

Meeting Summary
Bonita Peak Community Advisory Group
March 24, 2022, 6:30—8:00 PM
Via Computer Conferencing

CAG members in attendance: Peter Butler, Anthony Edwards, Helen Mary Johnson, Chara Ragland, Susan Livenick, Brian Devine, Parker Newby, Ty Churchwell, and Marcel Gaztambide. Not in attendance: Russ Anderson (he provided a proxy with Ty), Justin Elkins, Charlie Smith, and Terry Morris.

Also in attendance: David Heinze, Linda Figueroa, James Hou, Chuck Wanner, Christina Prograss, Laura Dixon, Mark Rudolph, Samantha Wright, Ryan Bennett, Athena Jones, Chris Stoneback, Taryn Chaya, Doug Jamison, Willy and Chris Tookey, Ben Martinez, Tom Schillaci, Meg Broughton, and Neil Westesen.

Introductions and Announcements.

Peter said he had a CAG member request that the meeting be recorded since he was going to be unable to attend, and he would like to view it later. Generally, the CAG does not record meetings in order not to dampen open conversation. After some discussion, Chara motioned to record the meeting only for the purpose of allowing non-attending CAG members to review it. Parker seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Peter thanked Melissa May for her time and insights over the past three years. She is stepping down as a CAG member. He then welcomed Alyssa Richmond as a new CAG member

Next Peter announced that CAG member John Ott had passed away suddenly a couple of weeks ago. John was born and raised in Mancos and lived around Durango for decades. He was very well-known in both the water community and agricultural community. He was active in all manner of community activities and he will be missed dearly.

There were a couple of other speaking announcements. Anthony and Peter are to give an update on the BPMD for the Lunch and Learn series via Zoom on April 4th. Many of the participants in the Lunch and Learn are government employees from around the Four Corners region. Peter also mentioned that he will be speaking about the BPMD at the annual Southwestern Water Conservation District water conference on April 1st.

Update on WQ Standards Proposal for Upper Mineral Creek

Peter said he turned in the CAG's Prehearing Statement for the WQCC hearing in June. The actual statement isn't that long, but he included Exhibits A-Q. He is meeting with EPA, WQCD, CPW, and HWMD to discuss the proposal further next week.

Update on SGC/U.S. Draft Settlement

Not much new information at this time. There were only about nine written comments submitted. EPA also held a public meeting at the request of the Town of Silverton and San Juan County. It is expected that DOJ will give a response to the comments to the court.

Pre-Final Repository Design at Mayflower TP #4

Rob Parker with EPA presented the design for a repository on top of the reclaimed Mayflower Tailings Pond #4. First, he announced that he is leaving his position as a project manager to take a position with EPA's Safe Drinking Water section. A number of CAG members thanked Rob for his work at the BPMD and for his willingness to always consider the CAG's concerns regarding activities at the site.

The repository will be lined and built on top of the Mayflower Tailings which provides about 35 acres of flat ground. Part of the repository will be a lined impoundment which for storing wet sludges like that which is produced by the Gold King treatment plant. It will be able to hold about 30,000 cubic yards of material. The treatment plant currently generates about 3,000 – 6,000 cubic yards annually and has over two year's worth of sludge stored on site. Additional space on the impoundment will be used for drying sludge and testing combining the sludge with cement, fly ash, or other tailings to see if structurally the sludge can be placed in a landfill type repository. Over time, the second and third stages of the repository will be constructed in a landfill style with a potential capacity of 335,000 cubic yards to accommodate solid mine waste.

The CAG asked several questions. The top of the whole impoundment will be sloped towards the southwest end to a constructed pond for catching precipitate and leachate. Concerns were expressed as to the size and capacity of the pond. Initially, water from the pond will be trucked up to the Gold King treatment plant for treatment. If the treatment plant shuts down, another solution will need to be found. In the winter, the repository, or at least the impoundment part, will be covered. In spring and after heavy precipitation events, there could be a lot of trucking.

Concerns were also expressed about dust blowing off the repository. Roads on the impoundment, going around the repository will be paved, and EPA says they will have a dust mitigation strategy in place.

Susan asked about drying out sludge so that it becomes a more stable material. Linda Figueroa explained that water becomes molecularly bonded with the particulates in the sludge material so that it is very hard to separate unless you are willing to bake the sludge with a heat source.

Rob said they are continuing with geotechnical testing this summer because eventually, the repository will add a lot of weight to the reclaimed tailings.

Administrative Items

Meeting Summaries:

Marcel moved and Brian seconded a motion to approve the January meeting summary. Support for the motion was unanimous.

Peter said he might try to schedule a CAG discussion session in April, but currently he didn't have any topics for discussion.

The CAG elected officers for the executive committee for the coming year. For Chair, Anthony nominated Peter and Marcel seconded. For Vice-Chair, Ty nominated Russ and Brian seconded. For Secretary/Treasurer, Susan nominated Ty and Helen Mary seconded. All motion were support unanimously.

Future Agenda Items? Planned 2022 Field Activities, Tailings Sampling between Eureka and Howardsville, Plans for Howardsville Mill, Macroinvertebrate Data, Mayflower Repository, Site Specific Plans for Interim Remedial Actions, etc.

8:20 PM Adjourn