



Stream Management Planning Workshop
October 7th, 2019
Westin Riverfront Resort Ballroom, Avon, CO

Key Takeaways

In October 2019, River Network gathered 30 stream/integrated water management plan leaders before the Sustaining Colorado Watersheds Conference. The group spent the day discussing:

I. Funding Sources

SMPs from throughout the state are getting creative to fund their planning and implementation efforts. We asked each person to give us one funding source that others might consider. Ideas included stakeholders, water districts, conservation districts, local governments, foundations (local, community, regional), state/federal sources (e.g., Bureau of Reclamation Salinity and WaterSMART) and much more. See the full list at the SMP Resource Guide: [Ensuring Adequate Funds.](#)

II. Engaging Stakeholders

Community Engagement Strategies

Presenter: Holly Loff, Eagle River Watershed Council

- After initial disappointing turnout at community events, the Eagle River Community Water Plan developed a novel approach to gain input from the broader community. *Instead of making people come to them, they went to the people.*
- Created posters to collect feedback via a voting technique from community members at outreach events. This technique brought people in to converse/get educated on the process and provided valuable information to SMP leaders.

How to Get Farmers & Ranchers to Love You (and Your Project)

Presenters: Marilyn Bay Drake, Prairie Public Relations & Greg Peterson, Colorado Ag. Water Alliance (CAWA)

- There are win-win opportunities when farmers work with communities on SMPs
- Cattleman's survey of approximately 300 ranchers showed that 88% would be interested in being involved in an SMP
- Help farmers/ranchers (and communities) understand what's at stake; find the points of connection; take time to build relationships and learn about farming/ranching in your community
- Strive to speak the same language; provide definitions for terminology and avoid jargon
- Be thoughtful of timing of meetings (avoid busy times of year like calving and haying)

- Think about what producers want from SMPs/what communities can provide: security, infrastructure upgrades/improvements, opportunity for communication/to have a voice
- Be creative – fill needs (e.g., West Slope Conservation Center is providing habitat enhancement work as a service to landowners required to do salinity mitigation)

Additional Resources: [Engage Stakeholders](#)
[Gather Community Input](#)
[Engage Agricultural Water Users](#)

III. CWCB Perspective on Stream Management Planning

Presenter: Chris Sturm, Colorado Water Conservation Board

- Start thinking about funding your SMP before its complete; make sure your plan is actionable.
- Focus on what needs to be fixed AND what needs to be protected.
- Connect with local planners – know what their plans are.
- Consider all aspects/impacts of your recommendations (i.e., there can be unintended environmental impacts from a recreation project).

IV. Assessment Methodologies

Methods for Assessing Flow & What to Do in a Data-Poor Environment

Presenters: Scott Schreiber and Adam Kremers, Wright Water Engineers

- There are strengths and challenges to using StateMod to assess flow and identify flow impaired reaches, including that the model is monthly, aggregates smaller structures and amounts, and has data gaps/inaccuracies.
- Approaches for supplementing/verifying/updating data used in the model include collecting your own data, using [StreamStats](#), talking with locals to understand big controlling mechanisms (reservoirs, municipalities), and State Engineer Office funds for flow measurement.

Additional Resources: [Assess Conditions – Flow Regime](#)

Assessing Irrigation Infrastructure: Considerations and Approaches

Presenters: Luke Gingerich, J-U-B ENGINEERS, Inc. & Daniel Boyes and Emma Reesor, Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project

- Consider different interests and agricultural operations; producers are business-oriented (i.e., concerned about stream health, but decision-making process is risk/revenue/cash flow oriented).
- Think big-picture about the assessment – value add to the agricultural community; instill confidence that the value of the water right and the infrastructure will be valued/protected; recognize benefits of work now and potential long-term impacts (positive and negative).

- What is needed to increase agricultural productivity/profitability? Where is there a nexus with other needs/benefits? Can we use infrastructure assessments as a process to discover multiple benefit?
- Building relationships with landowners can provide benefit beyond the planning/assessment – can lead to positive multi-benefit projects; work with people who have connections with landowners (water commissioners, conservation districts, etc.)
- Process includes lots of qualitative assessment; includes diversion structure condition, channel migration impacts on the structure, failure occurrences of the structure (e.g., big water years), and opportunities for multiple benefit projects (e.g., boating area).
- Though data is mostly publicly available, be aware of privacy concerns/perception and be thoughtful of how data is presented.

Additional Resources: [Evaluating Consumptive Water Use through Diversion Infrastructure Assessments](#)

Baseline Conditions – How to Set a Standard Benchmark to Compare Data Against in the Watershed

- One task of an SMP is to organize data based on current conditions into a framework and use that to compare it to a baseline. There are several ways to define baseline:
 - COSHAF (Colorado Stream Health Assessment Framework) provides detailed definitions of different ‘grades’ for each stream health variable compared against natural reference conditions. A standard benchmark is the key to consistency within and among different COSHAF scores, assessments, and evaluators, but may be challenging to apply to a reach scale.
 - COSHAF is a rigorous technical tool that is extremely useful for identifying stressors, but may need to be adapted if the desire is to use it as a communications tool (e.g., community may be concerned with a low grade for a particular reach or variable when nothing can be done to change that grade)
 - Left Hand Watershed Center is utilizing an adaptive management process to look at existing, past, and potential future conditions. They are using a landscape architect to help visualize each scenario in a way that the public can respond to.
 - Rio Grande has built their system from the ground-up, utilizing technical experts to combine assessments and look for common ground.
 - Each community should decide which type of tool is the best fit for them.

Additional Resources: [Select Assessment Framework](#)

Full notes from the session can be found [here](#).