

Meeting Summary
Bonita Peak Community Advisory Group
Sept. 22, 2022, 6:30—8:00 PM
Via Computer Conferencing and In Person
at the Durango Reclamation Facility at Santa Rita Park

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

Also in attendance: Tom Schillaci, Al Basile, Megan Schutti, Athena Jones, Ryan Bennett, Kirstin Brown, Scott Roberts,

Introductions and Announcements

The CAG had a good tour in conjunction with EPA for a number of people in August. We were surprised that the La Plata County commissioners showed up in the morning. We didn't know they were coming.

EPA Update on Summer Activities

EPA provided a brief update on their recent activities. A number of IROD sites have been addressed including work on the Anglo Saxon, the Mammoth, the Silver Wing, Campgrounds 3 & 7 (done by DRMS), and the Gold Hub (Yukon). They are also in the process of pulling back mine waste material from Mineral Creek at the North Star. This project was started last year and is not part of the IROD. It is a Removal Action. Drilling at Lake Emma did not happen this year but should happen next summer.

Paper on Effectiveness of Bulkheads at Gladstone

Peter discussed a paper by USGS in *Applied Geochemistry*, "Water-quality change following remediation using structural bulkheads in abandoned draining mines, upper Arkansas River and upper Animas River, Colorado USA" by Katherine Walton-Day, M. Alisa Mast, and Robert L. Runkel. There is a lot of good information and history of water quality changes around Gladstone in the document, particularly related to the bulkheads placed in the American Tunnel. Peter showed and discussed several of the figures and graphs.

One conclusion of the paper was that bulkheads did little to improve water quality in comparison to when there were no bulkheads and no water treatment at Gladstone. Unfortunately, the authors found only two samples taken in lower Cement Creek pre-

water treatment – one in 1971 and the other in 1981. Peter noted that it is hard to draw any conclusions when comparing more recent water quality data to only two early samples taken ten years apart.

Peter also discussed unpublished data and graphs pulled together by Rob Runkel, USGS, around Gladstone. Rob looked at zinc load in Cement Creek above the confluence with the South Fork of Cement Creek. His data shows the zinc load coming out of the American Tunnel pre-bulkheads, before it entered the Sunnyside's treatment plant – around 240 lbs/day. He graphed the zinc load coming out of the American Tunnel (AT) from the late 1980's through 2015 showing the decrease in load from installing each of the three bulkheads. He also graphed the zinc load in Cement Creek upstream of the AT during the same time period and then added the data together. The zinc load in Cement Creek upstream of the AT increased shortly after the bulkheads were installed with an increase in loading from the Mogul, Gold King, and Red & Bonita. But overall, when adding the Cement Creek load to the AT load, the overall zinc load decreased by about 50%. That doesn't take into account any potential increases in load in the South Fork from the Natalie/Occidental or Lucky Jack Mines which is a concern of EPA. There doesn't appear to be any evidence that zinc load did in fact increase from these mines, although these mines have not been monitored regularly. Ian Bowen from EPA said that he had presented Rob's data to the CAG before, but Peter suspects that might have been in a presentation to the Animas River Stakeholders Group several years ago.

Topics for Discussion with EPA Regional Administrator

The CAG discussed topics for discussion for the upcoming meeting with KC Becker, Region 8 EPA administrator. One main topic was requesting EPA to do less study and to take more action on the ground in reducing metal loading. Specifically, the CAG wanted the main focus to be on the mines in the Gladstone area which produce the majority of the all the mining-related metal loading in the Animas River Basin.

The other main topic was to push EPA to pick up some of the local governments' costs associated with the site. In particular, we'd like to see EPA reach a cooperative agreement with San Juan County to cover some of their costs associated with the site designation, and to pick up the costs of operating the four gages around Silverton from the Southwestern Water Conservation District (SWCD). The gages are used specifically for monitoring metal loads in the streams and are not used for any water rights administration. SWCD had been funding these gages at the request of the Animas River Stakeholders Group

Administrative Items

- ✓ Meeting Summaries – The CAG did not have quorum so it did not approve any meeting summaries.
- ✓ CAG Discussion Time
- ✓ Long-Range Schedule

- ✓ Future Agenda Items? *Macroinvertebrate Data*, Remedial Actions for Gladstone, *etc.*

8:00 Adjourn