

Animas Watershed Partnership
Steering Committee Meeting
Wednesday, August 13, 2014
1 pm to 3 pm
City of Farmington Annex Building, Farmington

Minutes

Steering Committee Members present: Paul, Ann, Aaron, Carrie, Dave, Pete, Chuck
(Melissa went to the wrong office and missed the meeting)

Vista: Jon

Guests: Denise Rue-Pastin, Helen, Pam

(Pam and Chuck arrived late, went to wrong office, so the meeting notes start about 15 minutes into the meeting.)

...discussion was going on about testing and results that were different than what the NRCS soil report indicated.

Ann's report on Florida River Project: The project is funded by CO NPS 319 funds from the EPA. This is an implementation project that is designed to reduce nutrient and sediment loading to the Florida River. The work is taking place on about a mile of river with two landowners: Durango/La Plata Airport and Keith Fassbender. The project purpose is to install riparian fencing to manage livestock out of the river and change irrigation practices from flood irrigation to gated pipe which is more efficient in delivering water to where it's needed. Keith has completed all the work. The fence is installed, but not closed. It will be closed on November 1. The irrigation system is up and running. Ann will try and schedule a visit to the property. Keith's final invoice will be presented for approval. Ann met with Greg Monroe who is the local liaison for the partnership that owns the property that is upstream from Keith's to give him an overview of the current project. That partnership is interested in doing something similar on their property. Ann will meet with them out in the field to see what can be put together as a project concept. Funding could be provided by additional funding from a 319 grant and from the Colorado Healthy River Fund. CHRF request is 22,500. The suggestion was made to look for funding with the Fish and Wildlife and NRCS. Mountain Studies Institute will perform the pre and post monitoring.

MST and Nutrient Sampling (Jon and Melissa): Jon reported on the sampling. E.coli is fairly high coming out of the Florida. Tim, the new volunteer recommend by Buck Skillen, will start on Monday August 18th.

Southwest Conservation Corp: Earlier this month Jon had the second in a series of riparian assessment training class with Southwest Conservation Corp high school trail crews. The training was a 2 hour training in the field at the confluence of Junction

Creek and the Animas. Pictures from the training are posted on the AWP's facebook page.

Children's Water Festival – Denise Rue-Pastin is the Water Information Program Coordinator for the nine county San Juan River Basin in SW Colorado, WIP program. WIP has been around for 20 years. SWWCD provides funding and office space. Southwestern Water Conservation District is one of four conservation districts in the state. SWWC sponsors the Annual Children's Water Festival on the first Wednesday in May. It is held at Fort Lewis College.

History: The Festival has been going on for 19 years. Attendance was about 500 5th grade students from across the basin, plus about 100 volunteers and presenters. DWCD used to have own water festival, but stopped about 4-5 years ago. That area's 5th graders were invited to the SWCD's Water Festival and those students increased attendance to about 700 5th graders. San Juan Water Commission had conducted a 2 day Water Festival with over 1000 kids and has stopped conducting their water festival. Two years ago, one Aztec class attended SWCD's Water Festival. Last year, 10 Aztec classes attended. Attendance at the SWCD Water Festival has grown to about 1000 and has created safety and management issues. The Water Festival budget is about \$6500-\$7000 and that includes lunch and t-shirts for volunteers, stuff for kids, and room rental at Fort Lewis College.

AWP offered to facilitate a discussion to help identify a potential water festival coordinating body and funding source for New Mexico so they can conduct their own water festival again. AWP feels water education and outreach is important to offer 5th graders in New Mexico. San Juan Water Commission stopped conducting the New Mexico water festival because of the economy and because of the lack of volunteer presenters. The question was posed about what to do to maintain participation or build into SWCD's Water Festival the ability to include New Mexico. Another possibility was suggested to have a more regional venue. Ann will coordinate a meeting with agencies in Farmington that might support the water festival. The purpose of the meeting would be to let schools and agencies know that the water festival is at risk of not being available to New Mexico kids. River Reach is a possible participating agency. The limiting factor in the SWCD Water Festival is space. The suggestion was made to ask the 4H to participate as presenters. Entities involved in River Days in Farmington would be possible partners for the water festival in New Mexico. Two main questions/starting point: Does the San Juan Water Commission see themselves as having any role in the water festival, and what is the level of interest from the schools. Ann will call Aaron (from the San Juan Water Commission) to see what he thinks. Ann, Jon and Denise will get together to formulate a plan on how to structure the meeting.

Letters: Letters of support from the AWP have been circulating. The letter include support for the City of Farmington 404 permit application for the Animas Rock Garden. The River Stewards grant application needed a letter of partnership. Dave wrote the

letter. Another letter support the Parks Department for Anesi Park. It is a big project on the river involving invasive species removal, adding trails and wetland associated with the new lake.

Ann asked if the process for putting the letters together and getting steering committee approval worked for everyone. Everyone agreed that the process was okay.

September 4th meeting will be in New Mexico. Jon will determine the venue. The person from the Colorado Water and Energy Research Center will present the guide that they put together: Ground Water Monitoring Guide. NMED might be able to present geologic nutrient information. The primary goal of the meeting is to let stakeholders know what is going on in the basin. The person from the Colorado Water and Energy Research Center's speech should be about 20 minutes so other projects can be discussed at the meeting. The effects of fracking was discussed as a possible topic. MSI could present data from geologic nutrient testing. Aaron stated that while he wasn't directly involved in the testing he believed that the results did not show any significant effects from fracking. The meeting will be billed as joint meeting between San Juan Watershed Group, AWP, and MSI. Carrie will ask someone at the Bureau about the nutrients.

Nominations for Steering Committee:

Helen was invited to attend the meeting by Melissa. Helen was involved in her neighborhood's opposition to the waste water lagoon proposal at the RV park. Helen has a ranch on the Animas. She is a toxicologist. She presented testimony at the ground water hearing for the permit for the sewage lagoon. Her role was to talk about the possible health effects of emitted gases from the lagoon. She is a New Mexico resident.

The AWP Steering Committee is made up of 4 representatives from Colorado, 4 from New Mexico and 1 from the Southern Ute Tribe. Members from each state are two governmental and two citizens. The interest of the AWP is water quality; primarily nutrients and sediments, e. Coli and riparian health. The AWP is entirely grant funded and acts as an advisory group. The AWP meets 8 times a year and has quarterly meetings. The term is three years. Helen agreed that she is interested in serving as a steering committee member. Carrie moved that the AWP nominates Helen for the New Mexico AWP Steering Committee position that is open. Chuck seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried. Helen was elected as a New Mexico citizen representative on the AWP Steering Committee.

Financials: Pam provided a summary of the AWP's projects financial information, and income and expense details for the NPS 319 funded Florida/Animas Project and the BoR Watershed Management. Ann will check to see what the admin fee percentage is for the funds received from SWCD. A recommendation was made to zero out the closed project accounts.

Review and approve invoices: Ann presented invoices: SJRCD admin fees, Jon's rent, Jon's mileage reimbursement, Jon's office rent, MSI invoice, Fassbender invoice for fencing and irrigation (should be his last invoice). The invoices were approved. Ann let Pam know that the MSI invoice paid out of the BoR grant should have been accounted for as an expense for the SWCD funding. Pam will make the appropriate changes in the accounting.

Water Trust Board application: is the counterpart of the Colorado Water Board grant which is the state funding mechanism for water projects in New Mexico. It will be discussed at a later time.