

Meeting Summary
Bonita Peak Community Advisory Group
February 27, 2020, 2:30—5:00 PM
Silverton Town Hall, 1360 Greene St.

Attendance:

CAG Members: CAG members present: Peter Butler, Chara Ragland, Melissa May, Marcel Gaztambide, John Ott, Larry Perino, Terry Morris, Charlie Smith, Trevor Downing, Anthony Edwards, Russ Anderson, Ty Churchwell (not in attendance: Parker Newby, Levi Lloyd, and Brian Devine).

Audience members: Kirsten Brown (DRMS), Lisa Merrill (BLM), John Reiter (Town of Silverton), Chris Stoneback (Crowley Flock), Nate Rock (MSI), Chris Tookey (Silverton Mayor), Becky Joyce (Local Public Health), Ben Martinez (USFS), Michelle Furi (MSI), Karen Barger (Scott Tipton's office), Mark Rudolph (CDPHE), James and Susan Livenick (Citizens), Suzanne Copping (BLM), Laura Dixon, Christina Progress (EPA), Marcie Bidwell (MSI), Forrest Vaughan (So. Ute Tribe), Mark Esper (Silverton Standard), James Hou (new EPA project manager, characterization and remedial work focusing on Sunnyside mine waste), Mark Lursswann, Jeff Schell, Jim Morris (Citizens), Rory Cowie (Alpine Water Resources), Ian Bowen (EPA), Scott Fetchenhier (San Juan County Commissioner), Elizabeth Dawson (BLM), Katherine Jenkins (EPA), Athena Jones (new EPA person working on BPMG on data management and cultural resources survey), Willy Tookey (San Juan County Administrator), Dennis McQuillan (NMED)

Meeting Summary: Anthony moves to accept January's summary with minor edits and Marcel seconds. All approve.

Announcements: Doug Benevento who was the head of EPA Region 8 a couple of years ago and has visited the BPMD has been nominated to be second in command of EPA. He will need to be confirmed by the U.S. Senate. Many in the room know him. He is from Colorado and was the Executive Director of CDPHE in the early 2000's.

Peter was contacted by a wood straw manufacturer from Craig, CO. The mulch is like pixie sticks. It was used on the Bullion King remediation. Because it's heavier, it stays in place better than straw, and it has no weeds. They are interested in supplying wood straw for more mine cleanup sites and might built a new plant in Montezuma County.

The CAG applied for Southwestern Water Conservation District (SWCD) grant for 20k to update ARSG water quality database and conduct analyses of the data. SWCD had more requests than funds so we received about 17k. Peter would like to set up a technical committee to oversee and give guidance as to what type of analysis might make sense. Thanks Charlie as the San Juan County SWCD representative and thanks to five other CAG members who attended SWCD meeting in support of the application.

Jenna Emerick has resigned from the CAG. She left Green Analytical Laboratories to take a job as the health officer for Kinder Morgan in Cortez and is moving to Montezuma County. Unfortunately, since she's moved out of the watershed, she is no longer eligible to be on the CAG. In April, the CAG is planning a broader, community-wide meeting and that might be a good time to solicit applications for two empty seats we have on the CAG.

Ty added more items and pages to the website. Please look at it and let him know what you think. We are planning to add some information from the ARSG website which will go away in the coming months.

Administrative Items: Peter put together a draft Sampling and Analysis Plan (SAP) for the CAG's sampling. We've received some feedback from CDPHE but nothing from EPA yet.

Next Meeting (March 26th) – Topics will include a presentation by Sunnyside Gold Corp. of their characterization work at the Mayflower Tailings Ponds, a presentation of the CAG data being collected in the Animas Canyon, discussion of a technical sub-committee, and steps to get new CAG members on-board. The meeting will be in Silverton in the afternoon

Future Meetings – EPA has a number of items they'd like to discuss with the CAG in the coming months. In April, EPA wants to talk about chapters for site management strategy and discuss their feasibility work on a repository on the Mayflower tailings Ponds. They also want to conduct a public meeting to review work done in 2019 and look ahead to 2020. In addition, the CAG has discussed a broader, evening meeting with the public to present what the CAG has been doing this past year and perhaps EPA and the CAG can make that a joint meeting. We would try to get elected officials there.

In May, EPA would like to have more discussion on the site strategy and roll out the study on repository feasibility. In June, the CAG might do a site tour of the water treatment plant at Gladstone, Red and Bonita bulkhead, Gold King, Natalie/Occidental, Elk Tunnel, Little Dora and North Star.

San Juan/Silverton Planning group will meet after the presentations today. It makes sense for the CAG and Planning Group to have time together for different presentations. To better coordinate the two groups, the CAG may want to meet a different day of the week. Peter and Anthony will talk more with the two groups and see what might be doable in terms of scheduling.

The *Terrestrial Baseline Risk Assessment* should be out this summer. Also, the Southern Ute Indian tribe is working with federal partners on a cultural survey assessment, but it may not come out until next year.

EPA Update on BPMD Site Strategies

After working with a number of different stakeholders, including the CAG, EPA developed an initial site strategy. As the CAG requested, the focus is on upper Animas (above Cement Creek) and upper Cement (area around Gladstone). There will be more discussion during the next few upcoming meetings.

EPA has been developing a feasibility study for using some of the Mayflower Tailings Ponds for a sludge and mine waste repository. That information will be shared in the coming months.

Work under the interim record of decision (IROD) from last summer will begin this year at several sites in the Cement Creek and upper Animas River drainages. Most of this work will be done by DRMS in conjunction with CDPHE.

There were several questions from CAG members and the public about process including: scheduling and developing a timeline for studies, having an organizational chart about who is doing what task, a list of IROD sites where work is to be done this summer, when are ARAR's going to be developed, and what does the BPMD funding look like over the next couple of years. Overall, people appear to want a better understanding how work is going to be structured and when might it occur.

Mark announces that on May 13, CDPHE will have an OSHA refresher course in Silverton. (It has since been moved to June 18.)

EPA Presentation on Sampling and Hydrogeology of the Gladstone - Bonita Peak Area and Potential Impacts of Additional Bulkheads

Rory Cowie, who now runs Alpine Water Resources LLC but has done a lot of work for the past five years under MSI for EPA in hydrologic investigations, made a presentation on his work. He has done an enormous amount of sampling of the adits around Bonita Peak (the mountain), and seeps and springs around a large area where groundwater may have been affected by the filling of the Sunnyside Mine Pool.

Ian Bowen, a hydrologist with EPA, presented studies done by USGS in upper Cement Creek showing changes in pH and metal loading above Gladstone in the pre- and post-mine pool filling time periods. Both presentations had quite a bit of detail, and they will be posted on the CAG website.

People asked a number of questions about the details in the presentations including, is there work to measure groundwater infiltration at Lake Emma and Ross Basin and what type of risk management analysis might there be regarding impacts of bulkheading tunnels. People also wanted to know when the Red & Bonita bulkhead valve might be closed. (Answer: later in the summer. The head behind the bulkhead would be raised in small steps so that potential groundwater impacts to other adits can be closely monitored.)

Charlie pointed out that having these presentations a few months earlier could have been helpful during last fall's discussions on different site strategies.

5:15 PM Adjourn