

**River Network Stream Management Planning Workshop Notes**  
**October 8, 2018 10am-3pm**  
**Westin Riverfront Resort, Avon, CO**

I. **Welcome and Introductions:** Nicole Seltzer, River Network

- Here today to discuss what's working and what's not working in SMP
- River Network finishing second year of helping to launch SMPs in CO.
- Hope to continue this work into 2020. Proposals and funding streams in the works to make this happen.

II. **Updates to CWCB Funding and Evolution of SMPs,** Chris Sturm, CWCB

- Please use SMP guidance document before, during, after process and keep track of your documents. Do not ask Chris for copy of your past application, scope of work etc.
- Chris hears that processes are not involving ag stakeholders in SMPs, but he's seen good examples of this too. He'd like to see more involvement of recreation groups
- SMPs are social and science based process. Building a stakeholder group takes a lot of energy. Doing so contributes to good science.
- Chris is seeing people putting hydrology together very well, as well as managed hydrology, which is important when dealing with low flows. But make sure you are including work on how the river is administered.
- Funding was \$250,000 in 2008, now \$5 million with \$5 million in additional match. Program is very well funded.
- In grant applications, people are identifying stakeholders but they are not identifying what stakeholders are doing, how they are involved. Be clear on the roles of your stakeholders.
- Q: Will CWCB "accept" SMPs funded by other agencies? If, for example, City of Aspen, eg, (did not use CWCB funding) came to CWCB for implementation funding, what is the result? CWCB does not "accept" SMPs, they are non-regulatory. It is more important that major stakeholders accept the SMPs. If the City of Aspen came forward with an SMP that included a robust stakeholder group, then this is a compelling reason to have implementation funding.
- Q: Does CWCB have conversations with Division of Water Resources about their involvement in SMPs? A: Chris has had conversations, and tries to revisit with them as much as he can. Other agencies too: CPW very interested in SMP process. They now realize their best strategy is to get involved locally. Chris has map of CPW biologists, and they want their biologists to be involved at a local level. CPW interested in "common metrics" for biological assessments. Chris sees that there are common variables, and some common methodologies (methodologies dependent on scale). CPW has technical value to add to SMP processes.

III. **Assessment Methodology Scoping Strategies,** Seth Mason, Lotic Hydrological and Jen Shanahan, City of Ft. Collins

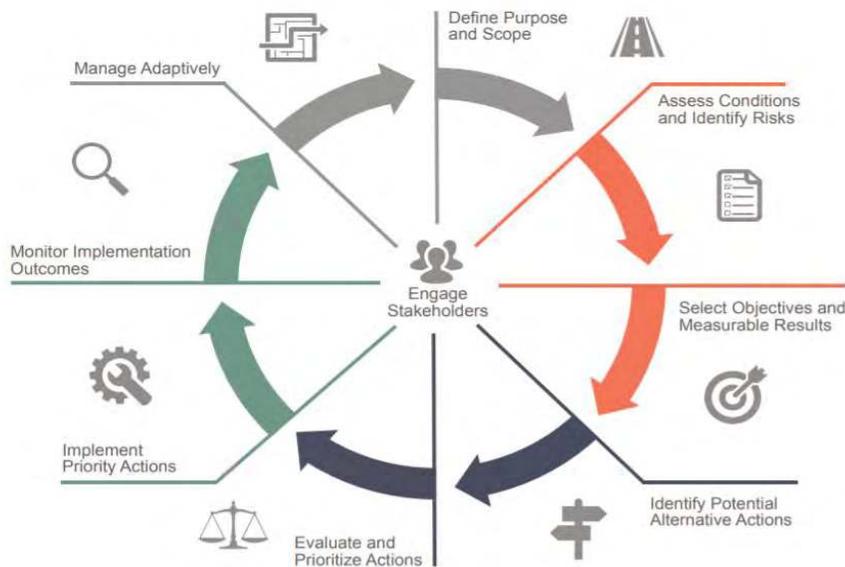


FIGURE 3. MODIFICATION OF THE RATIONAL PLANNING MODEL (TAYLOR, 1998) TO ACCOMMODATE THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF INTEGRATED WATER MANAGEMENT PLANNING ON COLORADO STREAMS AND RIVERS. MANY PLANNING EFFORTS WILL END WITH AN EFFORT TO EVALUATE AND PRIORITIZE MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES, WHILE SOME WILL GO ON TO IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR OUTCOMES OF SPECIFIC ACTIONS.

- Scoping assessment methodologies for SMPs: 3 themes to keep in mind
  - Identifying types of products and applications of your assessment
  - Methods-range of approaches, data types, sources, etc.
  - Linking science assessment with stakeholder questions and real life applications

- Best practices depend on local

relevance

- At the beginning, think about the outputs, and where you want to be at the end
- Methods selected need to reflect original purpose and scope
- Methods drives planning outcomes and recommendations

Why do you need an assessment within SMP?

- Required in grant guidance
- Need to understand baseline (needed for measuring progress/monitoring)
- Baseline helps to identify priority areas/issues
- Assessments help take anecdotal truths and adds quantitative evidence
- Assessment plays important part in bringing stakeholders together. This assessment provides greater detail, and describes the process, brings stakeholders together.
- Assessment is important, just like studying history is important.

Methods selection influenced by:

- Types of broad questions you may try to answer
  - Potential for future change in water development projects
  - Flooding concerns around town (infrastructure and irrigation structure), and sedimentation in the dam.
  - SMP process provided opportunity to dive into perturbations that were previously identified in a watershed plan
  - Environmental issues impacting local economies and fisheries
- Geographic scales and time periods
  - Make sure you are transparent to stakeholder group what methods will produce what outcomes. There may be tradeoffs that you may need to make.

- Products and deliverables, audiences
  - Being in the nexus of stakeholders and technical team. Make sure messages about methods and outcomes are clear.

IV. **Case Studies Illustrating Common SMP Challenges**, Lindsay Murdoch, Cross-Watershed Network

- Surveys sent out to those involved in SMPs elucidated 3 themes

**Case Study 1: Involving Producers in SMP efforts**

**Upper Gunnison**

**Frank Kugel, Julie Nania, Ashley Bembenek**

- Environmental flows were early consideration. When met with UGRWCD Board, the ag. community “slapped us around a little bit”. There was some push back. This push back is important and helped them realize they need to include ag community more.
- Upper Gunnison (upstream of Blue Mesa Res). The Basin was so large and diverse, they broke into smaller basins. Lots of outreach to these basins.
- Producers hard to bring to table, tremendously busy most of the year. Difficult to get producers to meetings. Evening meetings seemed to work better. But when this was difficult, individual meetings with producers, work better.
- One to one communication at their location, and their convenience was best opportunity to engage Ag.
- Worked with Board members to outreach and involve Ag.
- Worked to solicit feedback about what kind of information and what kinds of projects would be important.
- Stakeholder outreach: 400 hours on outreach component last year, for both Ag and other stakeholders.
- Targeted outreach, 1:1 meetings, and being flexible have been very important
- Existing users should be included in process.
- Early on, it was known that Ag users wanted methods to reflect R2Cross, because it relates to water rights system.
- Survey sent to recreation
- Taking advantage of small community, getting face time all over town
- Benefitted with good contact with local CPW biologist to assist with baseline fisheries data
- Also used data from other watershed groups and health department
- Think about how is best to convey scientific information. Fit information to the audience.

**Middle Colorado**

**Laurie Rink and Liz Chandler**

- As of today, things are working very well. The combined effort, however was unplanned.
- Process started by looking at the State’s program, MCWC stepped up to take up enviro and rec side of the planning. In proposal, there was a heavy-duty stakeholder process. Proposal was advanced, and there was funding awarded.

- The Conservation District stepped up to take on consumptive use. When they first stepped up it was adversarial rather than complementary.
- Ag. producers have diverse interests. Each entity of agriculture has different needs. Ag. do see threat of taking away water rights.
- Laurie and Liz have worked to make the efforts transparent and complementary. There are different goals, but does not mean they are opponents. Both honor each other's opinions. This Foundational trust has been important
- Could we have done this differently? Upper Gunnison model perhaps is good model-taking a couple years with outreaching and starting conversations. However, currently there is an accelerated process, with funding allocated.
- Perhaps not as ideal as it could have been, but now on the middle Co, at least ag. is at the table.
- Shared value of river of lifeblood as community has been valuable in bringing people together.
- Recommendation of a question to ask. How can this SMP/IWMP improve our local economy and preserve ag, recreational economy, etc.. in our community? Asking this question can perhaps bring more people to the table. Perhaps a SMP could help bring back the local economy. Presenting SMPs as an opportunity.
- Ag. needs to be looking creatively about how to sustain into future.
- Hundreds of hours of relationship building to build stakeholder groups. Has CWCB considered a funding pool for this. CWCB has considered this. Capacity building is in the Water Plan (Chapter.1). One SMP has received funding for this. A good outcome: building stakeholder group, and conducting assessments. CWCB also been considering demonstration projects, to get people out on the ground. An example could be a diversion reconstruction project, or volunteer riparian restoration projects.

## **Case Study 2- Designing an outcome-driven stakeholder process**

### **Nicole Seltzer (Examples from Yampa)**

- How can we design stakeholder processes that result in actionable input for SMPs?
  - Instead of 1 community meeting, go to the people: local meetings of stakeholders, water conservation board meetings, etc.
  - Rather than coming into processes with rigid outcomes in mind, come into the process with flexibility and openness. Think about how to build in flexibility into the scope of work, leaving room for stakeholder group to have input.
  - Put together advisory committee (7-10 people). Encourage and expect each member to actively seek input from other stakeholder groups that they represent.
  - It is more expensive to do it this way, but outcomes will be more reflective of the river and community. There is not a "regulatory hammer" enforcing stream flows for environmental needs. (Except for some NEPA processes). Because these are collaborative processes, important for stakeholder engagement.
- In Steamboat Springs (city was lead on SMP), a 9 mile SMP that took 18 months. There were advisory meetings, individual stakeholder meetings, 2 community workshop (typical open house). This kind of engagement went fairly smoothly.

- At the first community meeting there was “dot voting”. Asking what kind of opportunities they support during the process. From land use and planning, to education and outreach, to stream and riparian restoration.
- Second meeting had “Yampa Bucks” where people could vote on specific actions with their money. Water contracts with UYWCD and riparian restoration were top 2 categories people put their money.

### **Holly Loff (Examples from Eagle)**

- [Eagle River community water plan graphic](#) lays out our schedule of stakeholder versus community meetings and decision points.
- Attempt to get in front of MOU contract for East Slope water right. Front Range, and West Slope water interests were all brought together before funding was applied for to agree to Scope of Work. They were concerned that there was not trust, and people were not communicating where their concerns lie.
- So, to follow up, there were conference calls with individual stakeholders and the facilitator. Minutes were being taken, but comments were anonymous. These 6 phone calls were compiled and shared with the larger group. This was a strong starting point.
- Through first meeting, community engagement, was not identified as discrete goal in Scope of Work. It was important to realize that some people did not realize Eastern Slope had influence over Western Slope water.
- Eagle watershed is divided to up valley and down valley. In the future, up valley and down valley meetings, as well as a meeting in Spanish.
- Before community meetings, they will meet with town councils, county commissioners, Eagle County Conservation Districts, etc. Letting them know what is going on with the SMP, and let them know they should have a seat at the table in the stakeholder group.
- Stakeholder group is split into community engagement committee (what talking points are, how, when etc), also a technical group
- Discussion
  - In the Upper Gunnison, a theme: the role of data in bringing people together. All diversions were included in a basin-wide model. Using the model’s data to get in front of Ag. producers, is a good way to get face-time and open up a larger conversation about SMP.
  - Sometimes, there may be a public perception of “SMPs are just another study”. How do you make sure studies and assessments are useful? How do we convey usefulness to the public and stakeholders?
  - A: Issues mapping. Sitting down with stakeholders to address what issues stakeholders want addressed. Challenging people to then think of solutions. Options document, an interim tool to consolidate challenges and potential solutions. Stakeholders will help select solution. Also, encourage people to apply through other funding sources for project.
  - A: Pilot project. What are some pilot demonstration projects we can do right now? Also, in community meetings, questions posed to producers: “How does Ag. promote rec. And enviro. Flows?”

### **Case Study 3- Geographic Scales and Phasing**

#### **Scott Schreiber (Examples from South Platte)**

- Biological and ecological benefits from Chatfield Reallocation Pool Releases
- How can you benefit from increased flows during times of need?
- Total project cost: \$45,000 (TU, CWCB, In-Kind)
- It's ok to start small, gain momentum, and phase SMPs
- Timing was key, the reservoir to be filled in 2020
- Potential challenge: change in leadership, how do you continue momentum when it's a small volunteer effort?
- Include multi-users: recreation, enviro, municipal water, downstream water users, agencies.
- How are the projects that we are doing right now positively impacting streams? SMPs allow for a way to gauge this.
- Next step: Repot is in draft form, and feedback and more stakeholder involvement in the future. Addressing questions of future host for the SMP, such as CPW? What other consultants are needed, and how do to pay for this?
- A benefit of this effort is that it can feed good scientific advice to both the roundtable, and Chatfield advisory committee.

#### **V. World Café**

The group then broke into three rotating tables to discuss the following topics. Notes from all three sessions are below.

##### **Breakout 1: Involving Producers in SMP Efforts**

- *Challenge: Articulating the benefit of participating in an SMP project to members of the agricultural community (they will not attend meetings unless the purpose/incentive is clear). Solutions/tactics include:*
  - SMPs pave the way for future money to implement projects like diversion reconstructions
    - Note: not every producer will be excited about this project in particular, which has the potential to negatively impact groundwater availability/ditch-aquifer recharge
  - SMPs provide data that can be used later for drought contingency planning and reserve allocation
  - There are a number of opportunities for “win-win” projects, including:
    - Addressing dry-up points (these can impact producers ability to access their water rights)
    - Stabilizing banks (reducing property loss)
    - Minimizing channelization
    - Addressing storage issues
    - Headgate and diversion efficiency projects can be paired with fish passage
  - Fund pilot projects showcasing multiple benefits - hands-on

- Articulate that SMPs are intended to benefit “our community” “our river” “our economy” - this is not an us-vs-them
    - Promote a multiple-use culture among all stakeholders
    - Economic benefits are common good
  - Ag, Rec, & Env can be aligned on minimizing “buy&dry” and trans-basin projects
- *Challenge: Identifying concerns of Ag community to build into SMP goals*
  - Ex. the Sawatch Creek project on the Rio Grande SMP is entirely in response to Ag enthusiasm
  - Host meetings to collect producer concerns
  - Ag feels misunderstood by rec/ev community. Find local representatives (such as conservation districts) to speak on behalf of community/predict needs
- *Challenge: Compensation for Participation: Producers are not paid to attend meetings, like many other stakeholders*
  - Set up fund so producer communities can hire local representatives to attend meetings (Gunnison tried this, but it was hard to nail down one representative)
  - Ex. Aspen paid attorney fees to have attorney attend meetings
- *Challenge: Fear of SMP process (“take our water”, “if you’re not at the table, you’re on the menu”, producer-level impacts)*
  - Articulate prior appropriation - there are no takings on the table
  - Ag is feeling the wave of buy-and-dry
  - Organize multi-use tours
  - Planners cannot get bogged down by some level on negativity - individuals may be impacted by some projects and we can’t expect to please every producer
  - Engage Ag working at the regional level, with connections to the local community - they will have a better sense of current trends

## **Breakout 2: Methods for Outcome-based Stakeholder Process**

- Methods that resonated strongly throughout all three groups:
  - Use a facilitator to help with issue/solution prioritization
  - Give people something to start with like values or issues-mapping (use maps to visualize concerns)
  - \*Define expectations of stakeholders, like:
    - Going out and seeking input from broader community
    - Expect them to come back to leadership with input
  - \*What authority do your stakeholders have? Are their recommendations set in stone? What is the decision-making process?
- Other ideas put forward:

- Opportunities in the process for public participation, but some meetings should be invite only
  - Lean on local experts that have trust
  - Develop goals for the stakeholder process (ex. Maintain existing uses in face of future change)
  - Know your end/interim products first, then decide what input is needed
  - Have a schedule/end point and circle back with results
  - “User group” conference calls with like-minded people to minimize early conflict
  - Never waste a good crisis (before or during) - you can start on a topic of immediate interest and go from there
  - Use early surveys to map issue areas but provide background info too
  - Make rules for your meetings
  - Be respectful of local culture/customs and be respectful of them or involve someone of high reputation
  - Define involvement/time-expectations early
- Challenges/things that are hard:
  - Outliers can injure the majority consensus
  - Tough to define what you need at the front end
  - Getting people to show up
  - There are long processes - hard to maintain involvement
  - Getting to consensus
  - “River health” means different things to different people
  - Integrating the early feedback into your methods
  - Defining values is “squishy”
  - Factors outside your control: existing stakeholder priorities, busy lives, off-topic controversies influence opinions
  - Re: crisis - sometimes in means they cannot participate. And it can cause you to chase thinking unrelated.
- **Breakout 3: Phasing**
  - Entire IWMP/SMP process lends itself to a phased approach in some way. Different entities found different natural breaks
  - Most groups phased geographically - by sub-basin or by river reach
    - Different levels of stakeholder involvement/existing data for each geographic break
    - Early phases inform later phases (and make next phases more efficient/cost-effective)
    - Phasing by sub-basin can lead to a heavy workload at times where some aspect of all basins is occurring simultaneously
    - Some reach breaks were defined by water user interests (big picture)
  - Poudre separated “reasonable but aspirational” targets (political) from scientific assessments

- Groups often phased by stakeholder process
  - used phases of stakeholder involvement: Stakeholder input → scientific assessments → back to stakeholders
- Grand County plan invoked “Learning by doing” - monitoring and adaptive management phases are important to identify at start
- “Data mining” phase before SMP development is useful
- Phasing by time when it makes sense for a particular situation
  - Capacity-wise, it’s sometimes easier to do it piecemeal
- Other types of phasing:
  - Studies/research questions
  - Transferring leadership
  - Other natural transition points

VI. **SMP Resource Library Preview**, Kim Lennberg, Alba Watershed Consulting

- CWCB funding this effort to put together online resources for SMP
- Website predicted phase launch Winter 2018/19
- Host site TBD. Any interest or ideas?
  - Q: Could this resource capture the power and potential of SMP in broad ways? Could this be a place where funders can find this great SMP initiative?
  - Q: SMP process is spin off of Water Plan. Could this be hosted on Basin Roundtable websites? Links to BIP, so natural fit.
  - Q: Could this be a part of the Co Water Plan website?
- Goals include: Enlarge coalitions interested in undertaking SMP, advance knowledge
- Target Audience: Local watershed coalitions or other NGOs, state government agencies, CWCB, municipalities, foundations etc..
- Content: general background, example docs, existing SMP contents and status, lessons learned, best practices, technical information (assessment methodologies)
- Organization: CO Basin Roundtable commissioned IWMP Framework developed by Lotic and Colorado Mesa University Water Center. Website organized to reflect framework
  - Pages will consist of: SMP 101, current and completed SMPs (with interactive map and status), SMP nuts and bolts (explanation of phase, methodologies, and lessons learned)
- Example Pages. If you have feedback on website draft pages, please give it to Kim.
- Fact sheets about each SMP/IWMP will be collected by Lindsay in near future to be hosted on website.
- “Get Started” button to lead into info about starting a SMP, as well as questions to initially address.
- Resources to guide decision-making SMP assessments
- This site helps can help be better stewards of public money. Important questions to eventually ask of website: are the example RFPs helpful? How can we help our consultants better meet our needs?

- We also need to address what makes a SMP? CWCB funding? Other? Need to think on this more.
- What are “locally prioritized streams”? This is a good question to ask at conference panel.
- In the future, Kim may be reaching out about some resources to be incorporated into SMP website.

## **VII. What else do SMP leads need to be effective?**

- Better cooperation and information from water commissioners by DWR making SMPs a priority to assist
  - Cooperation from Division of Water Resources. CWCB and DWR have had some conversations about this. The point is, cooperation with Ag./producers will be difficult unless there is progress and better collaboration here. One Basin has heard about water commissioner lack of support in another Basin, which makes people scared and reluctant in other Basins.
  - On the Crystal, CWCB/private funder funded gauges on river, that could be used to measure effective implementation of some strategies. Though that seemed like a good idea, DWR did not acknowledge that that data exists. What ways can we make DWR comfortable with using if not hosting data that was not collected with their gauges. This data can be QA/QCed. This is relevant question because, how will we collect data and cross this divide with DWR.
  - Helpful in the Basins, for these conversations to be started at State level, not Basin level. This gives Basin more permission to begin this conversation. Though this is unfortunate, it is the truth. People are hesitant to start the conversation with Division Engineer.
- Provide a definition of “locally prioritized streams”. People are hesitant to approach a SMP because they are unsure what prioritized means. If there should be some process the BRTs are following, we don’t know about it. But maybe that is ok, and local prioritization simply means what bubbles up?
- Helpful resource would be answer to what future funding looks like, after the SMP process. Will the state invest, to bring SMPs to next level? What if we start this process and the money goes away to support our efforts? It will be for naught.
- A simple fact sheet that explains SMPs generally
- The resources that River Network provided were invaluable. The moral support for River Network, and “hand-holding” was critical.
- It is beneficial when everyone in the room can now be an expert. We need more of these peer-peer convenings!
  - Another example: quarterly conference calls to connect and share lessons.
  - What about the timing? Before the grants are due with enough time to answer last minute about the grants?
  - What about a mentorship scenario? Can people take it upon themselves to find mentors! And keep conversation going...
- What does appropriate Basin Roundtable involvement look like?
  - About half the room working with the Basin Roundtables on their SMPs.

- It would be great to have someone in Roundtable to implement Basin Implementation Plan. Some Basins have hired someone to do this, some have not.
- Preliminary prioritization of streams in Roundtable committee. The Rio Grande Roundtable did prioritize scope and prioritize river stretches, which was helpful.
- For the Yampa, very important to incorporate BIP and roundtable, by solving own problems. Acknowledge that some Basins are planning and don't necessarily need another plan to plan, if they are already planning!
- How can we mobilize additional private funding?
  - Currently, private funders matching funds are small pool. How to engage and excite private funders for match?
  - There is a sustainable funding team(s) for CO Water Plan including: IBCC and Walton Family Foundation with Keystone Institute. Western Resource Advocates working on NGO side of this. Eventually these groups will be coming together to come up with coordinated strategy to fund CO Water Plan.
  - In the Yampa Basin, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is conducting convo around Water Fund, which is a TNC global fund. TNC is working on this in the Yampa. They are working on \$1 million starter pot for enviro projects around water. Preliminary talks with TNC in the Rio Grande Basin, as well.
  - Never overlook local match. Upper Gunnison has lots of local money invested in their plan. Also in Pitkin County, The Healthy Rivers and Streams Fund is collected and distributed by a Board (Fund comes from ~.01% sales tax)