

## WRC UCF Minutes

February 1, 2022

Public Meeting

### **Those Present:**

Susie Johnson – DLVCD/WRC, Dan McQueary – WRC/landowner, Rem Mannix – Powell County Commissioner/landowner, Karen Knudsen – WRC/CFC, Will McDowell – CFC/WRC, Josh Schrecengost – NRCS, Pat Saffel – FWP, Mark Marrano – Rampart Solutions, Glen Green – WRC, Greg Mullen – NRDP, Casey Hackathorn – TU, Ginette Abdo – MT Bureau of Mines & Geology, Nathan Cook – Valerie Kurth – DNRC, Mary Price – CSK, Eric Nylund – Senator Tester office Butte, Amanda Cooley – Powell County Planner, Brian Bartkowiak – NRDP, Caleb Uerling – FWP, and Ted Dodge – WRC.

### **Agenda:**

- The meeting was called to order by Treasurer Dan McQueary.
- **Treasurer Report:**  
Invoices were reviewed and approved at the previous Board meeting.
- **Minutes:**  
It was moved by Rem Mannix, seconded by Karen Knudsen and motion carried to approve the minutes of the previous meeting.
- **New Business:**
- Ginette Abdo, Ground Water Investigation Program Manager MT Bureau of Mines & Geology: Ginette talked about ground water storage and surface water. She can provide guidance to the WRC. Need to look for existing studies/information that already exists. This topic will be brought up at the Upper Clark Fork Stream Flow Working Group meeting.

### **Project Updates:**

- **CREP Proposal:** NRDP sent the FSA training recordings to partners. Planning checklist also completed and sent to partners.
- **Upper Clark Fork Stream Flow Working Group:** Ground water topic will be discussed at this meeting. Would like the Gold Creek landowners present at this meeting. (John and Bruce)

### **Terrestrial Priority Areas:**

- **Garnet: Terrestrial**  
**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:** Jordan Rice finally got back to Glen concerning the proposed spring developments that were asked of him to discuss with Brian Robbins and get back to Ted on what they decided to do. They have decided to develop two of the springs and Aspen clone enhancement by removing conifers. Now Glen will work on finishing a draft of their landowner agreement.

**Brock Creek:** Cynthia Montagne: Glen started work on the mapping to be part of a conservation plan for this property.

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

**Lampert Ranch:** No activity; all planned projects under the RCPP EQIP contract should now be completed.

**Aspen Grove Ranch (Sherm Anderson):** Glen is working with Troy and Terri Jo Anderson on the proposed projects that will be part of the NRDP landowner agreement. Glen briefly talked with Troy and Terri Jo (on Jan. 8) and they have not met with Sherm yet to discuss the proposed projects so still on hold until they have that meeting.

### **Habitat Enhancement**

**Graveley Bros.:** WRC participated in a teleconference call with Greg Mullen and Greg Orem (Confluence Inc. engineer) to discuss revisions needed on the Vegetation Management projects contract documents. Worked on and finished all edits and revisions to the documents and maps.

**DNRC:** (Brock Creek and Spring Creek sections): Stock Water System – Glen participated in the contractor walk through held on Jan. 20. Greg Mullen, Ray Vinkey and Glen met with 3 contractors that attended and met at the Sanders Ranch lease section in Granite County. Answered the questions they could on site and noted other specific design questions best answered by the Confluence Inc. engineer. The questions and answers (to all questions received by the contractors) will be posted on the eMACS question/answer board for all interested contractors to see. Glen & Ray asked if any contractor wanted/needed to travel to the Dutton leased section to look at the planned spring developments and all declined.

DNRC (Brock Creek and Spring Creek sections): Stock Water System – reviewed the edits and revisions to the contract documents completed by Greg Orum, Confluence Inc. engineer. Revisions were done based on notes/comments from the NRDP lawyer. Comments/edits again sent to Greg. Pipeline Bid out & info provide to MSU for research proposal development.

## 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. Partial Future Fisheries grant obtained. WRC will work with Will M to identify other funding sources. No change since December report
- **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. No change since December.

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. No change since December report.

**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. No change since December report.

- **O'Neill Creek** – No activity.
- **Gold Creek** – Meeting held with key landowners to discuss potential multiple landowner involvement. Meeting held with Ground Water program staff Bureau of Mines & Geology to begin discussion of how to design potential ground water storage projects with Gold Creek as Pilot. Program manager will attend the Jan WRC board meeting. No change since December report.

**Flow:**

- **Racetrack/Dempsey:** Glen assisted Ted with a portion of the RCPP agreement final report to the NRCS. Had to contact Dan Kelley to get information from him on his irrigation project that was installed with funding from the RCPP funds. No change since December report

**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. Continued implementation of the NRCS Conservation Innovation grant. Carcass pickup still under way. Landfill board has submitted their expansion permit to DEQ. The Compost projects will be addressed after the expansion has been approved. Vital ground grant extended to allow for development of the compost site in 2022.

**Potential Funding Opportunities with recent Congressional Legislation: Eric Nylund, Regional Director/Natural Resources Issues, Senator John Tester, Butte Office:** talked about funding opportunities through the Infrastructure Bill.

Partners/Board Members reports were given.

Next meeting: March 1, 2022

Submitted by Susie Johnson, February 15, 2022