

NPS Alliance Meeting notes
March 17, 2011 Forest Service
9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Present:

Joan Carlson	Ed Rumbold	Troy Bauder
Lucia Machado	Loretta Lohman	Connie O'Neill [phone]
Jason Peel	Greg Naugle	Jeff Crane
Tracy Yager	Marcella Hutchinson	Barb Horn [phone]
Holly Huyck	Mike Eytel [phone]	Julie Annear
Jeff Litteral	Denis Reich	

Introductions

Tracy Yager facilitating. Those present and on the phone introduced themselves. Jeff Litteral represents the Colorado Data Sharing Network and Denis Reich is a Colorado Water Institute/Extension water specialist located in Grand Junction.

WQCD Update

The Nutrients hearing is delayed until March 2012, and so other changes have had to occur with the Water Quality Control Commission's schedule. The Ark-Rio Grande Basin Issue Scoping hearing will be October 2011 and the San Juan-Gunnison Issues Formulation Hearing will be February 13th 2012, with the associated Rulemaking Hearing rescheduled for October of 2012. This should then helpfully get the Commission back onto the 'normal' basin rotation in 2013.

Since the Nutrients hearing is now in March, there has been a request to also re-schedule the annual NPS Project Funding Administrative Action Hearing. The WQCD NPS workgroup has requested that the Commission move the Project Funding hearing to April 2012. Based on that request most of the planned activities regarding the project solicitation process would shift to a month later than usual.

Using the April 2012 date as the final hearing point, the proposal process for 2012 will be:

June 2011 concept paper announcement

August 2011 Consultation Day

October 2011 proposal announcement

January 2012 proposals due

February 2012 Alliance discussion day

April 2012 WQCC hearing for approval

Holly Brown is the newest member of the TMDL staff, and transferred to the TMDL workgroup from the Permits Unit. Her background in permit drafting will be helpful when assessing TMDL wasteload allocations. The division is making TMDL projects the priority to fund with incremental funds.

There was a discussion about changing the proportion of incremental and base funding to 50-50. Marcella said it depended on the language in the Performance Partnership Agreement.

The Measurable Results Project [MRP] is to fill in the data gaps by establishing a Division directed sampling effort to collect baseline, pre-project data, or for additional monitoring after a project is completed and no longer under contract. The MRP is concentrating on using macroinvertebrates, habitat and some chemistry when appropriate. Curtis is the Division project leader with a subcontractor. CWA is the fiscal agent.

Proposal Process

This year the consultation day was redesigned to focus on water quality. There was also a new section 5.0—monitoring and evaluation—that will need some tweaking. Since there are still some complaints or misunderstanding about sections 2 and 3, those should also be looked at.

The group discussed the overall feedback from Alliance members, and the fact that some proposal had very little Alliance input. There was discussion regarding the process, and the electronic evaluation forms submitted by the Alliance. Input from these evaluation forms are used by the Division in their presentation to the WQCC but the names of reviewers are removed. The additional comments are also especially valuable to the NPS staff during PIP negotiations. With enough care in filling out evaluation forms it might be possible to share comments directly with proposal sponsors.

Thus the question is how to get more comments. Turning them in on paper does not help prepare reports for the WQCC. One suggestion was to ‘volunteer’ 5 or 6 Alliance experts based on their background and professional interests to review selected proposals, and then submit on consolidated set of comments.

Data Sharing Network Presentation

Jeff Litteral was present and Barb Horn on the telephone. Barb gave a historical retrospective of the DSN, including the original intent, progress to date, and the current status. Jeff ‘s presentation focused on the latest upgrades and functionality of the DSN website. Most of the presentation was screen shots of what the web site will look like with some description of features. The site is coloradowaterdata.org and right now it contains the PowerPoint presentation and other information about the project. A webinar was offered and three in attendance signed up for it. If you are interested you should contact Jeff Litteral cwqmc@coloradowaterquality.org.

Alliance Targeted Outreach Process

There are four living matrices at <http://npscolorado.com/NPSalliance.htm>. They are part of the Alliance outreach process to select areas or projects that might benefit from Alliance assistance. The existing matrices were based on the 303d list. Now there are integrated listings http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/op/wqcc/Reports/waterstatus_305_b/305bRept2010.pdf and the soon to be adopted statewide water quality management plan <http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/op/wqcc/Hearings/AAH/WQmanplan/wQmanplan.html> that is integrated with SWSI will help guide input into new matrices for Alliance outreach.

These matrices provide the history of efforts as well as the framework to input data to discover the best new efforts. This is helpful to the Division as preparations state about two years out before priority basins and issues are determined. The Commission will have some priority discussion in October.

This is an Alliance/Division collaboration. The next step will be San Juan Gunnison in February 2012 followed by the Arkansas Rio Grande that September 2012 for scoping.

Next Steps:

1. Review what’s been done with San Juan-Gunnison toward implementation.
2. Create an Arkansas-Rio Grande spreadsheet in June. Need focus on watershed plans, central and lower Arkansas, energy development in Huerfano and Trinidad.

Plan June meeting to discuss. The Division will create an updated Ark-Rio list with the 2012 303(d) list for the basic information regarding known impairments. The Lower Ark RC&D and some counties may

have watershed plans that should be included. These materials will be distributed prior to the June Alliance meeting for review and further discussion.

Between June and October, target areas for Commission presentation. Perhaps have a webinar session in April or some sort of meeting. Notify Alliance about the effort that is being led by Barb and Tracy for contacts.

Update on NPS Management

Continuing with internal discussion and getting ready to set a date for external review. Have looked at other states plans and they are all over the place, with some being very short, while others exceeded 400 pages. There has be a slight delay from the earlier proposed schedule timeline, but this will not impact the overall schedule of being complete for the August Commission meeting. At the conclusion of the internal review, the Division will be soliciting comments from the Alliance members. The external review is currently targeted for early May.

Alliance member updates

Loretta Lohman, CWI – participating in 2012 year of water and in the “value of water” effort for 2013. All of the League of Women Voters project materials and newsletter are now available at npscolorado.com.

Jason Peel, NRCS – there will be information on some new efforts shortly.

Joan Carlson, Forest Service – new draft planning rule out for review next month.

Ed Rumbold, BLM – NRCS, BLM and Forest Service had a new manual and handbook about ecological site description. This is another tool and they are also updating soil surveys in the state. Dust on snow is an emerging issue and they are trying to get monitoring equipment on the landscape—four corners, Grand Junction and Craig.

Julie Annear, DRMS – long list of 319 funded projects nearing completion.

Marcella Hutchinson, EPA – No budget. Might be the same as 2010. 2012 has a substantial cut for NPS. OMB is doing a study of NPS programs. GAO is doing a review of EPA with NPS as a critical issue.

Denis Reich, Extension Grand Junction – working on a video of watershed activities in the Colorado River Basin during later summer. Talking with Tim Gates about Selenium and building his research on the west slope.

Troy Bauder, CSU – improved irrigation management on the Gunnison, BMP survey going on. Successful nutrient workshop in Salt Lake. Nancy Mesner with Utah State University and Ginger Paige with UW have release a BMP monitoring guidance document (see <http://www.uwyo.edu/bmp-water/>) . I have an allocation of copies for interested parties and they are looking for potential groups with whom to pilot some trainings.

Barb Horn, DOW – DOW may lose some funding.

Tracy Yager, USGS – new national project to look at hydrofracking effects on water quality. USGS being reorganized into new mission areas. Online newsletter, geo health.

Barb Horn, DOW – nada

2011 planning, schedule, facilitator identification

NPS Alliance Meetings as USDA Forest Service

Jun 23	Aug 25	Sep 15	Dec 15
Quarterly Meeting- Holly	Consultation Day – Jason	Quarterly Meeting- Ed	Quarterly Meeting- Marcella