

Animas Watershed Partnership

Steering Committee Meeting

Friday, October 2, 2015

1 pm to 3 pm

Southern Ute Environmental Programs Division Office, Ignacio, CO

Meeting Notes

I) Introductions. Attendees: Ann, Paul, Pete, Melissa, Carrie, Conn, Rachel, Chuck, Dave, Pam

II) Consent Agenda – 3 Green Analytical Invoices, Invoice from Rachel for travel will be approved after Steering Committee receives invoices via email.

III) Financials: Pam presented a January-September 2015 Profit and Loss statement that showed the income and expenses received and paid for in the active projects: Healthy Rivers Grant (reimbursement type grant), SWCD 2015 grant (all funding has been received), Bureau of Reclamation grant(reimbursement type grant), the NPS grant (reimbursement type grant), and the balance in the AWP donations account.

Current Business

IV) Updates:

- Florida Water Quality and Habitat Improvement Project Phases 1&2. A new grant opportunity with CWCB is due October 15th. Ann will submit a proposal to continue the fencing downstream from the Fassbender property. The fencing would extend almost to the confluence with Salt Creek. The Steering Committee approved submitting an application.
- BOR Grant (Ann) The grant term was extended to April 30, 2016.
- GKM Technical Committee – is led by La Plata County through Wright Water Engineers. The Tribe, EPA, the County, the City, Marci with MSI and Ann participate in the meetings. CDPHE has participated in the meetings. Colorado has continued sampling ground wells of public water suppliers, but the understanding is that the EPA would take over. New Mexico has put together its own long term monitoring plan but wants EPA to pay for it. It was recommended that the New Mexico plan include upstream and downstream entities/monitoring in the plan. The EPA 2 year plan extends from Silverton to the Navajo Reservation. Comments to Technical Committee were that the monitoring plan didn't address monitoring agricultural impacts.
- Pending and upcoming Grant requests:
AWP is hoping to hear back about the BHP Billiton grant soon. The funding would be for an educational project with youth on the Florida.
A LOI has been sent to Ben and Jerry's for funding for a VISTA
A Colorado Watershed Restoration Grant is available for additional fencing on the Florida.
AWP is considering asking LPEA for funding in addition to the BHP grant.
Norcross Foundation – the funding would provide for the purchase of a flow meter and/or water quality meter. The grant only provides funding for equipment. AWP can apply for funding this year and next year.
Equipment discussion: water quality meter recommended by MSI: Horiba approx \$4000
The recommendation was made to get extra money for additional probes.

Flow meter: recommended by MSI approx \$9000 Hach FH950
Mark recommended Global Water flow meter approx \$1000

Possibilities for other funding: Roundtable (looking for projects) and City of Farmington.

The Tribe has been sampling the Animas and is in the process of getting the contractors to produce the final reports. They have had multi-parameter sondes on the river for 2 years, working all summer. The Tribe is getting the data worked up and will share the data. They hope to see the results before the end of the year.

Possible projects:

Synoptic sampling down the River. The last one was done in 2010 Colorado side, 2006 on the New Mexico side.

Restoration project on the Animas.

Imagery – County will be releasing soon flyover with LiDAR. With that imagery, the AWP could look at parcels and get a general idea of the riparian condition.

Hypothesis (Melissa): Samples from all the tributaries coming in at base flows will never account for loads in the river because it is coming in during storms. Inflows do not add up to the load in the mainstem of the river. MST dataset shows that the difference in loads is 100-1000 times greater during a storm event. An idea might be to sample some of the larger inflows during storm events. Or sample segments of the river in the mainstem to bracket inflows.

Issue an RFP for projects on the Animas as a method to get ideas for new projects.

Ann will schedule a technical committee meeting to discuss possibilities.

Reference sites might used to indicate how much the Animas is changing.

NMED scheduled an intensive sampling for 2018 on both rivers.

- Florida River nutrient and E.coli sampling
Update: 4 or 5 days left. Animas High students might be interested in assisting on sampling dates.
- Good Samaritan letter of support. Rachel has three letters that have been signed. The letter will be sent to everybody (?) instead of just to Sen. Bennet. Rachel will forward letter to Paul.
- GKM Story Journal. The Animas Watershed Partnership in collaboration with Mountain Studies Institute and San Juan Soil and Water Conservation created a Story Journal and Map to record the events of the Gold King Mine release. Can be view here:
<http://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/?appid=a8126b0790844e1f8e3f2ee8e4564f06>
CDPHE, VISTA, and a teacher at Animas High have requested it.
- Dennis McQuillan, Chief Scientist for New Mexico Environment Department, will present at SJSWCD Annual Meeting December 8. SJWG is interested in having watershed forum. (During the Annual Meeting?)
- Lower Animas Watershed-Based Plan: SJWG, at last meeting, presented the table of contents. SJWG worked with MSI to get the sections worked out. Main categories: introduction, background, descriptions of 6 individual subwatersheds downstream of the Florida confluence to the San Juan. A draft of the plan is promised by the October meeting of the SJWG.

CDSN/San Juan Watershed Group: CDSN had budget cuts, so it was not active during the summer. Changes to the website were suggested: when a user wants to view the data for a selected area then make the data presented to the user the data collected by all organizations the default selection.

New Business

V) Upcoming WQCC meeting – Triennial review for water quality classifications and standards of the San Juan Basin in Colorado begins in October with the Issue Scoping hearing is Oct 13 in Denver. The Issue Scoping Hearing is for early identification of issues that are expected will need to be addressed in the next major rulemaking hearing. The public is encouraged to comment via letters. The Issues Formulations Hearing is in November 2016 in Gunnison. The Issues Formulation Hearing will formulate the specific issues that will be addressed in the next major rulemaking hearing. The process for the Issue Scoping Hearing is to suggest changes in standards. The suggestion was made to write a letter for the Issue Scoping Hearing that contains data from the Florida River and suggest inclusion in the 305b report.

VI) December Forum proposed topics:

December 3 in Durango, theme: human waste management

- Current Technologies for Nutrient Discharge Reductions at Waste Water Treatment Facilities; the head of the CO Watershed Assembly, Casey Davenport, supplied names for speakers.
- SJBH Environmental Health Department Septic System Permitting;

- Colorado Watershed Assembly – not sure how they might participate, but have offered to be available for the forum.

VII) Concept Discussion: 2016 Water Quality Seminar & Conference

Ann will draft a letter to Dennis McQuillan asking for joint SJWG/AWP water quality seminar/conference. The topics should be broader than just the Gold King Mine spill.

VIII) Other?

SJWG is hosting Dennis McQuillan to speak about the Animas "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly". The bad would be the Gold King Mine spill, the good would be what the watershed groups are doing to benefit the water quality of the Animas. The bad could be the problems that have existed in the watershed for a long time.

ARSG meeting in Durango – The ARSG have finished the heavy metal pile and are just waiting for vegetation to grow. They will install a treatment plant at Gladstone. The intent is to close the valve at Red & Bonita and then monitor to see if water levels are rising. The ARSG offered information about bulkheads in a powerpoint presentation. Rachel will distribute the powerpoint presentation when it is available.

Ann was invited to give a presentation in September about water quality in the Animas at the Animas Valley Grange. Ann invited Peter Butler to join her because of the Gold King Mine Spill. Ann presented the AWP and its work and mission, an overview of the MST study, what reaches of the whole Animas are not meeting standards, and how the Gold King data measures up against the standards and historic data.

Eric Hilstrom at stateline site asked about discolored outflow from the Florida into the Animas. Suggestions for the cause included that irrigation water was running till September 30.

Update on the gage: BoR will continue funding for another year.

Next Meetings:

November 5, 2015 Steering Committee Meeting (Durango)

December 3, 2015 Fall Forum Durango