

Meeting Summary
Bonita Peak Mining District Community Advisory Group
April 14, 2024, 6:00—7:30 PM
Via Computer Conferencing and In Person
at Santa Rita Water Reclamation Facility Conference Room
Durango, CO

CAG Members attending: Chara Ragland, Ty Churchwell, Parker Newby, David Palmer, Russ Anderson, Brian Devine, Sara Burch, Helen Mary Johnson, Susan Livenick, Jason Fast, and Emily Thorn

Also in attendance: Kirstin Brown, Jimmy Keene, Joe Lewandowski, Jeff Schell, Allen McCaw, James Livenick

EPA online attendees: Jessica Duggan, James Hou, Joy Jenkins, Meg Broughton, *etc.*

Introductions and Announcements

Brian announced his reappointment to the CAG representing La Plata County.

Chara announced a CAG membership is open to replace Peter Butler, and applications are being accepted.

Rocky Mountain Mining Conference will be in Leadville, CO May 22 – 24, 2024. Kristin noted there will be talks on mine wastewater treatments, and field trips to the Climax Mine and the Eagle Mine Superfund site.

Joy announced a major development; property settlement at the Gladstone wastewater treatment facility. EPA purchased three claims around the facility and took title from the owner. Parker noted the three claims are: Herbert, Anglo Saxon and Harrison. Ty asked how much space was obtained, was there space for a new treatment plant? Joy was uncertain but will get a map of the area. She noted it includes the entire flat area around the Gladstone facility and includes the sludge drying area. Ty stated that he uses a hunting map to verify property boundaries. Joy stated the EPA still needs to change the property ownership with the county assessor.

CAG Progress on Work Group Sessions

Water Sampling Work Group – Sara reported that the team looked at Peter’s old sampling plan. Some amendments will be made, including changing the sampling frequency from monthly to seasonal. The revised plan will soon be available for CAG review and approval. The work group will continue Animas Canyon sampling at three locations. Sara will send out a request for volunteers and timing for a spring sampling

event. Sampling has typically occurred at the beginning of the month, so an April sampling event is already out. The number of sampling events per year will be sent to EPA and Kirstin to coordinate sampling times with other agencies where feasible.

Howardsville Work Group – Chara said the work group had set goals, but could not access the list of them at this time. She expects that EPA will have a document to review sometime in May, then we will determine how the work group functions.

Gladstone/Treatment Work Group - Chara said the work group had set preliminary goals, but could not access a list of them at this time. Ty noted the work group was not as far along as the others and would be ready later this summer.

BPMD Superfund Site, Natural Resources Damages Assessment and Restoration Funds

Ty reported that the State of Colorado settled over the Gold King mine release and received a \$7 million grant to be held in trust. The funds are available for projects to offset damages to natural resources caused by the spill. Half of the funds are available now for Phase 1 projects anywhere in the watershed below Silverton. The Phase 1 plan is to consolidate into one package multiple proposals submitted to and approved by the State by September 20. The State wants to bring parties together for approved projects, including the State, tribes, NGOs, and private parties, and wants projects ready by September for the first phase. They already have some ideas listed on a spreadsheet. Phase 2 will use the remaining funds held in trust for projects in the upper Animas watershed. The Phase 2 delay is projected to follow any EPA projects that may change conditions upstream. Several CAG members had comments:

- Jason said the City of Durango was concerned about a manganese concentration issue in the Animas water in winter and would like to have some of the grant funding for a project to mitigate manganese concentrations.
- Ty mentioned possible wetlands projects near Silverton. Chara noted that project proposals will require matching funds.
- Parker noted that any ideas should be specific to the lower watershed, including Silverton, and the proposal should have detailed components.
- Ty stated that a public meeting is scheduled for May 9, 2024 from 3 to 5 pm at the Durango library to discuss uses of the trust money. He expects there will be much public engagement, including City and County governments, and state trustees (Colorado AG, CDPHE, etc.). Entities could even apply on their own but the AG prefers one proposal with multiple small components.

OU2 Updates by EPA

Meg (online) - The Conceptual Site Model (CSM) for OU2 received a 2-week review and comment period, with comments submitted by CAG members and Peter Butler. The comments were reviewed by EPA and by CDM Smith (Kurt Coover), the OU2 contractor. Meg stated that the review process was new to EPA, and they received many useful and valid comments. The contractor also appreciated the detailed comments. CDM Smith is incorporating many of the comments and updating the CSM.

The CSM deliverables are:

1. A robust update of the CSM should be completed in a few weeks.
2. The CSM is a living document; there will be subsequent updates/revisions as the project progresses.

EPA received feedback from the contractor. Remember that making changes is not free (contractor time), but important if the changes are valid. Kurt was concerned whether the cost for his hours of review and updating were commensurate with the benefits to the CSM. He said the review was well worth it, and it was important to have CAG input. EPA confirmed that community engagement early in the process is important, and incorporation of CAG's institutional knowledge will benefit the project.

Jessica (online) – What came out of the comments? Kurt was receptive to the comments. He agreed the data points needed clarification and will improve the displays accordingly. One important result of the comments is that he went back and looked in more detail at Seep 6150 location. He found a 20-ft-thick layer of tailings and mixed mine waste on top of TP-4 that had not been previously identified.

Kirstin is collecting Animas River water samples above and below the Mayflower in coordination with Alpine Resources. She is using an EPA-approved sampling plan. Her samples are used to measure conductivity and look for the peak that reportedly occurs in early March to early April. A sample collected on March 22 had a high concentration in the 450s. Later samples indicate conductivity is going down and is now in the 200s. However, she is uncertain if she missed the peak.

Susan asked, going back to the Seep 6150 issue, what is the definition of mixed waste in this context?

Jessica stated that it is about 20 feet thick and appears to be tailings from other historical sources. It may include sludge from American Tunnel and mine waste from other sources.

Kirstin noted the waste could have been input during different reclamation actions.

Chara asked if this information will be included in the updated CSM.

Meg answered yes.

KBI Contracting, Inc. Summer 2023 Projects (Jimmy Keene)

Jimmy discussed three projects completed in 2023, two for Mark Rudolph (CDPHE), and one for Kirstin (CDRM).

1. Gladstone Mine and Kittimack Sign Installation (CDPHE)

Two informational signs were installed for visitors.

Parker commented that he liked such signs, and asked if they were protected from vehicles. Jimmy had talked to the county to make sure the sign placement was not in the way of snow plows. The Gladstone sign was close to existing signs.

2. Tom Moore Mine Site Remedial Action (CDPHE)

Off of County Road 2, north of Eureka, uphill to the right of the Animas River.

Location: 37.9027N -107.5533W

Debris was removed from the mine adit allowing water to flow freely.

The water was initially clear until mud and debris came out from behind a beaver pond. Waste rock in the channel was removed.

Depth and flow rate were measured, with flow beginning at 20 gpm and going up to 80 gpm before subsiding. The water level dropped 41 inches. A big rock in the channel originally was part of the roof that had collapsed. A pipe at the bottom of the channel was originally an oxygen pipe attached to the roof.

Joe Lewandowski asked whether the water quality was an issue? Kirstin stated that the mine water quality was very clean, but the waste rock was contaminated. This is an IROD site, and the work was conducted to divert the water from contacting the tailings pile.

3. Campground #4 (CDRM)

On County Road 2 just before the Howardsville bridge crossing the Animas River, a level area between the road and the river. The contractor installed a 200-foot-long barricade consisting of large boulders to the left of a gate. To the right of the gate they installed two log pole fences totaling 500 feet. Barricades were installed to prevent camping access on the flat area.

Administrative Items

April 23, 2024, 6 pm: CAG zoom meeting to discuss future meeting frequency and formats, and other CAG-only business. Ty or Chara will send out a zoom meeting link soon.

May 16, 2024, 5:30 pm: Silverton Town Hall. Joint CAG/Silverton Planning Group public meeting. The main topic will be EPA and other agency summer plans.

May 30, 2024, 5-7 pm: Kendall Mountain, Open House. EPA will conduct a general Superfund overview, with agencies and contractors present, to provide information regarding summer road closures. Kirstin and Lisa Merrill (BLM) can provide closure information. There may be food and beverages provided (from private donations). Chara encourages a strong CAG presence. She is working with Kirstin on a Howardsville tour that afternoon so we can see “on the ground” how the site looks.

Future Agenda Items?

Macroinvertebrate Data

Remedial Actions for Gladstone

Other Items

Meg reported that a 5-year review/update of the 2019 IROD was tentatively scheduled for June 2024. CAG/Silverton Planning Group members and EPA should attend. Meg mentioned that June 19 is an EPA holiday so a CAG meeting is not good due to travel restrictions. She prefers the meeting occur in July.

Susan suggested a day tour of IROD sites. Ty preferred a Friday field day to Silverton to get on and view the TP-4 repository.

Ty suggested as part of our overall Animas River watershed responsibility that one meeting per year be held in Farmington to allow downstream agencies/parties to attend a meeting and provide input.

Meg commented that on Sunday, August 11, 2024, the EPA will host a field trip in conjunction with the American Institute of Professional Geologists (AIPG) Meeting in Durango. The field trip will look at the Gladstone treatment facility and tour Silverton.

Jason confirmed that funds are approved to continue monitoring water parameters at the 9th Street USGS gaging station. Funding was approved by City of Durango, La Plata County, Trout Unlimited, etc.

7:30 PM**Adjourn**