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## 2022 Updates and R2 Cross for Flow Targets

Join River Network, Colorado Water Conservation Board, and your fellow SMP/IWMP leads to learn more about updates to the Colorado Water Plan and the accomplishments of SMPs over the past five years. During this call we'll also continue the conversation with Seth Mason, Lotic Hydrological, about how to use R2 Cross to help set flow targets. You can watch Seth's presentation from our fall workshop about flow targets [here](#).

- Learn more about the updates to the Colorado Water Plan.
- Learn about the accomplishments of SMPs over the past five years and where we envision SMPs going.
- How to use R2 Cross to make instream flow recommendations.
- Connection, learning, and problem-solving with your peers.
- Continue to build a community of practice among SMP leaders, developing relationships and learning to collectively enhance work on SMP/IWMPs throughout the state.

### **AGENDA**

**10:00 – 10:15 a.m. Welcome and Introductions**  
Mikhaela Mullins, River Network

**10:15 – 10:30am Water Plan Updates**  
Colorado Water Conservation Board

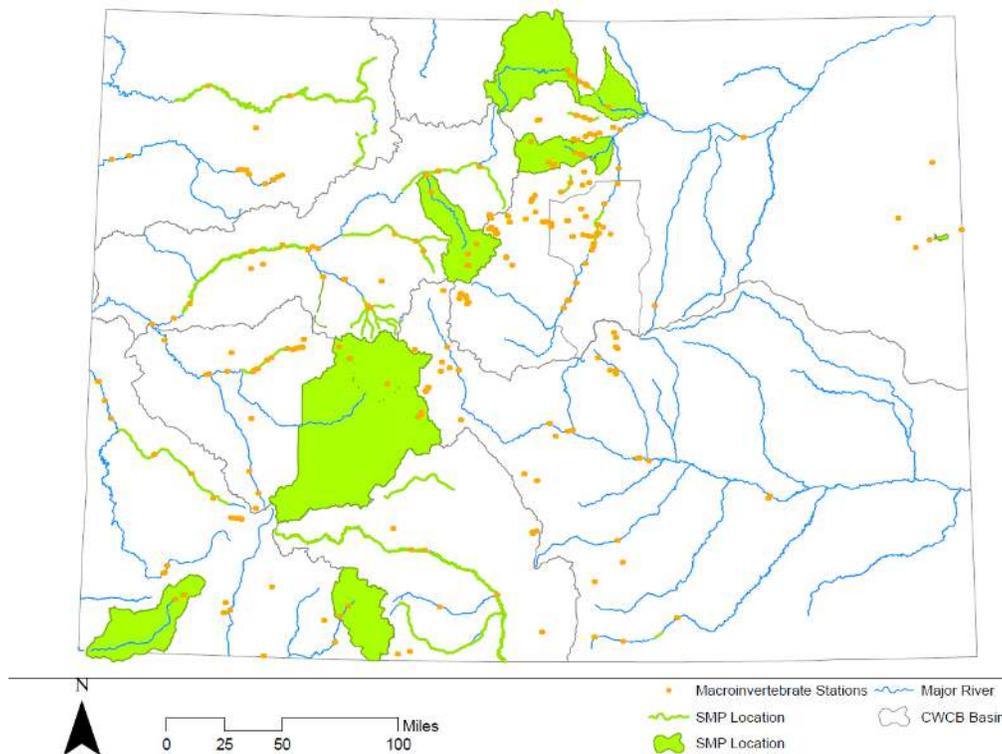
We'll be joined by CWCB staff to learn more about the recent updates to the [Colorado Water Plan](#).

Nicole introduced Russ Sands and reminded everyone that this SMP peer group can provide insights and input to influence the Colorado Water Plan (CWP). Russ gave a short presentation explaining the background and history of the CWP, as well as the schedule for the 2022 update (draft out for public comment on June 30, 2022 followed by 90 day public comment period ending on September 30, 2022). He let everyone know that the finalized BIPs are now online at [engagecwcb.org](http://engagecwcb.org). Russ asked the group for input on how YOU are implementing the CWP. He stressed that CWCB is trying to keep the Plan dynamic instead of having it be a static document that gets outdated quickly. He also emphasized that the CWP shines a light on the critical issues across the State, including SMPs and the environment, and reminded everyone that 5-6 times as much funding is available to address these as was prior to the CWP. The CWP is also being used as a strategic guiding document for CWCB. It lays out

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4 main buckets: cities (vibrant communities), farms (robust agriculture), streams (thriving watersheds), and people (resilient planning). Finally, Russ highlighted the focus area mapping tool that is available for folks to use.

Andrea Harbin Monahan informed the group of a focused state-wide effort that has been initiated by the CWCB to collect benthic macroinvertebrate community data and make it available for SMPs and other planning efforts. CWCB heeded the call that groups leading SMP efforts could use more data, and selected macroinvertebrate data because it can provide information about both water quality and aquatic habitat conditions. CWCB is working with River Watch to determine where existing benthic data collection sites overlap with SMP/IWMP efforts (see map below). Contact Andrea ([andrea.harbinmonahan@state.co.us](mailto:andrea.harbinmonahan@state.co.us)) for more information or to discuss data available for your watershed.



Steven Reeves then discussed a river health assessment guidance document/workbook that CWCB is developing with assistance from Brad Johnson that will support SMP/IWMP efforts in customizing river health assessments to work best for their local conditions. When completed, this tool will be circulated to SMPs at the beginning of their planning process.



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**10:30 – 10:45am**      **5-Year Memo Overview & Where SMPs Are Going**  
Nicole Seltzer, River Network

Nicole will share about the accomplishments that SMPs have achieved over the past five years and where we envision SMPs going. You can view the memo on the ColoradoSMP website [here](#).

Nicole gave a brief overview of the memo that River Network and CWCB recently released. She shared that we are working to quantify the impact of SMPs (both monetarily and by implementation projects that happen as a result of SMPs). Recommendations for the future of SMPs include: more baseline data collection, state-wide prioritization of SMP locations and support initiating the more difficult aspects of SMPs such as flows, and additional one-on-one support to new SMP efforts.

**10:45 – 11:00**      **Q&A About Updates**  
Stacy Beough, Strategic by Nature

Julie Knudson asked a question about how current SMP outcomes align with the original goals of SMPs determined by the state. Chris Sturm explained that SMPs have drifted all over the place in terms of what they cover and the recommendations that emerge, which makes sense because they are designed to reflect the interests of local stakeholders. However, the original purpose for SMPs and what differentiates them from other watershed plans is that they should identify environmental flow needs. These are tough conversations to have but should not be ignored. Flow needs vary based on objectives. The tool that Steven and Brad are working on will be able to help us have that conversation with our stakeholders.

**11:00 – 11:25am**      **R2 Cross Training**  
Seth Mason, Lotic Hydrological

Seth will provide a high-level overview of how to use [R2Cross](#), why it's a good methodology, and how to interpret the data.

Seth gave a [presentation](#) on the R2Cross methodology for setting flow thresholds as a continuation of the RN/CWCB October 2021 workshop in Avon. He stressed that R2Cross is just one of several threshold-setting methods, and threshold-setting methods are just one approach to relating flows to environmental or recreational needs. The presentation provided a good amount of detail about the basic assumptions of R2Cross, reach identification and transect selection, hydraulic modeling needs based on R2Cross field data,

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threshold setting methods based on modeling results, use of flow targets in the planning process, and the limitations of this tool.

Scott Schreiber reminded the group to be cognizant of existing ISFs when conducting R2Cross evaluations. He also asked Seth what he recommends for higher elevation step-pool systems that are not dominated by riffles. Seth replied that the assumptions that go along with R2Cross are not as applicable in high alpine step-pool systems, and that something like residual pool depth may be more reliable in those situations. He reiterated that selecting a methodology for setting flow targets is largely site-dependent.

April Long brought up the point that ISFs don't always address all issues on stream of interest, and wondered how often SMPs look at water quality issues. Several folks replied that their SMP is in fact considering water quality issues (many as they relate to the relationship between stream temperatures and flows).

**11:25 - 11:30 a.m. Wrap-Up/Adjourn**  
Mikhaela Mullins, River Network

**Additional Resources**

- Fall 2021 Flow Target workshop notes, slides, and recording can be found [here](#).
- [SMP Progress from 2016 - 2021 memo](#)
- Upcoming peer calls:
  - April 14<sup>th</sup>
  - August 18<sup>th</sup>