

**Meeting Notes**  
**Bonita Peak Community Advisory Group**  
**June 25, 2020, 6:30—8:15 PM**  
**Via Computer Conferencing**

**In Attendance:** CAG Members: Peter, Chara, Ty, Melissa, John, Marcel, Larry, Anthony, Brian, Russ, Terry, Charlie

Others: Tom Schillaci, Dennis McQuillan, Lisa Merrill, Katherine Jenkins, Athena Jones, Beth Archer, Christina Progress, Susan Livenick, Rob Parker, Devon Horntvedt, Rob Parker, Steven L, Nate Rock, Ian Bowling, James Hou

**Introductions and Announcements, Meeting Summary Approval**

- ✓ Meeting summary notes from previous meeting. John moves to accept and Melissa seconds. All approve via hand or voice.
- ✓ Comments on Chapters 2 & 4 of Site Management Strategy. Peter sent the CAG comments to EPA
- ✓ June Samples were taken all the same day from Howardsville, M34, A68, CC48, A72, Below Elk Cr., Below Cascade Cr., and Bakers Bridge. Below Cascade and Elk Creeks were collected by the CAG and River Watch collected samples at the rest of the sites as they do every month.
- ✓ Animas Canyon Data to be put on website along with some analysis.

**Administrative Items**

*EPA Site Strategy Update*

EPA is hoping to have the Site Management Strategy finalized by September. They will get the CAG all the chapters including revisions on those that the CAG commented on and those that the CAG has not yet seen. They will allow the CAG an opportunity for a for final review and will finalize by September. Peter asks when they will send out. Christina replies that it will be late July.

*Consideration of Progress Table*

Part of proposed site strategy is for other agencies to develop a progress report for different time frames. The reports required by the Site Strategy Management Plan may provide the type of progress table the CAG has been considering the past couple of months. Susan had spurred the progress table idea saying that if one is not in the inner circle, it is difficult to determine what is going on. Chapters 2 and 4 did come close to addressing her concerns. Dennis asks Christina if Chapter 2 will be amended to include NM and the Navajo nation into the BPMD group. Christina says she will talk to management.

Peter said it is difficult in Zoom to get CAG conversational discussion so he would like for CAG to meet before the next July meeting and discuss long-term about what the CAG

wants to do moving forward. We could do as a Zoom meeting or meet in a park. Peter will send out an email requesting preferences.

*CAG Membership Size –*

This item will be addressed at the next meeting.

*Long-Range Schedule-*

Next month the ASARCO Multi-State Environmental Custodial Trust will discuss their work in and around Arrastra Gulch. Initially \$4 million was allotted for remedial work on ASARCO lands in the upper Animas River Basin. Most of this land surrounds Silver Lake at the head of Arrastra. The Trust works closely with CDPHE on how best to utilize the funds.

Currently we are expecting to see EPA's Baseline Terrestrial Ecological Assessment in August.

The CAG has discussed a tour in September but will wait to see what COVID situation is at that point. There may also a discussion about the Animas Canyon data in September. Christina asks about getting that into EPA database. Peter says if relatively easy to plug in, he is happy to do that. James Hou will work with Peter on it.

Ty notes that with Zoom we can't get new attendees' emails as they enter. He reminds people to go to CAG website and sign-up so they receive emails.

**EPA Discussion of Red & Bonita Bulkhead Test**

James Hou with EPA went through a presentation on the Red and Bonita Bulkhead Test Closure. Initially the value will be shut to raise the head behind the bulkhead to 50 feet. The head will be held there to check for seepage around the bulkhead. Then the head will be raised to 200 feet which is how much higher Adams adit is compared to the R&B. The head will be held at this elevation for several weeks and then the water will be drawn down before winter. The drawn down water will be run through the Gladstone treatment plant. A broad set of seeps, springs, mine adits, instream locations, the well bored into the American Tunnel and another well bored into the groundwater below the North Fork of Cement Creek near the Gold King will all be sampled every week or more often depending on what is seen. (As a side note, the Gold King is about 500 feet in elevation higher than the R&B.)

There were a number of questions about the test including:

Is 200 feet a high enough elevation to learn much about the groundwater hydrology?

EPA responded that the project will test the integrity of the bulkhead and they will get some hydrogeologic data. One of the constraints is that they want to drain and treat water behind the bulkhead before winter. They also don't want a lot of untreated water possibly coming out of the Adams mine.

There are questions about raising the head further if all goes well and when will EPA test the bulkhead to reach equilibrium. EPA responds that those are longer-term questions for which no decisions will be made until after this test.

Is there a contingency plan if the project doesn't go as planned? EPA says they are working on it. There are also comments on how the communication plan hasn't worked as well as it should in the past with downstream communities.

There are questions about the volume of the workings which may be estimated by closely watching how the rate of the head rise changes over time. EPA says they will watch that.

There was also a question on if the R&B discharge would continue to be treated after the test. EPA responded that there are no plans to do so and any decisions about long-term treatment will not be made for some time.

### **EPA Presentation on Repository Feasibility Study at the Mayflower Tailings**

Rob Parker with EPA gave a short presentation on a feasibility study nearing completion regarding using the Mayflower Tailings Ponds as a location for a site-wide repository for mine waste. In the near future, a repository is needed for the sludge generated at the Gladstone treatment plant. The repository could also be used for sludge excavated out of settling ponds under the initial IROD that EPA issued a year ago. Other mine wastes could go there as well.

The Mayflower tailings ponds, which were reclaimed many years ago by Sunnyside Gold Corp. (SGC), have large, "high and dry" spaces on top. They are the best locations for a repository in San Juan County. EPA would like to start construction next year and haul sludge from Gladstone the year after that. They are running out of space for sludge at Gladstone.

The Feasibility Report will be released in late July for a 30-day public comment. To decide to construct a repository, EPA must respond to public comments and make a record of decision (IROD) to move forward with design and implementation.

Several people ask questions regarding the potential size and longevity of a repository on different ponds. EPA says the details will be in the feasibility report to be released in July.

**8:10 PM Adjourn**