

Vallecito Creek/Pine River Workgroup
Meeting 5 Summary
June 22, 2011
Vallecito Community Center, Vallecito Lake

NOTE: The Web site for the River Protection Workgroup, including the Vallecito/Pine Workgroup, is <http://ocs.fortlewis.edu/riverprotection>.

Facilitator Tami Graham explained that this meeting was the 5th meeting for the Vallecito Creek/Pine River Workgroup and potentially the last. The fourth meeting took place on September 29th, 2010 at the Blue Spruce Campground at Vallecito Lake. The third meeting was a combined meeting of the Vallecito Creek/Pine River Workgroup and the San Juan Workgroup and took place in Pagosa Springs on August 26, 2010. The first two meetings took place in June and July 2010 and were held at the Bayfield library and Blue Spruce Campground, respectively. The last full meeting of the Vallecito Creek/Pine River Workgroup was on July 15, 2010 at Blue Spruce Campground.

Attending the June 22, 2011 meeting were Tami Graham (facilitator), Hal Pierce (PRID), Mike Canterbury (PRID), Marilyn McCord (Vallecito Service League), Cam Hooley (FS/BLM), Dan Randolph (SJCA), Jean Taylor, community member, Chuck Wanner, Steve Fearn, John Taylor and Bruce Whitehead (all members of the RPW Steering Committee).

Expectation of meeting: Following introductions, Tami presented that the goal of this meeting was to continue to orient interested stakeholders in the RPW process, to discuss any remaining questions regarding values on the Vallecito Creek and Pine River, gain a common understanding of key information, develop any recommendations and/or action plans and identify any potential areas for the regional discussion.

Brief overview of RPW process: Contributions came from all present members of the RPW Steering Committee.

Brief review of progress of Vallecito/Pine work group: Tami reported on the progress made during the 4 previous Vallecito/Pine work group meetings. In addition, Tami reported additional outreach activities conducted this past fall and winter, including a presentation by Steering Committee members to the Hinsdale County BOCC (a small portion of the focus area of this work group is in Hinsdale County), an email survey sent out to the complete stakeholder list for Vallecito/Pine (done to try to solicit additional comments, as attendance at the previous meetings has been very low), and a presentation to the Vallecito Service League meeting by Tami and Chuck Wanner.

Brief review of previously identified values and information sheet: As this is the 5th meeting of this work group, a brief review was made of both the previously identified values and information sheet. No additional information or edits were suggested by the group.

Current Protections: A discussion around the current protections in place (as identified in the Information Sheet) took place and the question was asked if the group felt that these protections were sufficient, given the identified values. A discussion ensued regarding the pro's and con's of a potential Wild & Scenic designation on these two

stream segments, including the possible benefit as an economic driver through increased tourism. It was agreed that the current wilderness designation provides enough of a draw for recreationalists and that W & S designation would not add significantly to that. The group concurred that with the majority of the focus area being already within designated wilderness, that protections were indeed sufficient. There was also a concern expressed around W & S designation and its potential impact on future water storage or use. It was also concurred by the group that the low attendance by stakeholders at the previous and current meetings was likely due to the perception that the current protections in place were sufficient to protect the USFS-identified ORV's (Outstandingly Remarkable Values). The consensus of this group was that indeed, wilderness designation does provide enough protection of the ORV's identified in these two segments.

Items for regional discussion: It was suggested that the USFS draft plan stating suitability designation for Wild & Scenic on the Upper Pine be maintained. Discussion topics included the possible resurrection of Emerald Lakes expansion as a reason to maintain suitability, although concerns regarding potential impacts on water rights arose as a potential concern related to designation or management for suitability. It was agreed that this topic would be discussed as part of the larger basin-wide discussion process.

Next steps: The facilitator will draft minutes from this meeting and email to the stakeholders list, as well as post on the website. A draft report will be sent to the participants of this meeting. Upon approval, the report will be finalized and distributed to the entire stakeholders list and posted on the website.

Minutes prepared by Tami Graham, facilitator