

Meeting Summary
Bonita Peak Community Advisory Group
Oct. 26, 2023, 6:30—8:15 PM
Via Computer Conferencing and In Person
at Silverton Town Hall
1360 Greene St.

In attendance: Peter Butler, Chara Ragland, Charlie Smith, Susan Livenick, Helen Mary Johnson, Sara Burch, Parker Newby, Russ Anderson, Dave Palmer, Jason Fast, Emily Thorn, Anthony Edwards, Terry Morris.

In the room: Scott Roberts, Lisa Merrill, James Livenick, Jimmy Keen

19 Zoom attendance: Athena Jones, Tom Schillaci, Meg Broughton, James Hou, Samantha Wright, Melissa Smeins, Joy Jenkins, Mark Rudolph, Claudia Tuebl, Jessica Duggan, Jill Kugle, etc.

Introductions and Announcements

- Silverton's Miners History was presented to the community. Kirstin was involved in putting it together and has a youtube link that Peter will get and send out.
- EPA canceled the community Superfund Process presentation. Meg has rescheduled it for November 15, 2023.
- Funding from WINN for the Animas River water quality sondes is scheduled to end this month. Funding to continue operating some of the stations has been secured from the City of Durango, La Plata County and Trout Unlimited for 3 years. That funding will cover temperature, turbidity, and pH for the sonde in Durango. The city is particularly interested in turbidity and Parks and Wildlife is interested in temperature. Anglers are interested in both. Jason with Durango, Melissa May with MSI, and Buck Skillen with TU were all closely involved in the effort. The SWCD will be the conduit for funds to cover USGS's cost to maintain the sonde.
- EPA folks joined CAG for the Oct. Sampling. Dave Palmer, James Hou, and Peter Butler went down to Cascade while Athena Jones, Parker Newby, Terry Morris, Meg Broughton, and Emily Thorn headed down from Molas to below Elk Creek. Good hike with beautiful color.
- Chara announced the Bighorn Celebration is on November 7, at Doubletree from 5:30-7:30.

**Discussion with EPA about Plans and Direction over the Next Several Years,
Possibility of Sub-Group Meetings.**

Joy Jenkins began a discussion about EPA's plans and priorities over the next few years.

Water Quality sensors.

Joy commented that EPA is looking into funding the sonde at A72 just below Silverton with support from Mark Rudolph with CDPHE. Funding will support four parameters: temperature, conductivity, turbidity and pH. Athena asked if possibly a local contractor can do the monitoring as opposed to USGS who has done it in the past. Jason and others noted that it is not possible to keep the sonde functioning over the winter due to ice conditions that affect the probes.

Joy developed four slides to help describe EPA plans for the next three years through the Superfund process. Some process tasks can be completed sequentially while others can be completed concurrently.

- Slide 1: Continue OU1, OU2, and OU3 Remedial Investigations (RI)
Near- and long-term remedy alternatives development and evaluation through Feasibility Studies (FS)
Work on completing RI reports
Tailor sampling program to fill data gaps via sampling plan, i.e.,
OU2 – Mayflower tailings – ramping up studies

There was considerable discussion following this slide. Charlie commented that he wanted to hear from the project engineers about their plans, and suggested they could use input from the CAG. The CAG has consistently felt that their opportunities for input come too late, after EPA has already determined what their plan of action is going to be. Meg Broughton with EPA agreed and commented that she was interested in (1) getting CAG input prior to project implementation, and (2) what are the CAG members individual expertise and interests that could be used to enhance project discussions and goals. Peter expressed an interest in providing that information. Russ said it is available in individual CAG bios. Anthony commented that we don't know what the general scope of work (SOW) for the feasibility study is. Meg noted that the SOW is broad and variable, and details vary by prescription and are adaptable. Peter asked if the FS includes all sites. Meg replied that it breaks down into several focused FSs. The scope is broad and not set in stone – there are general tasks because they are cost reimbursable contracts. There are places to have input.

One way of providing input is to have smaller workgroups that can have more informal discussion about issues and report back to the larger group. There is quite a bit of discussion about how workgroups might work.

- Slide 2: Concurrently work on focused FSs and interim RODs
Objective: determine remedies for larger metal sources to address Priority Reaches 1 and 2 in the Animas River
- Howardsville tailings
 - Major loading sources (draining adits) in Cement Creek – OU3 GW system
Specific adit discharges TBD
- Also informed by ongoing RI at Bonita Peak

There is discussion about the feasibility studies and what they entail. It appears that the scope of work is much more general and flexible than the CAG realized and that misunderstanding of how EPA's contracted work operates has been a source of confusion. EPA's main interest in the big sources of loading – Howardsville (the smallest), the Mayflower tailings (OU2) and the Gladstone area.

Slide 3: Remedial Actions

- Complete repository construction in 2024
- Complete 2019 IROD actions
 - 4 of 23 sites remain
 - CDPHE, USFS, BLM
- Continue operation of interim WTP

Remedial actions are already started, namely completing the repository in 2024 and completing the remaining 2019 IROD actions in 2024. Four of 23 sites remain to be addressed. CDPHE, USFS and BLM are doing this work. Finally, the operation of the interim water treatment plant is ongoing.

Slide 4: Near-term Priorities

- Continue to utilize CERCLA Removal Authority as imminent issues arise
- Stability items identified from Goals 2 and 3 inspections
 - Gold King access road
 - Anglo Saxon crib wall along CR110
 - Kohler Mine – ground control stabilization, bulkhead valving, pressure gauge replacement, further inspection of bulkhead

EPA will continue to utilize CERCLA removal authority as imminent issues arise. These are issues that just come up – the Gold King Mine access, the Anglo Saxon crib wall, the Kohler Mine, etc.

Tom Schillaci wants to know when the next 5-year plan will come out and will that include the treatment plant? Joy says that is part of the Cement Creek sources. They aren't really doing a five-year plan but are looking at remedies. (Side note: developing formal, five-year plans at Superfund sites was initiated by EPA Headquarters under the previous administration. It seems to have fallen out of favor with the current administration.)

Looking at Historical and Current Data at A68 (Gage on the Animas River below Mayflower Tailings).

Peter is not ready to present.

Jimmy Keene will present next month.

Susan says she likes working with this EPA group and glad we can have this kind of discussion.

Anthony asks what is the timeline for the CAG to meet with James about Howardsville? Meg thought it could be this winter and suggested a Howardsville workshop this spring. James confirmed that anytime is good. Peter said that more talk of subgroups is needed by CAG; will discuss individual and group interests at the next meeting.

Administrative Items

- ✓ Meeting Summaries: any questions? No discussion. Charlie moves to approve. Jason seconds. None opposed.
- ✓ CAG Discussion Time. Nothing planned now.
- ✓ Long-Range Schedule – CAG Meeting Dec. 7, 6:30 in Durango. Jason will check on conference room at the Durango Reclamation Facility and let us know if it is available. We can continue with subgroup discussion. Maybe talk some about the Mogul mine as a test for in-situ treatment. Peter asks Joy to talk about the at Captain Jack near Boulder as an example of in-situ treatment.
- ✓ Future Agenda Items? *Macroinvertebrate Data, Remedial Actions for Gladstone and Howardsville, etc.*

8:10 PM Adjourn