

Animas Watershed Partnership

Steering Committee Meeting

Thursday, February 19, 2015

1 pm to 3 pm

**Southern Ute Environmental Programs Division Conference Room, Ignacio
Minutes**

I) Introductions: Present: Ann Oliver, Pete Nylander, Curtis Hartenstein, Emma Deyo, Paul Montoia, Gary Thrash, Jon Scott, Helen Root, Konn Fraser, Dave Tomko, Aaron Kimple, Melissa May, Anthony Culpepper, Chuck Wanner, Pam Starr

II) Consent Agenda - Approve of:

1. Meeting Notes – January 25 – Annual Retreat Notes. The notes will be discussed at the next meeting.
2. Invoices were presented for approval – Ann Oliver Invoice #5 BOR; MSI #1124; CO Watershed Assembly #CWADSN2015003, Marsha Porter Norton invoice from the Retreat. The invoices were approved

III) Financials:

The SWCD grant: Budget \$16,923. The expenses totaled \$16,791.51 including \$15,043.25 for testing, \$1,184.61 administration fees, \$307.65 for supplies, and \$256 for contract labor and travel. No funds were received from Trout Unlimited for this project.

The Bureau of Reclamation grant for the Watershed Management Program: Budget: \$95,816.00. Expenses total \$26,115.20. Grant funds remaining total \$69,700.80. The Soil Health Workshop expenses will be paid out of this grant. It is possible, if there are funds remaining in the grant that those funds can be redirected to other uses. A Trout Unlimited \$1000 cash match was accounted for in this project.

The Florida Water Quality and Habitat Improvement Grant (funded by the CDPHE) Budget: \$159,245. Expenses to date total \$129,718.52. The project's implementation portion is finished as well as the sampling portion. The CWCB will continue the monitoring. A Trout Unlimited \$1000 cash match was accounted for in this project.

Current Business

IV) Updates:

Florida Water Quality and Habitat Improvement Project Phase 2

Budget: \$51,000. Funding Sources: CDPHE: \$36K, Healthy Rivers: \$15K. The work will be done on the property upstream from the Fassbender's property. The owners are Durango Commercial Development, representative Greg Monroe. DCD is ready to sign operation and maintenance agreement with the AWP. Ann is waiting to get the grant contracts in place first. They sketched out where the fence location will be. There is a section of the property that is adjacent to Tribal property and is ungrazed. The project just needs to get the NPS contract in place (amendment amount 36K, includes some funding for outreach and monitoring) as well as

the Healthy Rivers contract (15K). The budget for the fencing is \$39,000. Another downstream landowner, Carolyn Watson is interested in similar work. The work would provide riparian fencing almost to the junction with Salt Creek, about 3 river miles. The lower stretch project will require new funding.

Lower Animas Watershed Based Planning (Dave) Anthony provided a lot of data for the sampling results, so it was just a matter of discussing how to analyze it and how to use it. There will be another data meeting April 8th to go over and look for next steps. The goal is to use that data to try to identify area sources and implement BMPs. The data shows that Kiffen Creek and Cox canyon are high nutrient sources. But agriculture is limited to less than a mile strip. There are also irrigation canals dumping into Kiffen Creek. The questions are: are the upland sources coming in or intercepted ground water from septic tanks or something happening with irrigation canals possibly getting field runoffs. They are trying to figure out the sediment contribution, soil contribution, vs fertilizer vs manure vs. septic systems. Another goal after identifying some of these areas is to have public meetings to use local knowledge for input about sources to help develop the watershed based plan.

CO and NM Soil Health Workshops planning (Jon) March 17 or 18th. Registration has been slow, but advertising for the workshop has just started. Most of the details for the presentations have been worked out. Paul suggested asking Teresa SW Colorado Real Estate to plug the workshop on her Saturday morning radio show. Speakers include: Rudy Garcia, Agronomist New Mexico NRCS (will discuss general soil health), Todd Bolt, District Conservationist and IWM Specialist CO NRCS (will discuss irrigation water management), Brenda Simpson, Rangeland Management Specialist New Mexico State NRCS (will discuss pasture management and grazing), Francine Lheritier, Area Resource Soil Scientist Colorado NRCS and Dan Bloedel, Resource Conservationist NM NRCS (will discuss nutrient testing and soil testing results). Pam will send list of participant in the Holistic Pasture Management Program. The deadline for soil sample submission is March 2.

Joining Colorado Data Sharing Network (Ann). The AWP has joined the Colorado Data Sharing Network. The next step is to schedule a time for training for data entry in March. SJWG would like to participate in the training. Plans also include helping MSI to participate in the training too.

Outreach Plan (Jon): Jon thanked everyone for their input. Jon will have a finalized version available in a week. (February 22nd – 27th)

Funding Follow-up (Ann): Ann worked with the Durango Nature Studies to develop an 8th grade curriculum for river based science education that would be funded by a Colorado NFWF grant opportunity. The program would reach every school on the Colorado side of the watershed except Silverton. The program would be available to Aztec and Farmington schools too. The AWP's side would be to propose funding for more sampling on the Florida to compliment that grant proposal and as part of the match. Acceptance of the proposal will be in June. Sampling will start sooner than that. SWCD agreed to contribute 8k for the sampling to follow up to Florida sampling for e. Coli and nutrients. The project needs to find volunteers to start sampling in April.

New Business (60 min)

2014 Results and 2015 Sampling on Florida River (Ann) Ann submitted a final report to SWCD based on the analysis that Melissa and Kann had put together on the nutrient sampling done on the Florida River. SWCD was supportive of the sampling and were interested in the results. Ann showed the report she presented to SWCD that was organized as a series of questions. For example: What level of e. Coli and nutrients does the Animas River carry as it flows from Colorado Southern Ute lands into New Mexico. Colorado standards use a two month geometric mean, results were not in exceedance for a 2 month mean as it crosses the state line. New Mexico uses a one geometric mean so the results show an exceedance in September/October.

How did the nutrients and e.Coli compare on Animas mainstem and the Florida mainstem just above the confluence? Nutrient data was not available. Data points were frequently over the Colorado standard on the Florida River. How do e.coli and nutrient levels at the Animas state line compare to the New Mexico standards? There were phosphorus exceedances from Aztec upstream to stateline. Since there is no standard for nitrogen just over the state line in New Mexico so Ann did not show the results. The AWP might be able to present at the April 3, 8am-4pm SWCD water seminar. The AWP had proposed to sample at same Bondad site on the Animas, not the stateline site, Florida and three other sites above. The idea is to see what coming out of Salt Creek and main stem and little further up Salt Creek and the Florida.

VISTA renewal (Ann) Jon's last day is March 9. Ann is waiting for an applicants list from VISTA before the March 2nd deadline for selecting a VISTA. The VISTA position gets paid for out of BoR grant.

Analysis of Colorado RiverWatch WQ data through Durango (Jon) Jon started pulling up RiverWatch data in and around Durango to an analysis of different constituents. He created a trending graph over time. One discernible pattern shows inorganic nitrogen and Total N progression over last five years: steady increase. The graphing over time shows the same nitrogen peaks at Bakers Bridge and Trimble. Prior to 2009 there were not so many peaks. Same trend is seen at 32nd st and south of Durango and Weaselskin Bridge. The treatment plants above Baker's Bridge are Silverton, Cascade Village, Purgatory Metro and Glacier Club. There is another small subdivision that has a permit. The trend is only nitrogen. One sample was taken per month. The data is until the middle of summer 2013. Jon showed a 2010 – 2013 graph of dissolved copper at 32nd St. The chronic standard for copper was used to determine that the measured values are not exceeding these standards values.

Curtis' organization (?) has hired a consultant, TetraTech, to evaluate data using a sonde which can sample as often as every 30 minutes. The evaluation will include kinds of biology are that are found in the river, and will evaluate data with respect to stressed organisms.

March Volunteer Work Project: Ann is working on a willow planting project on Fassbender property within the fenced riparian area on some unstable bank. Potential project partners include Trout Unlimited. Gary offered the use of a tool to help punch holes for planting the trees.

Next Meetings:

February 26, 2015, Winter Forum San Juan College. Henderson Fine Arts building.

Melissa and Dr. Smith will be presenting the MST results.

Next Steering Committee Meeting. The committee agreed to postpone the March meeting until April 2nd.

Announcements:

Meeting March 24th : Neal Schaffer has been in contact with Army Corp of Engineers in Durango Office about 404 permitting, and wetland mitigation projects. Neal's goal is to have AWP and SJWG create a menu list of options that could be included as watershed based plan BMP's. Then that is something the Army Corp of Engineers could pick up when they are trying to find a site for people to go that are doing wetland mitigation. 10:00am at Ecosphere office in Durango.

Dave wrote the final report on the last SJWG 319 grant to figure out how to report E.coli load reductions. Neal suggested finding a formula to write into the watershed based plan. Then if EPA approves the plan then there will be an accepted formula for the model. Discussion.

Paul's office is temporarily located at Farmington airport.