

# ARSG MEETING SUMMARY

## June 17, 2010

Attendees: Peter Butler, Ray Johnson, Ann Umphres, Barbara Hite, Tom Schillaci, Kirstin Brown, Steven Way, Brent Lewis, Kay Zillich, Lisa Richardson, Sabrina Forest, George Foster, Craig Gander, John Ferguson, Steve Fearn, Bill Simon, Chuck Wanner

### ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Web site development – Peter and Bill have spend quite a bit of time editing pages, but not all of the updates are on the website yet. The website is up, however it is still very much a work in progress.

<http://animasriverstakeholders.org>

- NPS program consolidation & expansion – We still haven't gotten final approval for consolidating & expanding the NPS grants that we have from WQCD.

### OLD BUSINESS

Koehler Update & Silver Ledge updates – DRMS is moving forward with the bidding process on these projects although we need final approval from WQCD. There has been a pre-bid meeting at the Koehler and there will be one soon at the Silver Ledge. Both projects should begin construction ~~should move forward~~ in late August, early September.

Colo. Goldfields water protection plans at the mill – John Ferguson of Colorado Goldfields came to discuss plans to reopen the Howardsville Mill. An amendment to the existing permit to operate the mill is being processed ~~will be sought by through the Division of Reclamation, and Mining and Mine Safety.~~ There were a number of questions and a lot of good discussion. Colo. Goldfields plans to construct a tailings pond on the northern portion of the property after removing ~~Some of the historic tailings (1930's and 40's) from that area at the mill (1930's and 40's) will be moved into pond, but not all.~~ The new pond will be double-lined with sensors for detecting water between layers and a pump back system will be installed to capture any leakage and return it to the pond. The system is designed to be a zero discharge facility. There should be enough free board (space) in the tailings pond to capture precipitation on the pond and to allow enough time for it to evaporate off. Any cyanide leaching will be done to mill concentrates in tanks in the mill building itself (no leaching of bulk ore). The building has high stem walls designed to contain spills from all tanks in the building if for some reason they failed simultaneously. In addition, there is an overflow pipe to a lined pond outside. Goldfields plans to add another liner to the pond because the currently one is old. Cyanide concentrations in the tailings pond will not be greater than drinking water standards, but concentrations could be higher than aquatic life standards. There will be a fence along the county road side of the pond.

ASARCO Settlement update – The state is continuing to work with the trustee of the settlement account. The trustee has a number of sites around the country to deal with. Right now, the Silverton area is more on the back burner

Standard Metals settlement update – A settlement agreement is close to final with one insurance company and claims may be pursued against another. Claims in the Animas will be in the several hundred thousand dollar range which will be divided out between different agencies; EPA, BLM, FS, State of Colorado. When the settlement is finalized, we should get a better picture.

BLM plans regarding dump material in Ross Basin – BLM is planning to intern the mine waste in place rather than move the waste to another location. Mine waste at the Grand Mogul is on both private and public land. Mine waste at the Mogul appears to be on private land. EPA will work with the property owner on the waste issues on private land.

Gladstone Demonstration Facility Update – The group had a lively discussion on issues and how to address them around Gladstone. Because of liability issues and no identified source of funding, ARSG has been pursuing an incremental approach. The idea is to develop a demonstration facility to test mine drainage treatment technologies and expand the facility later to treat all of the 600-700 gpm of drainage that has recently arisen after the bulkheading of the American tunnel. EPA argued at the meeting that there is a funding source using targeted Superfund and that a comprehensive treatment facility to address all of the drainage, with a potential side stream for the technology demonstration, would be more attractive for funding and the liability issues would be covered under CERCLA. BLM, which has liability associated with the 90 gpm still coming out of the American Tunnel, said they are not willing to build a treatment facility on their own for that drainage. They are willing to be part of a comprehensive project for treatment but will not pay for treatment of drainage from privately held mines. Some other people at the meeting expressed strong reservations about using Superfund because of the potential stigma of having a Superfund site in the basin and how that might affect property values and the ability to attract potential investors for future mining projects. Concerns were also expressed as to whether or not there actually would be money available in Superfund to do a project. If there were some type of Superfund designation, it would probably preclude any other type of funding source. There were also concerns that Superfund would remove any local control over the project, and it would become the domain of federal agencies and their contractors.

Next steps for Rulemaking Hearing in 2012 – Peter has set up a meeting on August 10<sup>th</sup> with the Water Quality Control Division to talk about the 2012 Hearing. The meeting will be in Denver, but there will be phone links for those who want to participate by phone.

## **New Business**

Effect of WQCC Basic Stds Rulemaking on the Basin –This issue was tabled for another meeting.

BLM plans on the Eveline – The Eveline is a small mine discharge near Gladstone. BLM is planning to build a concrete vessel in which different media can be placed to remove metals. The idea is to experiment with different media to see what is most effective.

Should mention that BLM is working on analyzing effects of their various remediation projects and will be making the data available in the future.