

HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

SMP 101 participant questions are labeled “Question”. Speaker responses to individual questions are listed below each question as “Answer”. In some cases, multiple speakers provided responses. In this case, answers will be listed as “Answer 1”, “Answer 2”, etc. Speaker’s names are listed in parentheses () after their responses. Speakers who provided responses include:

- Chris Sturm, Colorado Water Conservation Board
- Brian Murphy, River Network
- Nicole Seltzer, River Network
- Kim Lennberg, Alba Watershed Consulting

Q&A RESPONSES

Question: Once you have completed an SMP and have a list of projects, how do you keep communication flowing in your basin to make sure other entities not involved in the basin roundtable and SMP collaborative process are aware of projects that were identified in the SMP? For example, I just got a request from a non-profit group who wants to make a data hub for stream flow, soil moisture, etc., and they were completely unaware of the project that came out of our SMP for a “data dashboard”. What are good ideas for communication and collaborating so local NGO partners with similar missions, but not involved directly in the SMP process, don’t repeat each other’s work?

- Answer: It’s hard to keep the momentum going when switching from planning to implementation! One strategy is to make sure that people/orgs who were not involved in the planning process, but may intersect the implementation ideas, receive a copy of the final plan and nudge to review it for areas of collaboration going forward. This could be done broadly (like making sure the local paper or relevant email lists include info about it) or in a more targeted way (set up meetings to discuss intersections).

As implementation moves forward, I’ve seen some groups develop status reports on an annual basis (City of Steamboat does this for its SMP) or give semi-regular updates to the Basin Roundtable on progress as a way to keep the community informed. This would require setting some roles/responsibilities that everyone agrees to hold themselves accountable to, which is an important part of implementation. (Nicole)

Question: Is a full water accounting (amount of water in a basin minus water rights) a valid question to be answered by a SMP?

- Answer 1: It is not specifically excluded from SMP planning. Instead, it is up to the stakeholders to decide. (Chris)
- Answer 2: I would think that a water balance (water in minus water out/used) is a great informational tool for an SMP if your outcomes are related to the best way to strategically manage water supplies for certain benefits (like augmenting flows in the fall, for example). The accounting is only useful if it’s used to answer a question and/or lead you to ideas, but it’s certainly a relevant piece of information.

Question: How are small streams impacted by the plans?

- Answer: Depends on whether or not small streams are under the purview of the plan. (Chris)

Question: How do SMPs relate to drinking water?

- Answer 1: Most plans include river reaches that include municipal intakes. Water quality is a priority in some plans (e.g., Steamboat/Yampa SMP). (Chris)
- Answer 2: Source water protection could very well be a desired focus area for an SMP.

Question: How do the SMP's work together? Is there any opportunity to offer economy of scale?

- Answer 1: Economy of scale can be reached by using common templates – Colorado River Health Assessment Framework (CoRHAF), template scopes of work, and RFPs may help streamline costs. (Chris)
- Answer 2: The Rio Grande developed 3 SMPs in three different sub-basins at the same time, which absolutely benefited from economies of scale.

Question: How to best apply stream management planning to urban streams and tributaries.

- Answer: Depends on objectives - happy to discuss this with specific areas of concern. (Chris)

Question: Bidding on work

- Answer: SMPs identify potential projects that watershed coalitions typically prioritize before seeking funding to implement top priority projects. The coalition may choose to put a priority project out to bid for design and construction once funding is secured. Tracking the prioritized projects list from SMPs is an avenue to identify projects to bid on. (Brian)

Question: How can we best support communities who want to undertake these or similar planning efforts?

- Answer: Continue to support River Network/Peer Learning Community. (Chris)
- Answer: coloradosmp.org

Question: What are the best practices for maintaining and updating SMP's 10, 20, 30 yrs. after development?

- Answer: Implement priority projects identified in the plan, monitor for success based on the project objectives, adjust the priorities in the plan based on monitoring results, modify objectives in the plan based on social response to project implementation. (Chris)

Question: What additional data sources are there to support the plan?

- Answer: It depends on the planning goals and objectives. CWCB will fund stream assessments to collect watershed, corridor/riverscape, and reach scale data. River Network and CWCB recommend a data scan and gap analysis prior to starting any data collection efforts to determine the existing data available to support the planning effort. (Brian)

Question: Storage Options

- Answer: SMPs can consider a range of project options, including storage, depending on the objectives, potential actions, and strategies to maintain or improve flow regimes and other stream conditions and are informed by stakeholder concerns and priorities. (Brian)

Question: How does this differ from a master plan?

- Answer: Stream Management Plans use assessments to analyze holistic river health (fishery, ability to transport sediment, bank stability, riparian corridors, etc.) and recreation goals. Stakeholders primarily interested in stream health and recreational water needs, or those who aim to solve a specific environmental challenge but need data or assessments to inform their next steps and want to work collaboratively with stakeholders might find a stream management plan a better option than a master plan that tends to focus on capital improvement projects.

Because the water in a stream is dependent on a healthy watershed and compatible infrastructure, stream management plans, watershed plans, and master plans are complementary to each other. A stream management plan can be developed in advance of a watershed plan or master plan or vice versa.

Question: What are the recommended wildlife surveys associated with stream management?

- Answer: It depends on the scope of the SMP and the questions that stakeholders are interested in. Stream health assessments often evaluate the quality of riparian/wetland habitat, and some use wildlife surveys as a metric to assess habitat quality (e.g., fish surveys, bird surveys). (Kim)

Question: Have you done a cost benefit analysis of an SMP or SMP's overall?

- Answer: The amount of dollars invested in SMPs amounts to approximately 1% of the value of implementation projects that emerge from those SMPs, which is one way to illustrate the benefits of SMPs across the state. (Kim)