

NPS Alliance Meeting notes
17 March 2009, USDA Forest Service
9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Present:

Marcella Hutchinson	Holly Huyck	Tammy Allen
Tracy Yager	Joan Carlson	Jeff Crane
Loretta Lohman	Connie O’Neill [phone]	Robert Sakata
Greg Naugle	Ed Rumbold	Barb Horn
John Elliott	Steve Lundt	Troy Bauder [phone]
Rich Muzzy	Tommy John	Frank Riggle
	Dave Kanzer	

Stream Restoration monitoring

John Elliott, USGS, gave a presentation about the geomorphic response of streams to flooding after stream restoration. Streams do not remain static as structures and sediments move during high water conditions. We asked to have the presentation for posting and hope that it will become available. There is additional information at: <http://co.water.usgs.gov/projects/rcmap/>. When the study publication becomes available we will pass that information along.

Grant Proposals – I

Greg presented the results of the FY 2009 proposal cycle. He noted that the decisions were made assuming a flat budget for the year. It was Greg’s decision to step back on the eligibility of LID projects for NPS grants to ensure there are no permit compliance issues and to prepare more formal guidance about such projects. The line is clear that permitted activities cannot be funded by NPS grants. The AWARE project was scaled back because several of its tasks were dependent on the LID projects. \$25,000 was set aside for the mini-grant program. Although Clean Marinas was conditionally approved, it will most likely not receive funding this year due to the lack of funds. The Alliance evaluation became an integral part of the WQCD review of proposals as the spreadsheets generated by the Alliance evaluation were referred to during the Division reviews. The Division recommendations, as voted on by the Water Quality Control Commission, are at <http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/op/wqcc/Hearings/AAH/NPSprojects.pdf>.

Grant Proposals – II

Greg briefly reviewed the process used for the FY 2009 cycle—announcement of RFP in early September, mentoring at the Watersheds conference in early October, consultation day later in October, proposals due December 1. Alliance comments were collected until mid-January and at an open meeting. The Division performed its proposal review and formulated recommendations in February.

The mentoring at the Fall watershed conference was not well attended. The group thought that perhaps a formal time needs to be set aside for mentoring at the watershed conference. Mentoring could then be advertised as part of the conference program. There was also discussion regarding potential mentoring sessions during breakfast, with tables identified by topic.

Consultation day with the Alliance was worthwhile. An older method might work to improve consultation day—hand each Alliance and staff attending index cards so that comments on each proposal abstract can be written and compiled in real time. These can be collected at day's end and either handed to the proposer or summarized by someone for the Division and then transmitted to the proposer.

Another thing needed up front, if it can be obtained, is a sample State of Colorado contract included with the RFP. The contract cannot be changed by project managers and folks need to know right away, before putting in hours of work, what they will need to sign.

Targeted Outreach efforts for South Platte

The targeted outreach effort was time consuming but did effectively target some key areas in the Colorado/San Juan/Gunnison basins using the 303(d) list as a roadmap. The combination of face to face meetings combined with web input and email provided a good synergy. The resulting matrix was a useful product that could be periodically updated as new information becomes available. It did provide a road map for capacity building. The efforts of some Alliance members to work directly with some proposal sponsors was thought to have improved the resulting proposals.

This year the priority basin is South Platte followed next year by basic standards. As there is not a specific priority basin next year the Division may want to target capacity building/watershed plans during the year. It is too late to prepare the detailed outreach matrix for the South Platte Basin this year (as the Alliance did for the Colorado River last year). However, there are still opportunities for the alliance to help with targeting, mentoring and other proposal efforts.

The lower South Platte still has no watershed plan. Drafting of the PIP for the Lower South Platte Watershed Plan project is just now underway. The upper boundary of the lower South Platte watershed is a bit unclear but arguments were made to include Weld County. Also, the NRCS has completed rapid watershed assessments in the area that could serve as a basis for the larger plan. Connie O'Neill is very interested in participating. The lower Platte, including Big Thompson and Poudre, is being handled by Randy Ristau.

Tammy has been meeting with various entities and is working on a map of watershed plans for the upper South. Tammy will distribute possible South Platte basin targets for Alliance comment. The upper South Platte includes the areas where CUSP is involved and most of the urban areas, including Cherry Creek, Chatfield, Barr Milton, Big Dry Creek, Bear Creek and the South Platte work group on land use.

The group discussed scheduling initial outreach efforts earlier in the process, or at least identifying Division priorities much earlier. With the San Juan/Gunnison being the target basin two years from now, it is a good time to start preparing a target outreach matrix this year. These efforts take time and need to be started at least a year ahead of the RFP. Greg stated that he would check the Aztec calendar and discuss with Lucia, the rest of the NPS coordinators, and the TMDL group.

NPS Management Plan

Greg shared an early outline of sections for a 2010 management plan. It is posted at <http://www.npscolorado.com/NPSalliance.htm>. Reactions and suggestions are welcome and should be channeled through Loretta. Feedback should focus on what is missing, what is present, what might be over the top. Greg expects more emphasis on restoration of impaired waters. Please provide any comments on the draft outline to Lucia or Greg by April 3rd.

EPA needs a strong executive summary. Barb pointed out that there is no precedence for section 4.6 Objective 4.6 – Measurable Results

- Sampling for BMP implementation results

- EDU collaboration

- River Watch Program Collaboration

- watershed assessment tools (?)

- Capturing Sediment Load Reduction Data

- Capturing Total Nitrogen / Total Phosphorus Load Reduction Data

or section 8 – Tracking Program Effectiveness

- 8.1 - Improved Watershed Planning Efforts

- 8.2 - Efficient Implementation Projects

- 8.3 - Capturing NPS Pollutant Load Reduction

- 8.4 - Inspection of Implementation of NPS Controls

- 8.5 - Measures of Public Education, Awareness and Action

- 8.6 – Reporting

 - NPS Program Annual Report

 - Grants Tracking and Reporting System (GRTS)

 - Project Reporting

- 8.7 – Adaptive Management

These sections will need a lot of work, and a collaborative effort may be the best approach. A measurable results subcommittee could be created (or reinstated) if the Division would find that helpful.

Much will need to be accomplished by small teams working collaboratively online, using one of two tools under Loretta's management although Barb thought some synergistic meetings might be needed. More information will be available about signup sheets and other procedures through the Help Wanted section of <http://www.npscolorado.com/NPSalliance.htm>.

Workshop and mentoring at 2008-09 conference

There will be a NPS workshop again this year at the Fall Forum. Jeff Crane and Marcella are working on the agenda for this conference. Last year's workshop was well attended; the mentoring was not very well attended. The feeling was that the NPS workshop may have answered most of the questions that might have come up for mentoring. One approach might be to formalize mentoring as part of the agenda, setup mentoring at the NPS workshop, or provide topics and signups for some time after the conference. Another possibility would be to establish topical pods ahead of time—find out what people want to hear or ask about.

Barb offered to draft a survey to find out what people want or need to learn. Holly, Greg and Marcella offered to participate in developing a survey to design mentoring.

A measurable results subcommittee should be created but that is the Division's call. Perhaps once the sediment task force is organized it can provide guidance for measurable results.

Announcements

None

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be June 16, 9 a.m. to 12 at the Forest Service. Tracy offered to facilitate if no one else steps forward.