

WRC UCF Minutes

October 5, 2021

Public Meeting

Those Present:

John Hollenback – WRC/DLVCD, Susie Johnson – DLVCD/WRC, Pete Dallaserra – WRC/MHCD/landowner, Dan McQueary – WRC/landowner, Bruce Thomas – WRC/landowner, Rem Mannix – Powell County Commissioner/landowner, Cam Balentine – WRC/MHCD/Brown's Gulch, Karen Knudsen – WRC/CFC, Heidi Brewer – CREP Coordinator, Will McDowell – CFC/WRC, Doug Martin – NRDP, Josh Schrecengost – NRCS, Glen Green – WRC, Stephen Bagley – 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 Bruce Thomas, seconded by Karen Knudsen and motion carried to approve the minutes of the previous meeting.

Project Updates:

- **CREP Proposal:** Meeting held with Lynn Harrington Hershey, her husband and Heidi on work proposed CREP project is now underway. Waiting for FSA to scheduled training session for NRDP partners & presentation of new rental rates. No new updates.
- **Upper Clark Fork Stream Flow Working Group:** Next meeting will take place November 17th starting at 10:00 – 2:00 at the Board room at the Pen Convention Center.

Terrestrial Priority Areas:

- **Garnet: Gough Creek:**

Hollenback: Completed the NRDP landowner agreement. Meeting with John to review and sign and forwarded the agreement to NRDP in Helena. Now waiting for the NRDP review and approval of the agreement. Hollenback Landowner agreement was signed by WRC.

Dutton Ranch: No contact made.

DNRC: Field visit with DNRC staff being scheduled for early November.

- **Brock Creek:** Cynthia Montagne: Field resource inventory on the property.

- **Deer Lodge North & South:**

Lampert Ranch: Project completed. Issues with air lock being addressed.

Aspen Grove Ranch (Sherm Anderson): Contact made with and met with Troy and Teri Jo Anderson concerning their participation with WRC and the NRDP. Plans made to start the necessary field work to complete a field/resource inventory to gather the information necessary to finalize a landowner agreement. They currently do not participate in the FWP Block Mgmt. program and NRDP is requiring public access on at least a part of the property. They are agreeable that something can be worked out where they would put a portion of the ranch property into the program. Field resource inventory completed. Work started with them on developing the new landowner agreement. Water Right changes will go out for Public Comment and if no objections then it will go through.

- **Habitat Enhancement**

Graveley Bros.: Draft documents completed for the vegetation management (conifer encroachment removal in grasslands and Aspen Clones).

DNRC (Brock Creek section): Revised the existing NRDP landowner agreement; planned projects have changed so had to revise the project list and update cost estimates.

Aquatic:

- **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 completing their Preliminary Determination (decision) of the two Water Right changes for Aspen Grove/Anderson. We hope to see the Preliminary Determination by the end of October.

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 2022. This is because installation of the fish screen below the head gate needed to be the first step in the construction and the fish screen was not available until November, pushing the other elements of construction back into winter, which is not advisable at high elevation.

Cottonwood Creek, Applegate Diversion/Fish Screen #1: The NRDP conducted an evaluation of two submitted bids and chose Jeremy Mickey of Granite County as the

contractor for installation. Jeremy is mobilizing this week, Oct. 4-8, and may begin construction of the rock diversions by the end of this week. The screen is a corrugated water screen for 7.5 CFS, so it is much smaller than prior screen installed on Cottonwood. Project completed on October 28th.

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 with key landowner under development.
- **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. 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: December 7, 2021

Submitted by Susie Johnson, November 22, 2021