

## **WRC UCF Minutes**

December 7, 2021

Public Meeting

### **Those Present:**

John Hollenback – WRC/DLVCD, Susie Johnson – DLVCD/WRC, Dan McQueary – WRC/landowner, Bruce Thomas – WRC/landowner, Rem Mannix – Powell County Commissioner/landowner, Karen Knudsen – WRC/CFC, Will McDowell – CFC/WRC, Doug Martin – NRDP, Josh Schrecengost – NRCS, Pat Saffel – FWP, Mark Marrano – Rampart Solutions, Bo Walker – MSU-Powell County Extension, Amanda Cooley – Powell County Planner, Brian Bartkowiak – NRDP, Caleb Uerling – FWP, and Ted Dodge – WRC.

### **Agenda:**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman John Hollenback.

### **Treasurer Report:**

- Invoices were reviewed and approved at the previous Board meeting.

### **Minutes:**

It was moved by Rem Mannix, seconded by Bruce Thomas and motion carried to approve the minutes of the previous meeting.

### **New Business:**

#### **Groundwater Storage, next steps?\_\_Pat Saffel, FWP**

Pat Saffel (FWP) talked to the group about groundwater storage and next steps. Wanted to get ideas from the WRC board. Would like to start at Gold Creek.

### **Project Updates:**

- **CREP Proposal:** Doug reported that FSA has provided a PowerPoint training on CREP for those who want to take the training. Fax sheets are ready to go. Need to get the rental rates finalized.
- **Upper Clark Fork Stream Flow Working Group:** Brian reported that there was a meeting two weeks ago and is very happy on the direction the group is taking. Next meeting date has not been set.

### **Terrestrial Priority Areas:**

- **Garnet: Gough Creek:** Josh reported that they are starting removal of the Conifer Encroachment from the riparian areas. Setting aside materials to do the Beaver Analog

projects. Permits are 85% done. There is a draft design done on John Hollenback's stock water project.

**Dutton Ranch**: Made some edits on the proposed projects map. Will be contacting Dean within the next week to hopefully set up a meeting and get this process of finalizing a landowner agreement back on track.

**DNRC**: Made some edits to the DNRC landowner agreement and preliminary project map and sent that to Jordan Rice and Brian Robbins. One day spent a day with Jordan on the section to look at the springs being proposed for development. Also looked at an Aspen clone that probably would benefit from conifer removal. Jordan will now discuss these options with Brian Robbins and get back with me once they make decisions on what projects they would like to put in the landowner agreement with NRDP.

### **Deer Lodge North & South:**

**Lampert Ranch**: Kevin, NRCS Technician and the contractor for the stock water systems have figured out the issue with the water flow in the west system and it is now operating as planned. Kevin has sent Greg and I a copy of his As-Built notes for our records and they will now certify the projects for payment.

**Aspen Grove Ranch (Sherm Anderson)**: Aspen Grove Ranch (Sherm Anderson): Field day to complete the resource/project inventory of the ranch property. Work on updating proposed projects map. Next step will be to meet with Sherm, Troy, and TerriJo to review the inventory notes and discuss proposed projects.

### **Habitat Enhancement**

**Graveley Bros.**: Completed draft of the contract documents for the vegetation management (conifer encroachment removal in grasslands and Aspen clones). Sent them up to NRDP (G. Mullen) for review. DNRC (Brock Creek and Spring Creek sections): Stock water System – reviewed the notes/comments from NRDP on the contract documents sent up a few months ago. Participated in the video conf. call with Greg Mullen Ted and Confluence Consulting Engineer to discuss edits/changes needed to the documents. The engineer agreed to making most of the needed edits - I completed what I needed to do. Once the changes are done and acceptable to the NRDP the project will then go out for bid.

**DNRC/Sanders**: NRDP expects to go out for bid in December for the proposed livestock pipeline.

## Aquatic:

- **Brown's Gulch:** Site visit by NRCS, FWP, & WRC contractor carried out in June. A follow up meeting is scheduled for Oct October 5. Final work underway on the Brothers Diversion after an August site visit by NRDP, Ted Confluence, & Mark as well as Randy Brothers. Meeting held with MHCD & Silver Bow County representatives to the NRDP advisory council. Future Fisheries grant request submitted with a\$5,000 match from George Grant Chapter of TU for the Balentine project.
- **Cottonwood Creek – Aspen Grove:** Reviewed and commented on project engineering, which is finishing up with engineer responding to 11 pages of NRCS comments. Discussed engineering considerations with GWE, NRDP, and both landowners. Also discussed concerns of the irrigation equipment supplier regarding the final designs.

Continued working with DNRC-Lewistown to provide our interpretations of the water rights, hydrology and water use as detailed in the DNRC “Correct and Complete” report. The DNRC Lewistown office is completed their Determination (decision) of the two Water Right changes for Aspen Grove/Anderson. The proposed water right changes were approved.

Aspen Grove project was moving towards a contract for construction by the landowner, starting in early September 2021. However, due to delays in the delivery of the fish screen from Farmers Conservation Alliance in Hood River Oregon, the landowner, after meeting with NRDP and WRC, has decided to delay construction of the project until summer of 2022. This is because installation of the fish screen was not available until November, pushing the other elements of construction back into winter, which is not advisable at high elevation. Conf call held with NRCS to review comments to final design.

**Cottonwood Creek, Applegate Diversion/Fish Screen #1:** Project completed on October 28.

**Cottonwood Creek, McQueary Fish Screen:** Met contractor on site in September to review the small modification on this screen (cutting an opening in back wall to flush sediments without using the 12-inch pipe under canal). Decided on a steel plate set horizontally over the 12” pipe well and inlet. This is so the pipe can still be used if a lot of fish need to be flushed to stream. This modification was completed. The screen will be cleaned and winterized in October, also as part of O&M contract.

**Cottonwood Creek, RCC-Vineyards Diversion:** An engineer (Confluence) is working with RCC on some initial conceptual designs of an improved diversion and screen for the senior water right on Cottonwood Creek. NRDP and WRC are in touch with the engineer.

- **O'Neill Creek** – No activity.
- **Gold Creek** – Meeting held with key landowners to discuss potential multiple landowner involvement.
- **Racetrack Creek:** No activity.

- **Brown's Gulch:** Site visit by NRCS, FWP, & WRC contractor carried out in June. A follow up meeting is scheduled for Oct October 5. Final work begun on the Brothers Diversion after an August site visit by NRDP, Ted, Confluence, & Mark as well as Randy Brothers. Work on Future Fisheries Grant began for the Ballentine projects.

**Flow:**

- **Racetrack/Dempsey:** No update.

- **Deer Lodge Landfill Compost Project:**

Work on feasibility study completed and submitted to the Deer Lodge Landfill Committee. Conf call held with other organizations on the status of the project. Waiting for responses from same. The landfill committee is waiting for approval of the permit submitted to expand site. Continued implementation of the NRCS Conservation Innovation grant. Carcass pickup still under way.

Partners/Board Members reports were given.

Next meeting: January 4, 2022

Submitted by Susie Johnson, December 21, 2021