**Upper San Juan Watershed Enhancement Partnership**

**Meeting Notes**

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING: June 14, 2019 9:30 am – 11:30 am

Where: Town Hall Courtroom, Pagosa Springs, CO

**NEXT MEETINGS:**

* + **Friday, June 12, 10-12 pm**, Location TBD
  + **Friday, August 16 10-12 pm, possibly Public Meeting in August**

**Attendees:** Celene Hawkins, Al Pfister, Jerry Archuleta, Chris Pitcher, Tobi Rowher, Mely Whiting, John Taylor, Joe Crab, Aaron Kimple, Mandy Eskelson

**Action Items:**

* Draft Concept Plan estimate for Steering Committee to review **(Chris)**
* Share Phase I Timeline (includes future meetings, funding applications) with Steering Committee **(Mandy)**
* Revise Request for Proposal (RFP) draft for Phase II technical assessment **(Mandy)**
* Determine matching fund source for Southwest Basin Roundtable request for Concept Plan funding **(MSI, Mely, Al, Celene)**
* Present WEP update/accomplishments, Concept Proposal, and Phase II request at Basin Roundtable meeting July 10 **(MSI, Mely, Al, Chris?)**

**9:00 – 9:10 Welcome & Introductions**

**9:10 – 10:00 Field Trip Debrief**

* Identified one site from field visit with potential to move forward immediately, while others possible in the future
* Committee decided to draft Concept Plan + cost estimate for this site, in addition to broader Phase II watershed assessment.
* First step towards beneficial project for all users and good publicity for WEP group and its efforts. Provide something tangible for the public and get work started as soon as feasible.
* Multiple interests and benefits identified: agricultural infrastructure improvements/efficiency, in-channel river restoration options (including fish habitat), public access/extend recreational river use opportunity, improve wastewater treatment/water quality, and protect private property.
* Confirmed interest and support from site contacts, including landowners and ditch company members.
* Summer targeted outreach: Committee members will continue contact with boards/members for this site to explain goals of WEP and potential collaborations.
* Conceptual Plan: discussed advantages and disadvantages with funding, buy-in, timelines for grouping project options or separating. First need to capture the vision to present to all entities, seek input/approval, revise plan, and then pursue funding.
* Committee agreed to have Concept Plan draft completed by Chris (Riverbend Engineering) rather than going out to bid, due to small amount and keep momentum.
* Draft will be shared with Steering Committee before presenting to Basin Roundtable.
* Conceptual Plan funding: may request at Southwest Basin Roundtable Meeting July 10, but need for matching funds. Discussed using Nature Conservancy funds from Phase I or pursue other options.
* NRCS Targeted Conservation Project:
* Background: NRCS has done piping along Park Ditch in the past, and has talked about the headgate and piping other sections. NRCS looking at multiple ditch companies and irrigators. SWJCD discussing issues, planning, budgeting this summer. Cost being the biggest challenge, but new Farm Bill allows NRCS to contract with ditch companies now, not just individual landowners.
* Goal: Hope these talks dovetail into WEP plans, collaborate with conservation district and NRCS to secure funding for these projects, and fit all groups’ needs. Higher probability to receive funding with more collaboration between multiple stakeholder groups, and could lead to bigger pot of funding to make larger ditch company repairs/improvements.
* Other field visit sites: while group may focus on one site in the beginning, other options will be included within Scope of Work for Phase II assessment
* Suggest including a timeline for multiple access point negotiations and possibly hire a third-party contractor to initiate that process.

**10:00 –10:20 Phase II Structure and Funding**

* Three major objectives: 1) initiate initial project work, 2) develop assessment scope of work for future watershed plan, and 3) broach long-term goals/outlook for this group.
* Summer: focus on planning and funding applications for Concept Plan and Phase II assessment. Possibly hold public meeting to be transparent, share progress and gather input.
* Sept/Oct: discuss long-term plan for group. Look at Rio Grande Restoration group for examples of completed project work and community buy-in. Possibly invite Rio Grande and/or Stollsteimer groups to share their experiences and strategies.
* Steering Committee confirmed they approve of having MSI, Trout Unlimited (Mely), and Western Wildscapes (Al) pursue Phase II funding application and responsibilities.
* Committee encouraged to keep local Pagosa groups/entities in mind for long-term plans/responsibilities, but committee agreed they are comfortable with current arrangement.
* Conceptual Plan work can begin before and during RFP advertisement/bidding.
* Funding Application Schedule: Complete funding schedule will be shared with Steering Committee.
* July 10 SW Basin Roundtable--approach with update, ask for Concept Plan funding for initial project work, and mention we will approach again in Jan/Feb for Phase II assessment funding. Possibly have Chris present the Concept Plan draft at meeting.
* Concept Plan: Estimated cost $10,000 from Roundtable, but they require 25% match with requests so WEP will need 15% cash ($1,500) minimum. Be upfront in application about preferred contractor to be transparent for board to approve or object. Not as big of a concern with concept plan scope, but possible with larger Phase II assessment.
* Match funding options: 1) check TNC contributions in Phase I budget 2) reach out to conservation districts, TU, Town of Pagosa, etc.
* CWCB Application Deadlines-Aug. 1and February. CWCB received more funding for water implementation planning. Multi-purpose projects tend to score high/more competitive within Water Plan grant funding.

**10:20 – 10:50 Request for Proposal Examples & Technical Analysis Needs**

* Reviewed 1st Draft of Request for Proposal-Phase II watershed assessment. Contractor tasks focus on:
* reviewing existing data and information
* develop hydrological simulation tools
* characterize ecological health, integrity and ecosystem goods and services
* identify high-priority management issues and locations
* identify alternatives that meet planning goals & objectives
* Edit suggestions:
* Embed public feedback and participation into scope of work and tasks. Current targeted outreach and conceptual plan done by Steering Committee can be counted, but need to also assign money and time for at least 2 public meetings (one before analysis and one after).
* Tighten geographic focus to Upper San Juan Watershed. Including all 3 watersheds could limit analysis and capacity to highlight priority sites. Revise map in appendix if group agrees to tighten geographic scope.
* Add flows and boating days to analysis tasks.
* Collect Steering Committee feedback on RFP until June 28. Discuss advertising at July meeting.

**10:50 – 11:00 Conclusion/Next meeting**

* **July 12, 10 am – 12 pm**
* August public meeting: possibly talk about updates, conceptual plan, and bigger picture scope. Open up RFP scope of work to public feedback.