
Troubleshooting Common Challenges

September 29th, 2020 | 10:00 – 11:30am

Participants: Nicole Seltzer, Stacy Beaugh, Kim Lennberg, Mikhaela Mullins, Kelly Romero-Heaney, Sean Cronin, Jen Shanahan, April Long, Daniel Boyes, Dan Omasta, Callie Hendrickson, Natalie Allio, Ashley Giles, John Semich, Peggy Bailey, Lindsey Marlow, Tristian Nielsen, Gary Swanson, Buffy Lenth, Chris Sturm, Hally Strevey, Heather Lewin, Phil Brink, Erika Donaghy, Gretchen Rank

This “fishbowl” workshop took on a very conversational style. Below are some highlights, but viewing the recorded Zoom meeting is encouraged for more detailed information.

Challenge #1: My SMP has generated a massive amount of data and information. What are the best ways to present complicated environmental information to non-technical people?

Dan Omasta presented some challenges related to assembling and disseminating complex information for the Blue River IWMP. Most of the responses and ensuing conversation centered around use and implementation of the FACStream methodology and how it worked for the different groups.

Jen Shanahan said FACStream worked well for the Poudre River Report Card ([see Jen's slides/data dissemination examples here](#)). They were able to adapt this methodology to their needs, customize the variables and metrics so that they were very specific to the Poudre, and organize the variables around the scale of their influence. Defining the scoring criteria early in the process and getting them approved by City Council separated science from politics. Their global reference description mostly focused on maximizing river function rather than comparing to a native/pristine condition.

Sean Cronin used FACStream as an organizing assessment methodology for the St Vrain and Left Hand SMP, but steered away from letter grades because he they were too risky and oversimplified the science.

April Long also used FACStream in the Roaring Fork. She liked the table/grid of scores produced for her SMP. The scores were listed by river reach and variable, and clearly showed where there were problems/opportunities, where things were in good shape, and where the data gaps were. See an example of April's table [here](#).

Challenge #2: I don't know if it's better to have an SMP that covers the entire watershed, or focuses only on a small reach. How do I determine the geographic scope?

Natalie Allio described her uncertainty in determining the scale of her SMP in the Upper Arkansas, which is currently in the pre-planning stages. The original focus was a one-mile section of the South Arkansas as it enters the main stem, but current conversations with new

stakeholders who may want to be involved stemming from the Envision Chaffee County project are prompting conversations about significantly expanding the geographic scope of the project.

Daniel Boyes discussed his SMPs on the Rio Grande River, Conejos River, and Saguache Creek, encompassing about 340 river miles. He made the following points:

- You can scale your approach and level of data collection based on your selected geographic extent
- Larger scale studies bring more stakeholders to the table
- It's critical to think about your capacity as the lead organization, including the potential/anticipated budget/funding
- Scope should come from stakeholder group, but be careful of rabbit holes!
- Large scale of project allowed for beginning to understand the stressors within the larger system
- One lesson learned from this process was that a phased approach might be the way to go rather than trying to accomplish everything in one effort

Kelly Romero-Heaney talked about her City of Steamboat Springs SMP on an 11-mile stretch of the Yampa River through town. Her main takeaways:

- Reach was small but projects move up into the watershed
- One-on-one engagement was important for scoping the scale of the project
- This SMP was one of the first completed, so it was a "pilot" or "experiment" which allowed them to test approaches and methodologies on a smaller scale. The City of Steamboat SMP laid the groundwork for the Yampa Basin IWMP, a much larger effort currently underway for the entire Yampa Basin
- Keeping within a jurisdictional boundary (e.g., City, County) may make the SMP more implementable and can be a way to define geographic extent
- Think about who "owns" the SMP – that may influence its implementation and outcomes