin Hintz, WCRC summer intern. Kevin is an undergraduate student at ASC, majoring in Wildlife Biology, with a minor in Chemistry. She reported that the willows that were harvested in April were planted along the Amethyst mine on May 16 by WCRC volunteers with the assistance of Phil Reinholtz, USFS. WCRC's annual water sampling event was conducted on May 21. In all, 19 samples were collected, and will be tested for total metals, dissolved metals, sulfates, and isotopes. Flow measurements were also taken at these 19 sites. WCRC carried out highway cleanup on May 28. Carishma thanks all the WCRC volunteers that helped with these three events.

Carishma reported that the grant application she had submitted to the Virginia Christensen Trust in April was granted. The WCRC received \$2,840 to cover costs associated with outreach and publicity, travel, and other administrative expenses. Carishma had also submitted an application to the Hitchcock Foundation in January for the production of a prospectus for WCRC, which the WCRC was recently awarded (\$8,000). Carishma has contacted Amanda Basler, Keen Designs, but is yet to hear from her. Carishma is working on thank you letters to both grantors.

Prof. Benson, ASC has expressed an interest in geochemical modeling of WCRC data. Carishma met with him to discuss possibilities. Mike W. asked about the possibility of ASC students getting involved. Carishma updated the Committee about possible field trips in the future, and Prof. Benson's students using WCRC data for their class last semester.

Carishma reported about the weekly articles about WCRC activities in the Mineral County Miner – an effort to inform the local community about the work being undertaken by WCRC.

Chairman's Report

The MCFA is closer to moving dirt as details are being finalized with the contractor. Zeke reported on the high water situation at the Commodore pile. Big rocks were procured from John Parker and from the area around the site. Ed Innerarity volunteered rocks from the Wason Ranch, if more are needed in an emergency.

EPA Report

Gwen Christensen updated the Committee on the listing. The NT/Commodore pile site has been officially proposed as a NPL site. The EPA received only one set of comments during the 60-day comment period (from WCRC), so the listing will go final, and will be published in the federal register. No action is needed from the WCRC at this point, and Gwen will inform the Committee when it is published in the federal register.

Mike Wireman reported on the current status and likely timetable of the project. There is still a lot of research to be done as regards the NT, and it will probably take another year of characterization. The EPA will also try to put a flume inside the NT. The hope is to stabilize the Commodore pile this year. He reported on the various mechanisms and techniques that could be used at the site, including hydraulic controls underground, and a treatment plant.

Mike Wireman introduced Mike Holmes, the remedial manager on the NT project, Hays Griswold, Emergency Response Program (ERP), and Steve, ERP.

Mike Holmes has been reviewing previous work carried out by the Committee, CDRMS, and EPA. He is in the process of assessing the past data on hydrology and water quality, and evaluating what needs to be done. They will then come up with a Feasibility Study (FS)/Alternate Analysis, to assess what exactly will be feasible at the site. He reiterated that the EPA works in fiscal year funding cycles, and that he is looking at this fall to get the initial infusion of money. He stated that he would like to work closely with the WCRC and CDRMS through out this process. After the FS is completed, a decision will be made. Public comment on the final decision will be sought. Mike will be soliciting the WCRC's comments continuously along the way. He introduced Wendy Naugle, his counterpart from the state. He mentioned that it was an equal partnership, and that the state would also be involved in the decision making. He emphasized that the EPA would do everything to expedite the process, and shield the community as much as possible from the possibly lengthy EPA process.

Jim Meitz inquired about the possibility of hydroelectricity. Mike reported that it is being considered in the plans. The EPA is trying to look at sustainable type energy development, and he mentioned possible funding sources.

Mike's contact information:

USEPA Mail Code: EPR_SR, 1595 Wynkoop, Denver, CO 80202; Phone: 303-312-6607; email: holmes.michael@epa.gov

Hays Griswold reported that the major decision document for the ERP is being finalized. Steve Way would also be helping with the ERP on the Commodore pile. They are also working on getting the project funding authorized. A few components have yet to be finalized, like locating materials, and making a few design changes after the recent site visit. He mentioned that the water is high, and that a diversion would be hard at this point. They will have to wait for the water level to come down.

Briana Gunn has been working to estimate hydrology and watershed information. URS has been through the statistical analysis, and 35 years of data, and came up with 532 cfs for a 100-year flood event. That number is 30% higher than what has been recorded so far. The design objectives include trying to control where the water is flowing, flood control, control energy to reduce erosion of the waste rock pile, stabilize the pile, and preserve the historic buildings and historic nature of the site. She mentioned that it wasn't an easy site, as it is very steep, and has high water at this time. She reported that after the site visit today, the previous design will be modified, and they will likely have a geo-technician look at the site.

Old Business:Water sampling:

Since access was restricted along East Willow Creek, no samples were taken downstream and upstream of the Outlet mine in May. JB suggested that these can be collected in July, while collecting samples for background data along Rat and Miners Creek. The new sample points along Rat and Miners creek were discussed briefly. It was decided to schedule sampling on July 1. Carishma will send the SAP to Mike Wireman.

WCRC Celebration

Carishma informed the Committee that the events for the WCRC celebration were yet to be finalized, but that it was scheduled for September 12 and 13. The committee briefly discussed possible locations and events.

Interpretive signs

Carishma received the first draft for the interpretive signs from the designer and is waiting on comments from the Committee. The signs should be in the ground in time for the WCRC celebration.

New Business:Targeted Brownfields

Mark Walker reported that the City of Creede requires a Phase I Targeted Brownfields Assessment (TBA) prior to taking title to the Creede Resources parcel. The WCRC can advise the City and assist with the application for Phase I TBA. Permission has to be sought from Creede Resources prior to sampling. Ed Innerarity also updated the Committee about the Wason Ranch lawsuit, and reported that the Board did not plan to appeal.

Ed moves to submit a request to CDPHE for Phase I TBA on the Creede Resources property, JB seconds. Motion carries.

Merl moves to task the TAC with discussing and establishing the sampling priorities in the Willow Creek floodplain, Erik seconds. Motion carries.

Adjourn:

Rex moves to adjourn the meeting, Merl seconds. The meeting adjourned at 3:00 PM; the next meeting will be July 2, 2008 at 1:00 PM, with a TAC meeting preceding it at 9:00 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Hintz