

**Coal Creek Watershed Coalition
Steering Committee Meeting
Crested Butte Town Hall
October 14, 2010, 2:30 pm**

Attendance: Anthony Poponi, Nicki Devanny, Amy Weinfurter, John Hess, Mary Alice and Gerald Smith, Steve Glazer, Robin Wehmeyer, Harvey Castro, Wendy Brown, Rodney Due

A sign-up sheet was passed around to record attendance.

Announcements (2:37 - 2:40)

- 1) On Tuesday, October 12, the Water Quality Control Commission adopted new assessment methodologies for aquatic life at its administration hearing. New guidelines (as opposed to standards) for macroinvertebrate populations will be used to identify the presence of stress to a water system. The guidelines will identify the presence of stress, rather than try to identify specific pollutants or stressors. The guidelines will be used statewide, and will likely be implemented around June 2012.

Approval of Minutes (2:40 - 2:41)

Steve Glazer moved to adopt the minutes from the September board meeting. John Hess seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with no abstentions.

Agenda:

1) Introduction of Nicole Devanny (2:41 - 2:47)

Nicole, or Nicki, joins the CCWC after a year with the Student Conservation Association in Arizona, collecting hydrological and biological data on the Bill Williams River. During her time in Arizona, she also collected ground water data, and conducted plant and wildlife surveys. She graduated with a degree in Environmental Studies from the University of Vermont. Nicki will train with the CCWC next week, will attend the VISTA Program's Pre-Service Orientation in New Mexico early in November, and will officially start her VISTA term on November 7, 2010. She also attended the Colorado Watershed Assembly Conference in Vail, which covers a variety of water quality, watershed remediation, and non-profit management topics, last week.

2) Discussion of Colorado Watershed Restoration Program Grant (2:47 - 4:00)

The board responded to concerns about its planned diversion improvement projects at the McCormick and Halazon Ditch from Gerald and Mary Alice Smith. The board also discussed costs estimates the CCWC has received from three contractors, and agreed on the requirements and guidelines for a contract for this phase of the project. Additionally, the board passed a motion to amend the CCWC's bidding policy.

After the Forest Queen Mine remediation project fell through, the CCWC received permission from the Colorado Watershed Restoration Program to transfer these grant funds to efforts to improve diversion structures along Coal Creek. Specifically, the grant provides \$13,000 to engineer diversion structure improvements at the Halazon ditch – located just upstream of the Town of Crested Butte – and the McCormick Ditch, located off of Teocali Avenue in Crested Butte. The 2009 riparian assessment, conducted by the environmental consulting agency BioEnvirons and Wendy Brown, identified these sites as priorities for remediation. The current design of these diversion structures requires regular maintenance. Heavy equipment enters the stream in order to move and reassemble rocks so that diversion ditches can capture greater amounts of water and, in some cases, the entire content of the stream's flow. This maintenance process creates ecological impacts including sediment plumes, impacts macroinvertebrate habitat, and damage to in-stream and riparian habitat. The grant will fund a site assessment and design of more efficient diversion structures that require less disruptive maintenance.

Gerald and Mary Alice Smith responded to a letter Anthony sent to homeowners near diversion ditches, requesting access to the stream channel through their properties. The Smiths, who live near the McCormick Ditch, provided several photos of the site and expressed some concerns about the need for the project. Gerald Smith questioned the CCWC's incorporation of scientific data into its project designs, and specifically suggested that metals from mineralization and mining activities might not be detrimental to aquatic life. The Smiths have denied the CCWC access to the site from their property. Board members thanked the Smiths for attending the meeting and voicing their opinion, and noted that the CCWC will respect the Smith's private property rights as it moves forward with this project. Several members did note the CCWC's incorporation of science – both its own data as well as data from other agencies and entities – into its projects, and specifically cited the creek's failure to attain state standards for suitable levels of cadmium and zinc for aquatic life as validation for the organization's efforts.

The CCWC received three estimates of cost for this engineering project, from TetraTech, SGM, and Crane and Associates. The board agreed to prioritize improvements to the Halazon Ditch, in case the \$13,000 allotted to this project will not cover remediation designs for both sites. TetraTech estimated a cost of \$32,000, SGM indicated it a range of \$13,000 to \$15,000, and Crane and Associates estimated a cost of \$13,000. The grant provides \$13,000 of funding towards this project. The board noted that it would like natural-looking designs for the new diversion features, especially since they will be highly visible within town. John added that before implementing the designs, the CCWC should speak with Rodney Due and Susan Parker, to determine if the plans need to go before Town Council, which owns water rights in both ditches.

After clarifying that the proposed contract would fund only the site survey and structure design – not the construction phase of the project – the board discussed the contractor costs of estimates. Steve Glazer moved to modify the CCWC's bidding policy to include costs estimates, as opposed to formal bids, where appropriate. John Hess seconded the motion. The motion passed, with one abstention from Harvey Castro.

Steve Glazer moved to authorize Director Anthony Poconi to negotiate a contract and scope of work with Jeff Crane, which will delineate the site survey, structure design, and site specs of the diversion structure(s). The contract will be limited to a total cost of no more than \$13,000, will prioritize the remediation of the Halazon ditch, and will be subject to approval from the CCWC Board of Directors. John Hess seconded the motion. The motion passed without abstentions.

3) VISTA Member Final Report (4:00 - 4:10)

Outgoing VISTA member Amy Weinfurter prepared a list of her accomplishments, the available tools, and the future needs and continuing challenges in a variety of areas, including grant-writing and fundraising, outreach and education, volunteer recruitment and management, and watershed monitoring and remediation. Amy also prepared a more detailed end-of-term letter, which can be shared with anyone interested in reading it.

4) Executive Session – Director Review

The board of directors held a private executive session to conduct a director review. The executive session was began at 4:10 and ended at 5:00pm.

The meeting (apart from the executive session) adjourned at 4:10 pm.