

Meeting Summary
Bonita Peak Community Advisory Group
Aug. 24, 2023, 6:30—8:20 PM
Via Computer Conferencing and In Person
at Silverton Town Hall
1360 Greene St.

CAG Members attending: Chara Ragland, Ty Churchwell, Parker Newby, Peter Butler, Terry Morris, Russ Anderson, Charlie Smith, Anthony Edwards, Sara Burch, Helen Mary Johnson, Jason Fast, and Emily Thorn

Also in attendance Kirstin Brown, Ryan Bennett, David Heinze, Jessica Duggan, James Hou, Tom Schillaci, Mark Rudolph, Jill Kugle, Athena Jones, Jill Kugle, Melissa Smeins, Jennifer Bennett, Joy Jenkins, James Hou, Jimmy Keene, Meg Broughton, Mike Fisher, Lisa Merrill, Jim Morris, *etc.*

Introductions and Announcements

Burrows Gulch Transbasin Diversion Update:

Lisa Merrill with BLM said the purchase is still on target for September. There are two water right owners which created some complications. TU is helping by paying for attorney time. Charlie asks how will BLM protect the water from being appropriated and diverted in the future. There are a number of organizations working on recommendations to discuss at a later date. There is a question about removing the diversion this year. BLM has an agreement to close it with the owner, and the agreement is that water needs to flow to the Animas River side before closing. If closing gets pushed past the September closing date, they will have to see if the owner is ok with leaving it open for the winter – it is his water right until it is a done deal.

Interest in Funding Sondes

Sondes are continuous water monitoring devices. A number of them were put in the Animas River Basin after the Gold King release. They monitor pH, turbidity, conductance, and temperature. Funding is running out to keep them operating. Several entities are interested in keeping some of them going, especially the one in Durango. Jason says that the City of Durango's water department uses the turbidity to determine if they may need to shut down pumps if a monsoon event brings debris or ash downstream. Ty says anglers are also interested in turbidity. CPW may be interested in temperature. Brian Devine has expressed interest in keeping the Durango sonde going from a public health standpoint. Charlie asks if they are run by USGS? Peter says USGS maintains the sondes but the money came from WINN funds. Mark says that the cost for five sondes was 128k per year. There is a discussion about what entities are

interested in the data, how some sondes might continue to be funded, and if they can be operated at a lower cost.

Updates on Field Activities

Melissa Smeins from BLM discussed actions in the Prospect Gulch area - Lark Repository, Joe and John Mine and Wynona Mine.

Wynona: BLM took out concrete box that had been used for testing some passive mine drainage treatment technologies in the past. They put in a terrace system with rocks and aspen that supposedly sequester zinc better than spruce. The mine used to be referred to as the Evelyn and was draining 18 gpm when ARSG put it on its list of high metal loaders. The flow has decreased dramatically to less than 1 gpm. No one is sure why.

Joe & John Mine: The adit drainage used to run along a county road. BLM piped it under the road. They cleaned out the culvert and did other maintenance.

Lark Repository: BLM wants to gain access to a draining adit buried under mine waste in repository. The pipe carrying the drainage is starting to fill up with iron material. BLM is working with EPA on a fluid analysis document and is looking to do some geophysical work to find the adit.

Chara asks what the goal for finding the adit. The goal is to understand how much water is coming out of the adit, its quality, and how they may redirect the flow from the adit so it doesn't impact the repository.

Midway: BLM also showed pictures of how well a rehabilitated area in Eureka Gulch looks a year after work was done at the site.

James Hou with EPA discussed drilling at Lake Emma. The first well hit the target and found water about ninety feet higher in elevation than the last measurement of the Sunnyside mine pool taken in 2002. The second well missed the target, but they may be able to slightly redirect the drilling to hit the proper location. James thanks Terry who walked them through some of the maps.

EPA is discussing putting tracers into the mine pool to see what seeps, springs, and mines it might be connected to. Not sure if they will be able to inject the dye this year. They want to deploy the dyes before they put in the pumps. They will put in a submersible pump eventually. Terry says it is great to have a baseline to keep track of the water elevation

Kirstin asks if the dye should come out the Gold King? They hope so, but this may take years. James shows the elevations of the mine workings. They are looking at the relationship between these mines.

Kirstin suggests a mini-sipper – a water sampling device that sips small water samples periodically – as a monitoring device for the dye. Peter thinks that it would clog at the Gold King. The mini-sipper is about the size of a bread box that takes 10 ml of water about every 15 minutes, but they have to have pretty clean water. Joy agrees with that. EPA is thinking of using device that can be left in the drainage for months that would show presence or absence of tracers, but not concentrations.

Peter asks which seeps do they want to monitor? James says they are looking at S. Fork of Animas, mines in Cement Creek near Gladstone, and about 2 dozen plus seeps. Peter points out that they will have to dump in a LOT of dye to see anything.

Terry points out that if elevation of water fluctuates, then salt deposits become a factor in terms of metal loading and 15' can be important.

Athena Jones with EPA discusses the construction of the Mayflower Repository. She shows slides of materials, ditches, and berms that have been built and compacted. They hope to move sludge from Gladstone by end of next year to the site.

EPA is doing PM10 monitoring for dust at the site, and the number of particles has been low. Their dust suppression work appears to be working. They have noticed that dust concentrations at the site don't change from weekdays compared to Sunday when they aren't working.

Helen Mary asks if the dust is related to road traffic? They have three stations with solar panels. They have an east and west gauge on repository and one by road so they can compare the three. There were times when the ones on the repository were showing more activity.

Peter asks if they are using infrastructure money for the repository? The answer is that the funding sources vary. EPA is using three sources of funding - Superfund, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds, and Sunnyside vs. U.S. Settlement funds.

Anthony asks if those funds can be used at sites not directly to the repository? For example, for a trail to go along the side of the repository or can the county go for anything adjacent for trails or beaver habitat. Can money be applied for? The answer is yes, sort of. Superfund is for cleanup and construction only. Money for BIL was set aside for other programs and EPA can't go after them, but county might be able to do so.

Mark says there are all kinds of funding for a lot of different things – talk to regional DOLA rep. for either state or federal funds.

Charlie asks if there can be funding for wetting roads down so they can take that out of the dust picture. County can't afford to do that but it would help with the monitoring of dust on roads. Charlie just points out that it would eliminate a variable. Anthony would like to see the 2.5 ppm data as well as the 10 ppm.

Mammoth Tunnel: EPA doubled the size of one of the two ponds at the site and removed the other pond which was constructed on BLM land.

Campgrounds 2 and 3: These sites are near the Mayflower Mill. They had elevated lead in the soils and could have been a human health risk for someone camping there for a long period of time. These are not legal campgrounds. They are flat sites people have been using on private land without permission. The sites have been covered and made unattractive for camping. Lead concentrations on the surface have gone down.

Red & Bonita: EPA relocated the discharge that was going into the iron fen. They added a new culvert as well. Another entity will have to do recovery of the fen.

Gold King Mine: EPA stabilized the portal and extended it outward to make it safer.

Questions: Peter asks about the scope of work with RI/FS contract and what is it's focus. Joy answers that the focus is throughout the site. Maybe some small sites can be deleted that have been addressed. Joy says Howardsville is a big loader that is of concern. Next effort will focus on larger loaders.

Peter asks about Silver Wing and Tom Moore. Mark says Tom Moore will be addressed next week. It is 2019 IROD site.

Chara asks if there is a possibility of a flow chart that shows the work and progress on a yearly basis. Chara suggests the storymap as a good location for a summary chart. Meg hopes to have that at the end of the year and is trying to figure out a better way to package that.

Charlie asks about the Mogul? Work there comes from a separate pot of money. The EPA Office of Technology is looking at doing a *in situ* remediation of the mine pool.

Someone asks about OU2 (Mayflower Tailings) and how that gets prioritized and are they collecting data there? Jessica says they will collect data again for OU2 and they have talked to contractors about a work plan. Not doing infiltration studies but want to see where ground water is going. The drilling would happen next year.

Peter asks if they will do sampling in April and late March when biggest impact is? Jessica says they are planning a spring sample site. Peter says it is before the high water. When the loading is the greatest and they should sample then. No response from EPA.

Administrative Items

- ✓ Meeting Summaries – April meeting summary. Terry motions to approve, Charlie seconds. Unanimously approved. July 11 meeting notes. Sara motions to approve, Terry seconds. Unanimously approved. There are July notes from the regular CAG meeting, but there are questions from Terry and Ty, so approval is postponed.
- ✓ CAG Discussion Time – September 13, evening
- ✓ Long-Range Schedule – Tour Tuesday, Sept. 26.

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

Anthony informs the CAG of some upcoming events. On October 3 at Kendall Mountain there will be a primer from EPA to the local community about the Superfund process. On October 4 – DRMS will show some films in Silverton on Silver Lake and on an oral history of mining in San Juan County through individual interviews. On November 15, 16, or 17th Connor Newman with USGS will discuss tracers looking at potential background metal concentrations in Cement Creek. Date is not set yet. These are all community sessions, organized by the Bonita Peak local planning group.

EPA did a tour with the Southern Ute Tribal Council, and it went well.

No regular CAG meeting in September, just the tour.

8:36 PM

Adjourn