

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

Present:

Marcella Hutchinson	Holly Huyck	Jeff Crane
Tracy Yager	Joan Carlson	Troy Bauder
Loretta Lohman	Ed Rumbold	Mike Eytel
Greg Naugle	Jason Peel NRCS	Curtis Hartenstine
		Dave Kanzer [phone]

Introductions

Curtis Hartenstine is working at CDPHE for the next six months while Tammy Allen is at EPA. He spent five years working with Colorado RiverWatch.

CDPHE changes

The next furlough day is on October 9. Because of the way a furlough week is being handled, all CDPHE employees must be completely off-duty by the end of business on October 8. That means they must leave the watershed conference immediately after lunch on October 8. The two remaining furlough days are the day after Thanksgiving and New Year's Eve. In addition to furlough days, travel budgets have been significantly reduced. They are attempting to consolidate travel so that one trip can fulfill several needs.

Since the last Alliance meeting, Kathleen Reilly retired and Tammy Allen accepted a six-month assignment at EPA. Although Curtis is on-board, the unit remains short-handed.

Mentoring at conference

Greg asked for volunteers for mentoring at the conference. Because of the furlough day, the new mentoring schedule will be late Wednesday morning, following the NPS workshop, and during the reception time later that day. One-on-one mentoring proved valuable for several proponents last year and every effort will be made to replicate that level of help. Anyone planning to be at the Sustaining watersheds conference who is willing to participate should notify Loretta.

Concept papers and Consultation Day

Concept papers will be accepted and discussed on the NPSalliance listserv from September 22 through October 20. You MUST join the listserv to participate. Join the listserv at <http://www.npscolorado.com/NPSalliance.htm>.

October 27 is the FY 2010 consultation day. Because of the Swine flu, the video conferencing room is not available. However, proponents not present will be able to email presentations to go along with their telephone conference call. Like last year, we will make efforts to group presentation according to topic so that Alliance members can schedule their participation based on their areas of expertise or interest.

Management plan outline and schedule

Greg went over the new outline that is now posted, <http://www.npscolorado.com/NPSalliance.htm>.

The state has already requested and received a 90-day extension from EPA. The new schedule anticipates a draft plan during late summer of 2010 with a finished product ready for the Water Quality Control Commission by October 1 for their review at the October Commission meeting. The plan would then be submitted to EPA no later than 12/31/2010 for final approval.

The audience for the plan is:

The main audience is EPA, and the plan has to address the State's NPS priorities and strategic goals for the next 5 years (2010 through 2015). The plan is how the State formally tells EPA how it intends to utilize the 319 grant funding.

An additional goal of the plan is to provide a resource to the public and technical interests regarding the nuts and bolts of the NPS process. The plan will cover the strategies for the program, long-term goals, the various processes, and information about State and EPA requirements.

Some process oriented aspect of the plan will be contained in appendices (e.g. lists of acceptable BMPs), so that if changes are needed over the next five years they can be updated without having to formally amend the plan.

Curtis Hartenstine is reviewing the previous two plans carefully to determine what might be included in the 2010 version.

Watershed plans during basic standards cycle

In the rotating priority watershed approach, every fifth year there is no priority basin due to the Basic Standards hearing. The state intends to focus on watershed plan development and updating in that year.

Watershed plans anticipated for next year include the Lower South Platte. Based on the first stakeholder meeting in Brush it appears that one of the primary interested may be monitoring. The Coalition for the Upper South Platte may need to revisit their watershed plan to incorporate the nine elements. Bear Creek may also need updating. The Republican River basin has done some restoration and is interested in additional restoration projects.

Marcella had an intern listing watershed plans and their updating needs over the summer. This list now needs some GIS information added. She did point out that EPA has a 20% limit on funding for watershed plans. She was asked to inquire if a one-year waiver could be obtained for the "off-year" for Colorado's basic standards year.

Updated San Juan/Gunnison spreadsheet

The spreadsheet [mostly posted at <http://www.npscolorado.com/NPSalliance.htm>] has a few corrections and notations that Greg went over. For example, the sediment TMDL, COGUSM03B was one of the first approved, and may be out of date. Box Canyon should be delisted. Mancos segment COSJLP05a is incorrectly listed on the 303(d) list, but it is being revisited and may come off the list in 2010. The TMDL priorities are based on the original 303(d) prioritization, not necessarily the NPS prioritization, though they should be very similar. The TMDL Status column lists the estimated completion date based on TMDL commitments to EPA. TMDLs listed as completed by 10/1/2010 could be done sooner, based on available data, monitoring resources, and TMDL prioritization.

The mercury TMDL and fish consumption advisories are being worked on with DOW and the air quality folks. The three-year study on reservoirs for mercury found that fish results were dependent on what the top predator preys on. The effort now is to address mercury TMDLs at a larger scale--a statewide, regional, or air shed basis.

Working areas include the Dolores, O Be Joyful, the Coal Creek plan and the Uncompahgre.

Another area is the selenium status of permits with sand and gravel companies. Combining sand and gravel outfits adds up to a load for a TMDL.

The spreadsheet needs each person to review it and add information he or she might have. For example, watershed groups with capacity need to be noted. This is the opportunity for the Alliance to refine and update the information entered two years ago to help define those areas where Alliance help would be most valuable in producing effective proposals.

The first input round for this effort should be completed by December 1 so that changes and updates can be discussed at the December 8th meeting. Holly asked specifically to be notified if any of the segments on the list are along highways so that she can get the right CDOT person involved.

Again, THIS IS THE ALLIANCE CHANCE TO CONTRIBUTE TO NEXT YEAR'S OUTREACH EFFORT. Please add any information you have and note with your initials so that we can keep track.

In addition, remember, the 2010 303(d) list is not final until the Commission holds their hearing next March, so the spreadsheet will need to be updated then with the latest data.

Data sharing

Barb was not present.

Alliance member updates

EPA - Nothing new. There is no Regional administrator yet.

CDOT – Straight Creek is under construction to separate clean water flow from highway runoff.

CWA – working to develop a proposal for measurable results program and would like to get the Alliance involved at some point in the proposal effort. This is to try to fill the post-project monitoring gap because projects have a 5-year limit and results may take as long as 20 years to be evident.

CSU – discussed performance based incentives for nutrient load reduction. Program developed by Jonathon Winston at University of Vermont. Denis Reich has found a suitable location for a test of this methodology in the Lower Gunnison area. Troy is looking for a research associate. M. Arabi of civil engineering has funding for modeling on the South Platte. Extension is undergoing more regionalization, which probably means more specialists.

NRCS – there is a new CSP program with a very short turn-around time taking. Also, in a study with USGS using the SWALLOW leads them to believe that an expansion of eligible salinity control projects

beyond existing boundaries my bear fruit in load reductions with a good cost benefit ratio. The Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum workgroup is discussing this.

Forest Service – Sec. Vilsack formulated a vision for the Forest Service that included water and water strategy is underway. It will be interesting to see what Harris Sherman does about roads.

BLM – still no BLM director but two hydrologists have been hired for the Grand Junction and Gunnison offices. Also dealing with end of year issues and trying to get two new air stations set up to monitor oil and gas emission—Meeker and Molas Pass.

USGS – also dealing with end of year stuff, which means everything is dynamic. Some work about nutrients and BMPs. Mark Cronquist asked about monitoring in the South Platte. Working with NRCS with the SPARROW model for salinity.

Colorado River Water Conservation District – Mike Eytel will be helping on NPS matters. The District is helping with funding of laterals in the Uncompahgre and participating in more gauge tracking in the Lower Gunnison. They are assisting in developing a mid-Colorado River watershed group.

CLRMA – Paul Clukie, who proposed the clean marinas program last year, asked CLRMA to lead the project this year. CLRMA declined as an all-volunteer organization and offered Paul all types of other support. Also, a lake association outside of Lyon wants to do a treatment with alum as a way of addressing sediment. This will be the first ever alum treatment in Colorado. Finally, Barr-Milton will be wrapping up their NPS project next year. Not everything will get done because EPA changed the time available for a project. They are hoping to put together a TMDL on phosphorus for early next summer.

CDPHE – the state contracting monitoring system started July 1 and will affect all new contracts.

Next meeting

December 8, 2009, USDA Forest Service. Joan will facilitate. Greg and Loretta will work on the agenda.