

ARSG MEETING SUMMARY

Feb. 21, 2013

ATTENDEES: Peter Butler, Kirstin Brown, Kay Zillich, Scott Roberts, Marcie Bidwell, Ernie Kuhlman, Andrew Parker, Ray Ferguson, Lisa Richardson, Chuck Wanner, Steve Fearn, Dale Rodebaugh, Larry Perino, Bill Simon, Steve Way.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- There is a Mining and Water Conf. in Lake City on Apr. 18-19 sponsored by Mountain Studies Institute, the Lake City Conservancy, the Uncompahgre Watershed Group, and several mines companies. The 18th will be presentations and the 19th is a remediated site tour.
- There were a couple of articles in papers about ARSG and Good Samaritan issues. One was in the Durango Herald on 2/19/13 and one in High Country News on 2/4/13. There is also a new technical paper out by Doug Yager of USGS on the Upper Animas: **A GIS and statistical approach to identify variables that control water quality in hydrothermally altered and mineralized watersheds, Silverton, Colorado, USA.**
<http://www.springer.com/home?SGWID=0-0-1003-0-0&aqlid=2443134&download=1&checkval=97093ee2b8ad879fe9b94af4ac961700>

Updates

1. Bullion King Mine Waste Remediation project – Nothing to report at this time. We should hear if we will receive funding this spring, although the funding will not be available until spring 2014.
2. Carbon Lakes mine waste – Bill reported that because we ran short of funding, there is still a small amount of mine waste on the ground at the Carbon Lakes site. There may be some funding available to remove this last bit of metal-laden, high acid producing waste. Bill and Kirstin have been discussing where to put it. One possibility is to put it in the shaft to the Carbon Lakes mine. While we have some information about the shaft, we are still not sure if the waste would be sufficiently isolated from the surface or other mine workings to make this a good repository. We'll look further in to it in the coming months.
3. Waste Water Management Inc.'s plans – Under the contract with BLM, WWMI was to test its technology for a certain number of days, which they did not complete. Therefore, they are obligated to come back to the basin. However, at this time, they haven't determined a particular timeframe when they might be here this summer. Someone suggested that there was a high school chemistry teacher in Durango that might like to bring up a class when WWMI was working to show chemistry in action.
4. Status of Sunnyside and EPA/BLM discussions – Larry Perino reported on the discussions. EPA sent a CERCLA 104e like letter to Sunnyside requesting information. Sunnyside has until sometime in April to respond. In turn, Sunnyside has sent a FOIA request to EPA. BLM's attorney has been involved with the discussions. It was asked if EPA had contacted or sent letters to other potential responsible parties, particularly insurance companies. Steve Way with EPA said he didn't think so, but he wasn't 100% sure because that is not his area.
5. Innocentive website proposal – The technical workgroup met to further refine different potential Innocentive Challenges. We have about five different potential challenges. We will be doing a short presentation of our ideas at the environmental subcommittee meeting of the National Mining Association in Scottsdale, AZ in early March and hope to gain some support for this process.

6. EPA/USGS Oct. sampling – We have some results from the EPA/USGS sampling done last Oct. in the form of some data on aerial maps. (If you would like to be emailed the maps, please contact Peter Butler.) We hope to have all the results in an electronic form in the near future. The group spent some time looking over the data. EPA collected data in the Animas Canyon at Elk Park and Cascade Creek which is quite helpful because no data has been collected in the canyon for quite some time. In addition, the Colo. Div. of Parks and Wildlife (CPW) will do another fish survey in the canyon this year. Usually, they only do surveys every five years and the last time was in 2010.
7. Potential additional River Watch Sampling (upper Cement Creek) – The group discussed establishing a River Watch website near Gladstone. It wasn't exactly identified what the purpose of the site would be, but there are concerns that in the future we may wish that we had collected data there before any more remediation occurs. We want to make sure we find a stable part of the creek channel to use as a sampling site.

Main Topics

1. Data validation and analysis on 4 gages – Twenty years of data from the four Upper animas gages have been validated and put in a format where metal loading and metal concentrations for seven metals and pH can be compared for three different time periods: the early 1990's before most remediation occurred, the late 1990's and early 2000's when most of the implementation of the consent decree occurred, including when Sunnyside treated Cement Creek, and the last 5 years. Essentially the data shows great improvement for some metals in Mineral Creek although not all, improvement in water quality in the Animas above Silverton except for manganese, and degraded water quality from Cement Creek and in the Animas below Silverton. None of these results are surprising, but now we have the data in place to quantify the changes. (If you want electronic copies of the spreadsheets, please contact Peter Butler.)
2. UAA for Arrastra Gulch – The group discussed the need for a UAA for Arrastra Gulch. The current standards for Arrastra and Silver Lake are Table Value Standards which we believe are not being met for zinc and cadmium. It is unlikely that those standards are attainable, especially in Silver Lake. The UAA would recommend site-specific standards that are thought to be attainable, much like the Upper Animas UAA that ARSG put together in 2001. The standards in Arrastra Gulch could impact how much money will need to be spent in the Silver Lake area by the trust set up by ASARCO and whether or not any of that funding might be available for remediation in other parts of the basin. Bill will start to pull together existing data on Arrastra. Kay will check with BLM biologists about surveying Arrastra Gulch to see if there is any fish habitat. We may bring in a CPW fishery biologist as well. The group also discussed if a River Watch site at the mouth of Arrastra gulch could produce useful data.

Potentially For March:

Innocentive Proposal

Good Samaritan updates

Existing info on Arrastra Gulch