

ARSG MEETING Summary

July 15, 2010

ADDENDEES: Peter Butler, Steve Fearn, Tom Warlick, Bruce Stover, Kirstin Brown, Sabrina Forrest, Kay Zillich, Tom Schillaci, Doug Ramsey

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Web site development: Nicole at San Juan RC&D is waiting to get together with Bill Simon to put up the website.

NPS program consolidation & expansion: San Juan RC&D has received the paperwork from the Water Quality Control Division.

Bats: Kay Zillich announced that Forest Service and BLM are promoting BMP's to prevent the spread a fungus that is killing bats throughout much of the eastern part of the country and is spreading across the Midwest. The fungus causes bats noses to turn white and eventually kills them. (Since the meeting, there has been an article in the newspaper that Forest Service may restrict or ban entry into caves and mines containing bats.)

San Juan RC&D 5 Year Strategic Plan: Doug Ramsey handed out a survey to help San Juan RC&D with their strategic plan. They want feedback on the community's interests and needs. The survey can be filled out at their website at www.sanjuanrcd.org.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Koehler Update: Construction Contract Considerations: There was only one bid on the Koehler grouting project, and it was much higher than the money allocated to the project. The project has components; one, rehabilitating the mine to make work feasible and two, grout near the bulkhead. Few companies have expertise for doing both phases. At Bruce's suggestion, the group asked him to re-bid the project as two phases with the mine rehabilitation to be done this fall and the grouting to be done next summer.
2. Silver Ledge update: Construction Contract Considerations: There were several bids on the Silver Ledge project. All were of similar magnitude and near the amount budgeted. Work should be done late summer/early fall.
3. BLM plans regarding dump material in Ross Basin: BLM is planning to dig a trench to see if water coming from the toe of the Grand Mogul dump is coming from the collapsed portal. They would like to burrito wrap the mine waste on site. (The Mogul mine waste is on private land.)
4. BLM plans on the Eveline: DRMS has awarded the contract for the project for BLM. Construction should begin in August.
5. Gladstone Demonstration Facility. There was more discussion about treating mine drainages in the Gladstone area and some frustration expressed that there hasn't been much progress in building a facility for treatment. Steve Fearn and Tom Warlick suggested we develop an initial plan of action, understanding that it will change over time. Peter offered to start outlining an initial plan with Bill and Steve to have something more to discuss with the overall group.
6. Next steps for Rulemaking Hearing in 2012. Peter has set up a meeting with the Water Quality Control Division the morning of August 10th in Denver to talk about the hearing. There will be phone in capability for those who want to participate from other locations. Let Peter know if you want to call in.

ARSG has done only minimal analysis for the hearing yet because the funding wasn't available until recently and because more data will be coming in.

New Business

1. Effect of WQCC June Basic Stds Rulemaking on the Basin: The Rulemaking will probably not have a major impact on the Basin. Although the WQCC hasn't taken final action yet, it appears it will adopt a slightly less stringent Table Value Std for Zinc unless sculpin are present or expected to be present and hardness is 100 mg/l or less (which it is in Segment 3c – Arastra Creek). Then the standard would be stricter. Because most of the Upper Animas River stds are site specific, the Table Values stds don't apply. There probably will be a new aluminum std that is based on hardness when pH is 6.5 or greater. That std will probably not have much effect in the Animas. There will probably also be a new molybdenum std for water supply and agricultural uses (not aquatic). ARSG doesn't have molybdenum data. The WQCC also may adopt a discharger specific variance rule to be used where dischargers cannot meet their permit limits for certain technological reasons for certain constituents.
2. Summary of Remediation Work Group session: In addition to many of the people listed above who attended the regular meeting, Bill Simon, Ron Borrego, and Jim Herron attended the Remediation Work Group session earlier in the afternoon.

The purpose of the session was to identify mine drainage sites that would be good to "tee up" in case Good Samaritan legislation passes. The idea is to have projects ready to go. The group discussed the big metal loading dischargers around Gladstone as possible candidates since they have such a large impact on the basin. However, because of the potential high cost of addressing those sites and the political issues that might arise because of the timing of when those mines started draining, the group felt it would be better to examine simpler projects. The Forest Service and BLM have been willing to address some of their mines under CERCLA removal actions. Therefore, publicly owned sites were not discussed. The group examined privately owned, priority sites in each of the three major drainages.

In Cement Creek, the Anglo-Saxon and the Porcupine rose to the top. The mines are close together, have one owner and are even possibly connected. Some preliminary characterization work has been done by the owner, partially funded by the NPS 319 program. They are collapsed and could be more expensive to do as projects. Other privately owned, priority sites in Cement Creek either need more investigation or are more difficult and expensive to do.

In Mineral Creek, the Bandora and the Junction mines are strong candidates under any potential Good Samaritan legislation. They have cooperative landowners and should be easy and relatively inexpensive to do. The Bandora directly impacts a good trout fishery, South Mineral Creek. Other potential projects include the Little Dora (source separation) and the Paradise. The Paradise is a big iron and aluminum loader, but is difficult to get to and it's not yet clear, given high metal concentrations in groundwater and nearby seeps in the area, if remediation would make much difference. Since the North Star was permitted in the 1980's, it might not be a good first candidate for a Good Samaritan project.

In the Animas drainage, there are several candidates. The Mountain Queen could be easy to do, but it may not make much difference in nearby water quality. The Columbus could be a good candidate for bulkheading. Those are probably the top three in terms of ease of feasibility. The Bagley tunnel,

while a big loader, is too complex for a first go around. It may be feasible to separate sources at the Silver Wing, but then something needs to be done with the concentrated water. The Senator attracted the group's attention because it is a big manganese loader and may have increased in flow, but it is unclear what could be done at the site. There was some question as to which adit was sampled as the Little Nation (apparently it was incorrectly named by the group earlier). One site could be an easy Good Sam project and the other would be difficult.

Probably the next step is to look at which of the good potential Good Sam sites would improve water quality the most and there were some questions about the Paradise, Little Nation and Senator that need to be investigated.