

Board Minutes – October 15, 2019

Attendees

Chris Smith
Kathy Peterson
Jessie Olson
Glenn Patterson
Sue Schaffler
Mark Schuenemann
Julie Trumpler
Monica Bortolini
Colleen Williams
Gabe Tuerk
Erica Crosby
Audrey Buckley
Sean Cronin

Welcome and Introductions

Chris S called the meeting to order at 2:05, and led a round of introductions.

Public comments on items not on the agenda

(None)

Left Hand Watershed News

Gabe mentioned that twelve decent size brown trout are stuck in a disconnected pool at Haystack Golf Course, due to low flow.

Colleen reported that James Creek Watershed Initiative has offered over 100 cash rebates for pumping septic tanks in the Jamestown area. The rebates used to be \$100, now are \$50. They hand out educational material along with the rebate. JCWI is also still participating in River Watch. This augments our LW data.

Presentation by DRMS Erica Crosby

Erica introduced Julie Annear, who has been helping at DRMS for several years. Erica also handed out educational material on safety around abandoned mines.

A few months ago Erica received a message from Ken about open mine shafts near the 1600 block near Jamestown. It had been advertised on social media: Old abandoned and interesting places in Colorado. DRMS and the Sheriff met up and inspected the mines (there were 3 openings), and, using safety gear, verified that they were dangerous. Some people had been camping in the tunnels at some point. DRMS also had an opportunity to interact with visitors who wanted to get into the mine, and they were hostile. DRMS notified the USGS, who put up orange fencing and posted them with a closure order. USFS soon replaced the orange fencing with a lumber gate. Then and DRMS are now working on plans for a permanent closure. The closures will involve bulkheads with drains and slots for bats. These openings had a name, historically; Sue Strothers with USFS has that information. There is some standing water, but no actual discharge, from the openings. Gabe asked about cultural surveys prior to the permanent closures; Erica responded that these are always done prior to the permanent closure. Closure does not involve mitigating environmental issues. Most of these are outside the mines.

Julie then continued the presentation by describing the summer project by a DRMS employee, "TC", to inventory 80 mine features on private and public (USFS) land in Boulder County in the vicinity of Jamestown and Balarat. TC had obtained clearance from all the landowners prior to conducting the field inventory. These included 50 vertical and 30 horizontal openings. DRMS is now working on closures, which will take about 3 years. Most of the closures will involve backfill. Some will have bat grates, native rock bulkhead seals, or polyurethane foam, which is more portable and can be used where it is difficult to use concrete or rock. In Colorado a landowner is required to safeguard mine openings with a 4-strand barb wire fence.

Next, Julie described the current bond revocation process for the Bueno Mine and Mill just west of Jamestown. This mine was a gold and silver mine in the 1860s, later a fluorspar mine. This is round 6 of the permit/bond revocations by DRMS. A series of owners over the years have obtained permits, brought chemicals and equipment, and walked away leaving messes for the State to clean up, using money from the reclamation bond funds set up in association with the permits. The current owner is Bob Nelson of Lakewood, who is very cooperative and wants to work with the State to clean it up. There are numerous barrels of petroleum products that need to be identified and removed, using safe and controlled hazardous waste removal protocols. There is also some trash, boxes containing core samples, and a small mill office that was tested for asbestos and found to be clean. (The previous owner, who wanted to build an amusement park, passed away.) Bob Nelson showed DRMS a subsidence feature related to the mine, which will also be safeguarded.

Julie also worked, with a contractor, on the Lower Fairday Mine near Jamestown. This had been a uranium and vanadium mine. In 2005 USFS consolidated the mine waste into a repository, but the 2013 flood damaged the repository. In 2018 DRMS accessed the site and repaired the repository with riprap and topsoil from the site. No water sampling was done at the time. Chris reported that, for about 2 years after the flood, uranium in the sludge from the Spurgeon water treatment plant was elevated enough that the sludge needed to be hauled to a special facility in eastern Colorado. The elevated levels were due to concentration that occurred during

the flocculation and sedimentation process, and then in the drying beds, where the samples are taken. The River Watch Bar-K Cushman site is just below Fairday.

Colleen mentioned that the Town of Jamestown requires permits for mining or other development within a district that includes their municipal watershed.

The Upper Fairday Mine, farther up the ephemeral drainage from Lower Fairday, near Bar-K, had some elevated levels of arsenic and gamma radiation. DRMS and USFS are working on what should be done in response. The wastes do not move very far; not as far as lower Fairday.

The Yellow Girl Mine, just above Jamestown, was a fluorspar mine. It has elevated levels of lead and arsenic in some of the waste rock. There was a landslide after the Porphyry fire, that buried the adit. The plan now is to safeguard the shaft, including some backfill, below the waste pile and do some revegetation around the waste pile. This might help improve water quality. Colleen mentioned that this has been characterized as an active debris flow. The County is responsible for maintaining a small sediment basin just upstream of a culvert under James Canyon Drive.

The Emmett Mine, a little farther upstream, is the one with a waste pile and a large glory hole. EPA sampled waste rock in September and found elevated lead and arsenic. A pitchblende outcrop has some elevated radiation. They plan to fence the top of the glory hold and do some reshaping, amendment and revegetation of the waste rock pile. They do not plan to do anything with the adit.

DRMS plans to work with CDPHE on some remediation inside the Big Five Tunnel, so they can access the recently installed bulkhead. There will also be some additional work near Balarat.

At the Burlington, EPA (Mike Wireman) did some tracer studies to try to identify the source of water to the pond. It might be a shaft near the Argo. It seems that many shafts and adits in the vicinity are connected.

Approval of Minutes

Sue moved, Mark seconded, to approve the minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

Quarterly Financial Report

Jessie referred and went over to the financial report included in the board packet.

Comments from the Board indicated that they are pleased with the format and content of the financial report. Sean mentioned that it is slightly confusing to have 2018 budget, then 2018 actual, followed by 2019 actual, then 2019 budget.

Kathy moved, Monica seconded, to approve the financial report. The motion carried unanimously.

Fall Application Update

Jessie mentioned that we are planning to apply for several grants in the next few months. Two will be to CWCB (regional adaptive management planning, and St. Vrain adaptive management monitoring, structure repair, and Lyons school collaboration). Two others are also in the works. We need letters of support for all of these involving Left Hand Creek. The last grant is the Bureau of Reclamation Water Smart program, a large federal grant program. In previous grant cycles this program did not match our organizational programs and projects very closely. This year, however, with an expanded geography, it does, so we will give it a try, under the category Watershed Restoration Planning. It is likely to be very competitive. The grant limit is \$100,000. We would like to use it as match for the regional adaptive management planning grant. For this application, a Board resolution is required at the time of application. The resolution acknowledges that the Board is aware of the application and is interested in moving forward on it. It does not obligate the Board. Chris showed Resolution 2019-01 on the screen.

Audrey moved, Colleen seconded, to approve the resolution. The motion carried unanimously.

Other Projects Update

Chris mentioned that Jessie gave a great presentation to the St. Vrain and Left Hand Water Conservancy District Board yesterday (October 14). The SVLHWCD Board indicated that they are impressed with the great work done recently by LWC.

Sue mentioned that the Left Hand Fire District is finalizing its plan for a new fire station. It will include two extra offices. One of the offices could be designated for LWC. Sue said the fire district is determining a fair market value to rent the offices, and a statement regarding the mutual benefits for both entities.

Gabe reported that the high-altitude stocking of cutthroat trout took place, with 6,000 cut-bows. He also mentioned that electroshocking indicated that the fingerlings in Left Hand Creek are rainbows, probably hatched last year. This might indicate that restoration projects might have affected brown trout spawning. It would be great if the restoration project schedules could take the spawning schedules into account. Brown trout spawn in September-October; rainbows spawn in April-May. (Deb is out fish shocking on Left Hand Creek today, mostly in the plains.)

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 pm.