

## **Coal Creek Watershed Coalition**

### **MEETING AGENDA**

Wednesday, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009 4:00-5:30PM  
Crested Butte Town Hall

#### **Attendance:**

Anthony Poponi, Amy Weinfurter, Steve Bogott, Mike Pelletier, Steve Glazer (by phone), Mike O'Loughlin, Scottie Willey, Wendy Brown, Robin Jones, Rosemary Carroll, John Hess

#### **Sign-up Sheet**

A signup sheet was passed around to record attendance at the meeting.

#### **Announcements** (4:00 – 4:05)

- 1) Amy announced that the Western Hardrock Watershed Team (WHWT) Spring Training has set a date for their spring training, on April 27-29. Speakers from groups including the EPA, Colorado River Watch, and River Network will be presenting. Also, the conference will offer a choice of workshops about beginning and advanced technical water monitoring, grant writing, and group sustainability training (fundraising and board development). While the location is still to be announced, the meals and transportation costs will be covered by the WHWT. Two members of each watershed community are invited to attend: Steve and Rosemary indicated that they were interested. Wendy and Robin have other commitments during that weekend, so would be interested but in going, but cannot attend.
- 2) The Coalition has requested an expedited status on its 501(c)(3) application, which should reduce the response time to a month and a half, down from a period of six months. Cindy Mattson and Bookie Louise helped prepare the 501(c)(3) application.
- 3) Steve reminded the attendees that the Colorado Healthy Rivers program is soliciting tax donations and that the members of the Coalition should be promoting the program, particularly by reminding town residents how the Crested Butte area is benefiting from the Health Rivers Fund grant. The program must receive \$75,000 each year to renew its programs, and has been close to falling short of this amount in the past. It is possible to send funds in through checks, as well as to donate by “checking off” for the program on the State income tax forms.

#### **Approval of minutes** (4:05 - 4:10)

The attendees briefly discussed the December meeting minutes. Wendy asked if more background information about the methods and equipment used in sampling and analysis was available, in case the Coalition needs to provide detecting and reporting limits and methods in the future. For instance, if a new lab begins to analyze the Coalition's water samples, this meta-data will be needed to make long-term comparisons and understand long-term trends in water quality. This background information is included with the raw data the Coalition receives from the EPA. Steve suggested providing this data online, possibly through a link to the EPA's website.

Wendy also commented that minutes could have been condensed to print onto fewer pages, and Robin caught a typo on page four.

Robin Jones motioned to approve the meeting minutes from the December 2008 meeting as amended. Wendy Brown seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously without abstentions.

### **Additions to the Agenda** (4:10 – 4:15)

Anthony requested time for discussing two upcoming grants the Coalition is applying for as well as the discussion of a potential Chamber of Commerce membership. Robin added that she also would like to discuss an additional item.

### **Agenda Items**

#### **1. Annual Meeting Overview (5:06 – 5:28)**

- **Approve Time**

Steve Renner, Tara Tafi, and Loretta Pineda of the Colorado Division of Reclamation and Mining (DRMS) are considering attending the Coalition's annual meeting. Most of the board and advisory group members had selected the 10am- 2pm time slot. However, the group decided that the best choice would be the time that will allow the most people, and especially the DRMS staff, to attend.

- **Determine Food**

DRMS has provided a \$130 budget for a meal and the Mt. Emmons project has also offered to contribute. John recommended sandwiches from the Gas Café, while Robin suggested the Secret Stash. Anthony will choose a place to provide a meal or snacks depending on the final meeting time.

- **Review Proposed Agenda (See meeting materials)**

After reviewing the Coalition's by-laws, Anthony identified several housekeeping items the board needs to address at the annual meeting. The by-laws state that the board members should stagger one-year terms with two-year terms, so at the meeting Robin and John will decide who will serve on the board for an additional year with the other person up for reelection. The by-laws also indicate that the Coalition needs to create a description of the advisory board's role and to reappoint officers.

The meeting will also include a budget update for the Colorado Non-Point Source grant. Steve asked Anthony to include information about how the Coalition is spending different components of the grant, since this topic is not usually covered in regular meetings.

During agenda item five, "Review Mission and Goals of the Organization," the group will discuss the possibility of the Coalition's involvement in Redwell Basin as well as in implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs) along County Road 12. Anthony noted that Marlene Crosby of Gunnison County is very receptive to collaborating with the Coalition to collect data and implement BMPs.

- **Review Evaluation Forms**

During the December board meeting, Anthony was asked to include details of the evaluation materials to be used in agenda item eight, "Evaluation Results." Two documents, an individual committee member self-evaluation form and a non-profit organization self-evaluation checklist, were included in the meeting materials as examples of what this evaluation could involve. The results of these evaluations can serve as best management practices for future boards. Additionally, the process of filling out these evaluations could make the board and advisory committee more aware of the Coalition's operating procedures, as well as of practices that could become useful in the organization's future. Robin suggested that instead of filling these sheets out at the meeting, it would be more useful for Anthony to send them out beforehand, so that they could be anonymously compiled at the meeting, and the board could discuss any trends in the results.

## **2. October 2008 Data Review (4:15 – 4:57)**

The data Anthony summarized included both the concentration of metals and the loading of metals in the watershed. He briefly reviewed the distinction between loading and concentration, noting that flow measurements are generally considered to be estimates, due to the possibility of error, the effect of groundwater, and the infrequency of sample collection. Such sample results should be treated as a snapshot of conditions. Anthony concluded the discussion by expressing his goal to collect loading data that looks at Coal Creek from several different perspectives.

October marked the first time no metals were detected at Coal-15 – despite its location just below the confluence with Elk Creek – possibly indicating that the remediation efforts at the Standard Mine are resulting in water quality improvements. Anthony recalled that in addition to the Copley Lake outflows, two uncontaminated springs flow from groundwater sources to create considerable dilution to Elk Creek. Anthony asked the group to consider whether the Coalition should request that the EPA use a point of compliance further upstream, to collect samples before this dilution occurs. Rosemary pointed out that if the Coalition relies on Coal Creek's tributaries to dilute metals, it should also find ways to maintain and protect these sources, to ensure that they continue to flow into the water body. A dam, for example, could alter the area's water table and hydrologic characteristics. Wendy asked Mike to provide the GIS location for the proposed dam sight.

Key-00 samples showed very high cadmium levels. Coal-11 and Coal-10's August and October values were lower than those in May. While the metal concentrations from the Bog-00 tributary were high, the loading data indicates metals from other sources are large sources of loading as well.

Anthony displayed some slides from his sampling at Irwin with Logan Reese and Steve Renner in September. During their examination of this area, they took GPS locations and estimated the volume of the site's waste piles. They also noticed coal slag, along with several old tools. Old industrial batteries were also discovered near these ponds. Water samples were taken at the Silver Queen adit, a nearby pond downstream of the adit, and in Coal Creek, upstream and downstream of some waste piles. Brook trout, one of the hardiest trout species, were spotted in the pond. In June and September of 2006, the EPA took samples at the Forest Queen Mine adit, but no water was flowing from the adit in when Steve, Logan and

Anthony visited the site. The group suggested revisiting the site in the spring, to see if water is flowing through the adit again.

No cadmium, zinc, or lead was found in water quality samples collected near the Forest Queen Mine site over the course of the last few seasons. However, arsenic was present at low levels. A past EPA assessment showed similar results, in which the site did not exceed table value standards for metals. However, the metal concentrations in sediments are cause for more concern. CERCLA (Superfund) currently stipulates that a metal must be present at three times the background rate to be considered a source of metals into a nearby water body. Data from the EPA studies show exceedances of this threshold prompting their determination that these areas may cause localized toxicity to wildlife. Wendy reminded the group that she found deformed midges at this site. In his investigations into the history of the Forest Queen Mine, Steve Renner did not find evidence that the Forest Queen Mine used mercury in its milling processes.

### **3. Water Quality Monitoring Report Overview (5:01 – 5:06)**

In reviewing the 2008 Water Quality Monitoring Report Overview, Anthony noted that incoming data could change some of what is discussed. Steve called attention to agenda item 12, asking if the Coalition's data shows a significant enough increase in phosphorous and nitrate/nitrite at Coal-01 to call the town a source of these nutrients. In general, he asked if we are seeing significant or insignificant increases of contaminants like nutrients and magnesium chloride. John suggested addressing the impacts of elevated nutrient levels in Coal Creek (i.e., letting the reader know why he or she should care about them). Wendy asked how much data the Coalition has collected and Anthony informed the group that the nutrient section will discuss three years of sampling results. The group also discussed the acknowledgements section, reiterating the importance of listing all the organizations and individuals who have provided free data, advice, and resources. The report will be completed and distributed in March.

### **4. Additional Agenda Items (5:28 – 5:32)**

The Coalition is currently in the process of applying for two grants: the River Network/Miller Coors Watershed Grant and the Colorado Water Conservation Board Grant. One of the priorities for the requested funding is to remove industrial batteries from the Forest Queen Mine site. If the Coalition does not receive either grant, the Colorado Division of Reclamation and Mining (DRMS) has funding available that could be used to remove and dispose of these batteries before they begin to break down. If the one of the grant proposals is accepted, the DRMS money could go towards analyzing waste rock samples. Most of Forest Queen Mine is on private land, and the Coalition would need to get permission to work on it. The owners, who are seasonal residents, seemed receptive and helpful when Steve Renner conducted safety closures at the Forest Queen shaft, and will hopefully respond similarly with this project. They also value the historical aspects of the mine, so the Coalition should be cognizant of that during its work at this site. The batteries have are approximately the size of a car battery, and did not have any corrosion on them when they were last observed. The advisory board wondered if they might have any economic value, or could perhaps be part of an old solar project, since they are so unusual-looking.

Anthony introduced Steve Bogott, who is interested in interning with the Coalition for credit at Western State College. His potential project would examine the impact of magnesium chloride application and dust deposition from non-paved roads on the health of the watershed.

Robin introduced an additional agenda item, asking for a narrative of the capabilities of the ISCO samples in an email or in a meeting, so that the board and advisory group knows more about these tools: the different functions they can perform, how frequently they can take samples, and their possible sampling strategies.

**Adjourn** - Next Meeting Date: February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2009 time TBD