

**DOLORES RIVER DIALOGUE  
STEERING COMMITTEE**

**Feb. 13, 2012**

**3 pages**

**Present:** Don Schwindt, Dolores Water Conservancy District; Randy Carver, Montezuma Valley Irrigation Company; Wendy McDermott, San Juan Citizens Alliance; Peter Mueller, The Nature Conservancy; Vern Harrell, Bureau of Reclamation; David Graf, Colorado Parks and Wildlife; Nathan Fey, American Whitewater; Matt Clark, Trout Unlimited; Phyllis Snyder, San Juan Basin Farm Bureau; Drew Gordanier, Southwestern Colorado Livestock Association. Guests: Amber Kelley, SJCA; Don Magnuson, MVIC; Jay Loschert, AW; John Porter, former manager of DWCD. Contract staff: Marsha Porter-Norton, facilitator; Gail Binkly, recorder.

The committee convened following an orientation session for new members Drew and Phyllis.

**319 watershed plan:** Marsha said Chester Anderson of BUGS Consulting, who has been working on the 319 watershed plan and has done a great deal of other work for the DRD, has moved to California. He has a full-time job and would like someone else to take over the task of completing the 319 plan. Marsha said he isn't abandoning the plan and the DRD, but he can't be a good advocate for the plan from another state.

The \$25,000 grant to create the plan was received in 2008, but the plan is just now coming to fruition.

Chester has created a web site for people to give input into the historic context of the watershed, but it hasn't received much response. There is a need for someone to talk directly to people about their historic perspectives. There is \$13,000 remaining from the original grant that can be used for outreach and the writing of the plan.

Matt said the writing of the plan will be intensive and someone is needed who can put time into it.

Marsha said five major issues have been identified with the watershed: salinity, grazing, fish, temperature and sediments.

David recommended adding nutrients as an issue, specifically just below the dam, and there was consensus to do that.

Marsha said the plan needs to describe context; history; current information and studies; what is under way; and local needs. Someone needs to put those elements together and create a plan, using the nine components of an EPA watershed-based plan.

Marsha said she had asked for volunteers for a subcommittee to focus on the 319 plan, and Don and Wendy came forward. Anyone else who wants to be on the subcommittee should let her know. Meanwhile, the DRD-SC needs to discuss what the end product should look like and how to use the \$13,000 to create that final product.

In response to questions, Marsha said she is not sure what Chester's contract status is. She will email the original contract to the DRD-SC. Marsha said the contract to do the plan is with the state, but the

funding comes from the EPA.

Matt asked whether the subcommittee will oversee the budget. Marsha said she thinks the DRD-SC's role is to handle the budget, while the subcommittee will decide how best to get the plan completed and what sort of outreach is needed.

David said a one-page synopsis is needed of what has been done and what remains to be done on the plan. Nathan agreed.

Don said he volunteered to be on the subcommittee because he sees the need to include local history in the plan. Don said a 319 watershed plan has some potential drawbacks. Don has asked the DWCD's attorney, Barry Spear, to comment on such plans and advise how to help the district perspective be seen. Don said Jeff Kane, another attorney in the same office (Maynes, Bradford, Shipps & Sheftel) has expertise in this area. Don suggested having Jeff and Chester have broad oversight over the finishing of the plan, but they wouldn't be the draftspeople. The subcommittee, which may need to be expanded, would be charged with making sure the job is done. Don suggested that Gail could listen to the interviews and be the scribe for those. However, Don said he still has some trepidation about the whole idea of doing a 319 plan and maybe it would be best to bail out and let it be.

Wendy voiced a need to look at the grant application and see what Chester has already done and what he has spent. Phyllis agreed and said she also wants to see the grant application and understand the goal of having a 319 watershed plan.

David discussed framing this as a water-quality component of the efforts on the Lower Dolores and asked whether this plan could be a component of the monitoring and evaluation plan being drafted by the Implementation Team.

David said the DRD-SC needs to find out whether the 319 plan is binding if certain water-quality standards aren't met. Vern said, years ago, TU tried to use a 319 plan as a basis to require more water in the Lower Dolores. That could be a down side to having a 319 plan, but in the end TU's attempt didn't succeed, and Vern thinks the 319 plan is a good measure to have. Don said local managers had to spend a significant amount of money to deal with TU's request and that could be a concern.

**Next steps:**

- Marsha will email the original grant application to everyone on the DRD-SC. She said to keep in mind that much has happened since 2008, so it is somewhat dated.
- Marsha will find out to the best of her ability whether anything in the plan creates binding obligations. Chester says all the measures outlined in the plan are voluntary. She will do some fact-finding and report back to the DRD-SC.
- Don and Wendy will serve on the subcommittee.

**Agenda for full DRD/LDWG meeting on April 26:** The group agreed this will be a good opportunity for the IT to give a full update about plans for the upcoming spill. Peter will talk about forecasting and the specifics of proposed changes to the managed releases.

Vern said he will also address some of those topics in his operation meeting March 21 at 7 p.m. in Dolores. He said BOR used to do an annual operation plan for McPhee before the DRD was formed and

the Spill Committee began making annual recommendations. Now, with the IT is in place, Vern said there is really no point in continuing to have the Spill Committee, because of the potential for conflicting recommendations, so BOR will go back to the annual operation plan.

Nathan said the DRD-SC should probably support this shift back to the single operation plan. The operation meeting would be a good opportunity to explain the change and support Vern in this. David said boaters will have questions so it would be good to explain to them.

Vern said he doesn't think there will be a problem making the change because most of the Spill Committee members are in this room or have tight links to the people here.

It was agreed that the DRD meeting agenda will include:

- An update on the IT
- A discussion of forecasting
- An explanation of the shift to the single operation plan
- An update on the NCA legislation
- An update on the 319 watershed plan

**Meeting summary:** The Jan. 3 meeting summary was approved with a correction to the list of attendees.

**Outstanding items from January:** Marsha said she is still working on the budget for 2012. There has also been discussion about reaffirming the roles of the DRD-SC in light of the creation of the IT. Those are two major outstanding items, and the DRD-SC can pick them back up after the orientation phase for the new members.

**Meeting schedule:** It was agreed that the DRD-SC will continue to meet on the first Tuesday of the month, with the exception of next month (March), when the group will meet Tuesday, March 13.