

Coal Creek Watershed Coalition

MEETING MINUTES

July 8, 2009 4:00-5:30PM

Crested Butte Town Hall

Attendance: Amy Weinfurter, Anthony Poconi, Steve Bogott, Ross Metler, Mike O'Loughlin, Rodney Due, Scottie Wiley, Harvey Castro, Kevin McGruther, Steve Glazer, Eddie Balch (Colorado Rural Water Association), Jake Jones, Mark Hatcher, Dr. Kevin Alexander, Christina Progress, John Hess, Bruce Lakin

A sign-up sheet was passed around to record attendance

Housekeeping

4:00 Signup Sheet and In-Kind Reporting

4:00 – 4:06 Announcements

- 1) In-kind reporting forms were passed around at the meeting. CCWC members were asked to turn in any in-kind work they had done on behalf of the Coalition.
- 2) An invoice for Amy's expenses for the Assessing Riparian Conditions Workshop, Rural Philanthropy Days, and travel to the IZStyle/Reverb event at which the CCWC attended. The invoice was approved for payment.
- 3) August 19th and October 21st are the dates for the next basin-wide sampling dates; CCWC members were asked to keep these days free if they would be interested in volunteering.
- 4) The Western Hardrock Watershed Team is provided a free laptop to the CCWC, which will be used in the field to download data from the ISCO auto-samplers, among other uses.

4:06 – 4:07 Approval of Minutes for the June Meeting

Steve Glazer motioned to approve the minutes from the June meeting. Harvey Castro seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously without abstentions

4:08 – 4:15 Treasurer's Report

Harvey reported that the CCWC has \$5601.85 in the bank. There is currently more money in the account than in the past went through Lois Rozman. This change will allow the CCWC to cover more of its own expenses.

The possibility of the CCWC receiving a debit card was discussed before being tabled for a later meeting. The card would facilitate Anthony's ability to get cash on hand without having to go through Harvey to get a check, and to make purchases online or over the phone more easily. Steve Glazer mentioned the potential for losing track of funds; Mike pointed out that online banking would allow Harvey to keep track of the card's purchases. In order for Anthony to use the card, he would need to become an authorized signer on the account.

4:10 – 4:24 Additions to the Agenda

1) The second page in the packet of meeting materials contained information on the pesticides used by the Town of Crested Butte. Kevin McGruther brought the issue to the CCWC's concern, noting the need for the CCWC to be aware of all the potential contaminants in the watershed at all source points. Jake Jones of the Town of Crested Butte's Parks and Recreation Department was invited to talk about the chemicals that the Town uses. He stated that the department's weed control was in line with Gunnison County's weed ordinance and control issues, and that chemical control is a viable option for controlling weeds. He noted that determining how to balance the issue of plant biodiversity as compared to water quality is very difficult. The Town uses Cool Power products to, among other issues, remove dandelions. Jake stated that the products are considered safe when wet and dry, although noting that different parties might quantify the term "safe" differently, and that he was not an expert on how the product travels through the water table. Jake asked about the CCWC's weed control; at the moment, the CCWC does not conduct any weed control along the watershed.

Steve Glazer pointed out that the major threat from pesticides results from spills rather than from application. The argument could be made that professional application possibly is preferable to over-the-counter purchases by residents, where waste is improperly discarded and the pesticides are improperly stored. Jake noted that homeopathic remedies also have impacts, which are sometimes untested. The issue was tabled for the August meeting, by which time Anthony will have had the chance to talk with others who might have opinions on the use of pesticides that can be added to the conversation.

Steve Glazer motioned to approve Amy's attendance of the Water Workshop. Mike O'Loughlin seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously without abstentions.

Agenda Items

1. Crested Butte Arts Festival Booth (4:29– 4:32)

The Office for Resource Efficiency (ORE) is interested in splitting a \$135 fee for booth space at the Crested Butte Arts Festival with the CCWC. The cost covers the booth space for both Saturday and Sunday (August 1st and 2nd); additional costs would include funding Anthony's time to staff it, which are available in the Non-Point Source budget. Dr. Alexander may have a tent that the CCWC can borrow for these days. Steve Glazer noted that High Country Citizens' Alliance gets a lot of traffic at its booth at the festival. The group agreed to split the cost with ORE and set up a booth during the festival. As the festival gets closer, volunteers will be asked to help staff the booth.

2. Office Space in Crested Butte (4:32 – 4:39)

The Town of Crested Butte agreed to give the CCWC one month of free rent at the old Town Hall building, through the end of July. They have also waived the lease requirement should the CCWC choose to move forward with maintaining the space. Summer Associates Steve Bogott and Ross Metler have access to computer and office space through Western State

College. The office would act as a central meeting space for all four of the CCWC's staff and materials. It does have fairly limited public exposure compared to the space at town hall.

After July, the rent is \$150 per month. Qwest internet service costs about \$75 per month, while a land line includes a \$54 activation fee in addition to a \$35 cost per month. Receiving any deals requires a long-term contract. Steve Glazer asked Mark if any space was available at the Forest Service office in Gunnison, and suggested using the space while waiting to hear from Mark. The group was reluctant to pay the additional phone and internet expenses for the space.

3. Forest Queen Mine Update (4:39 – 4:48)

Wendy Brown, Mark Hatcher, Steve Bogott, Jalene Szuba and Anthony removed 62 abandoned industrial batteries from the Forest Queen Mine in June. On June 23, Tara Tafi of the Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety (DRMS) helped Anthony, Amy, and Steve Bogott collect soil, sediment, and water samples from the ponds, adits, and waste piles, as well as from the former site of the abandoned batteries. Both of these projects were funded by Steve Renner at DRMS. Mark has provided a map of the claims on the area to the CCWC, so that a better sense of ownership boundaries can be established. Ross's primary project as a Summer Associate will include conducting a survey of waste piles at the site, and researching disposal options for objects like the old car and generator that still remain at the site.

A copy of the budget for this work was included with the meeting materials. The board approved reimbursing Wendy for lunch on the day she volunteered to help remove the batteries. Anthony used the same rate for his work as is usually applied for his work in town. The insurance money was taken out of existing CCWC funds and will cover the CCWC for a year.

4. Sampling Update (4:48 – 4:53)

Four of the ISCO automated samplers have been installed in Coal Creek, and Steve Bogott and Ross are monitoring the samples for chlorides, total dissolved solids (TDS), and total suspended solids (TSS). Dr. Alexander's field visit will determine the location of the remaining auto-samplers in the watershed. Four rain gauges were installed at the Standard Mine, Coal 25, upstream of the fen, and upstream of Elk Creek. Mt. Emmons and the waste water treatment plant also contain rain stations that might be accessed for data. The samplers captured a rain event right after a magnesium chloride application; so if any of the magnesium chloride is running into the watershed, these results should indicate it. At the moment, the samplers are set at 12 hour intervals or triggered by storm events. The CCWC is still waiting to hear back about using a chloride probe from Western State College, and may see if the EPA has one if none are available from the college.

Christina noted that the EPA also has auto-samplers in Elk Creek, with a huge capacity for collecting samples. They plan to analyze 1 in every 10 samples, and conducting more in-depth analyses as needed. This could also be a good plan for the CCWC to follow, if the number of samples becomes unmanageable. The CCWC may send a few baseline samples to the EPA, since the analysis process has low detection limits.

5. OSM/VISTA Discussion (4:53 – 4:58)

The CCWC grant submitted to the Colorado Healthy Rivers Fund for \$10,700 has a good chance of being funded. The grant was submitted this winter (the submitted budget was included in the meeting materials) by Amy, with help from Anthony. These funds include \$3000 to fund a third year OSM/VISTA member, a decision that would also require finding other funds (approximately \$1000 to \$2000) to support the position and provide affordable housing. Anthony reminded the group that his position is unfunded beyond March of 2010, and that this could possibly lead to a scaled-back version of coordination. The group agreed on the benefit of having a VISTA member for third-year. Amy indicated that she would like to stay on for a second year.

6. Non-Point Source Budget Update (4:58 – 5:04)

Outlines of the Colorado Healthy Rivers Fund and Non-Point Source Grant budgets were included with the meeting materials. Section A of the Colorado Healthy Rivers Fund budget overviews the costs of a riparian assessment with Kevin Alexander and/or Andy Herb. This assessment includes summarizing the data from the first BioBlitz and conducting a second Bio Blitz as well. The next major section in the budget includes the cost of completing storm water studies, financing the third-year VISTA, and the cost of a few board members attending the Colorado Water Assembly Conference. The matching funds listed in the proposal include in-kind contributions and staff time. The total grant is for approximately \$10,700 of the Fund's \$89,000 total funds.

A more detailed account of the Non-Point Source Budget will be presented in August, where the board will ratify any changes, so that the record will reflect any budget adjustments. At the moment, the CCWC is currently over budget on three line items listed on the outline. In answer to Christina's question, Anthony specified that the research line item referred to the purchase of ISCO automated samplers, supplies for the ISCO samplers and for basin-wide water testing, macroinvertebrate testing, along with other costs. The group suggested following up on Brad Taylor of Dartmouth's offer to analyze the macroinvertebrate samples he collected.

The proposed Best Management Practices (BMPs) were also included in the meeting materials and discussed. Steve Glazer suggested that SGM present them in-person at the next board meeting. Dr. Alexander suggested reminding SGM of the preference for watershed manipulation over high-maintenance BMPs. Anthony wondered if there might be a level of inefficiency in questioning SGM that could slow down the process of installing the BMPs.

The Water Quality Monitoring Report is finished, and can be downloaded on the CCWC website. A hard copy of the report will be given to the County and Town, as well as saved for the CCWC's records, due to the expense (~\$15 each) of printing its 24 pages. High Country Citizens' Alliance, the local libraries, the Non-Point Source Program, the Gunnison Department of Environmental Health, all of CCWC's supporters (including the Environmental Protection Agency), the Upper Gunnison Water Conservancy District, the County Commissioners, and the Town Council members will all receive CD copies of the report.

7. Tracer Study Discussion (5:04 – 5:40)

As part of his work for Standard Mine Technical Advisory Group (SMTAG), Dr. Joe Ryan conducted a tracer study during the high water levels April and June of 2007 and 2008. The report for the September study is complete. After emailing Dr. Ryan to ask for either the raw data or the analyzed results, Anthony learned that a miscommunication had occurred. Dr. Ryan had not completed the analysis, and asked for \$3,600 in order to make the analysis a priority and finish it during the last week of July.

The group expressed some hesitance to contribute money to this effort. Several ideas were suggested, such as asking Dr. Ryan to apply for another grant from Colorado State University to complete the project, which others pointed out might take a considerable amount of time, as well as offering the payment conditionally, upon receipt of a final report. Steve Glazer pointed out that with a possible TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) to be determined in the near future, it could be extremely important to receive this data in a timely fashion. Christina mentioned that the EPA is also very interested in receiving this data, and could look into helping to fund Dr. Ryan's work, although this process might also take awhile to complete, particularly as the end of the fiscal year approaches. The group decided to send another email to Dr. Ryan, indicating that the CCWC is looking for funding, suggesting he apply for another grant, and requesting the raw data.

8. ISDS Study Update (5:40 – 5:43)

The CCWC is still waiting on a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) from the lawyer for the Gunnison Department of Environmental Health. The CCWC will sample for nutrients and E. coli this month and again in September to get data for the high and low flows.

9. Water Wise Program Update (5:43 – 5:44)

Ross and the Office of Resource Efficiency's intern Danielle are helping Arin, Anthony, and Amy deliver the kits. As of the meeting, eight had been given out, and the rest were being scheduled for the next two weeks.

10. Additional Agenda Items (5:44 – 5:45)

The group discussed having a representative from the CCWC sit on the Regional Advisory Council for the National Forest. This item was tabled for the next meeting. During that time, CCWC members were asked to think about who might possibly act as a representative.

Adjourn - Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, August 12th, 2009 at 4:00 PM