

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
Nonpoint Source Management Area
Non-Point Source Alliance
Meeting Notes for November 15, 2007

Overview of the Current State Vision for the NPS Management Area

- Lucia Machado's view of the NPS Program: NPS is where everything comes together and where we can make a difference, especially at the local level, in terms of improving and preserving water quality.
- Collaboration, team work and involvement from all is desired and appreciated.
- The NPS Alliance is a collection of valuable expertise and experience that the whole state needs.

CDPHE's Vision for the NPS Management Area

- Every local community is aware of its local watershed, the value of that watershed and is actively involved in protecting and improving it.
- The mission of the NPS Alliance is to help state and local watershed groups implement this vision.
- CDPHE values and envisions collaborative and inclusive teamwork between the Alliance, Colorado Watershed Assembly, Colorado Watershed Network and CDPHE. Input from everyone is welcome and diverse membership is needed.

CDPHE's NPS Management Area Objectives

Key Goals

- Integrated approach to NPS management using a watershed approach.
- Address impaired segments or waterbodies that have been placed in the state's list of impaired waters - the 303(d) list.
- Focus on waters where we can make a real difference.
- Capture and document measurable results.
- *By 2025, NPS no longer a water quality problem (found in the 2005 Supplement- Update to the 2000 NPS Management Plan).*

Key Issues

- Sustainability of watershed efforts.
- Empower behavior that prevent or minimize anthropogenic pollution that impacts natural resources.
- Facilitate local capacity building.
- Technical support of NPS work.

CDPHE's Proposal for NPS Alliance Structure

The NPS Alliance acts as an umbrella organization under which local watershed groups are recipients of capacity building support and technical expertise.

Conduct meetings that are topic specific and lead by NPS Alliance experts on that topic.

Help Nonpoint Source Management Area (NPSMA) devise state-wide strategies or approaches to the key issues identified.

Convene and conduct issue-focused meetings to assist CDPHE on state-wide strategic planning. (Example topics: Mining; Selenium; Hydro-modification and Stream Restoration; Nutrients; Wetlands; Process for Assuring Federal Consultation/Consistency; Capturing Project Results; Exploring the Water Quality/Water Quantity Nexus; Semi-arid Climate Zone Issues; Effluent Dominated Waters; Pathogens; Point vs. Non-Point Source Issues; Interagency Agreements.)

NPS Alliance provides accountability and credibility for how CDPHE develops its NPS Management Area by:

- Assisting CDPHE update the NPS Management Plan.
- Being CDPHE's eyes and ears in the state's watersheds.
- Helping evaluate efficacy and efficiency of Best Management Practices.
- Providing technical support and expertise to the state's watershed groups.
- Working with CDPHE to make things happen at the local level.

Colorado Watershed Network (CWN) and the Colorado Watershed Assembly (CWA)

CWN and CWA act as bridges between the NPS Alliance and local watershed groups.

NPSMA's envisioned roles for CWN and CWA:

- Translate big picture thinking to local watershed groups.
- Develop local capacity - technical, financial, business-ready (local watershed managers are ready to manage a project)
- Ensure technical support is provided to local watershed groups when needed.
- Work with local leadership in watershed planning.

CWN has tools to implement at least some of the needed monitoring. CWN is already an active partner with CDPHE and has a volunteer network that can be used for monitoring efforts. NPSMA wants to capitalize on these resources. CWN may also help obtain volunteers, equipment and financial support for local projects.

The NPS Alliance, CWN and CWA together can help NPSMA address questions about how to engage all watershed groups throughout the state and other important partners.

Watershed Plans

Watershed planning is the cornerstone of NPS work. Watershed plans are needed before larger TMDL and/or implementation projects can be awarded. The NPSMA is the lead organization in guiding the development of watershed plans. Watershed coordinators are needed at the local level and will require champions for support and success.

Education and Outreach

The NPSMA seeks to develop a single cohesive strategy and message with the Alliance, CWA and CWN. The NPSMA has several goals for emphasizing education and outreach. One is to create behavior changes in each watershed. Others are to improve the sustainability and awareness of NPS work around the state and to ensure that there is an outreach and education component in each NPS project.

The NPSMA sees sustainability as the challenge. Perhaps a state-wide survey could be developed to determine where we are today and where we need to go. How do we make the NPSMA sustainable beyond 319 funds? Can watersheds organize as fiscal agents to generate their own funds (i.e. charge fees which could make them sustainable for the long-term and also eligible for low/no interest loans)?

Environmental Covenants

Develop more effective ways to obtain buy-in at local level. The NPSMA is concerned about the long term integrity and maintenance of 319 on-the-ground projects.

NPSMA's Ideas on Moving Forward

NPSMA's main message is that there are many more prescribed ways in which the CWA Section 319 money is to be spent. The 319 projects need to have a more focused scope of work and be implemented on waterbodies that need water quality improvement or preservation. Also, measurable results of water quality improvement are an important requirement.

We need to focus our time, money and energy where we can make a difference. The challenge will be to how to ensure that the work is being implemented in a collaborative manner, with good management and leveraging of resources.

We need to tackle each goal and objective one at a time. Let's start small and celebrate our successes as we go.

The NPSMA and the NPS Alliance need to establish effective communication practices. The NPSMA is committed to this effort and is open to suggestions as to what is needed to ensure that this happens.

The NPSMA can no longer offer to lead and coordinate all of the Alliance meetings and workgroups. The NPSMA is asking for the support of the NPS Alliance, CWA and CWN in leading and coordinating Alliance meetings and workgroups starting in 2008.

Summary and Reaction to NPSMA Remarks

What I heard is that NPSMA wants a lot of subcommittees (??) and is passing the baton on leading and coordinating regular gatherings. I have seen this work, but there have been government-paid people to lead and attend meetings on a regular basis. This allows volunteers to attend as well. (Yes, this is what NPSMA said (??))

What about focused task groups?

(NPSMA - Groups would meet around certain themes. Meetings could be set up to address issues on a single topic. Focus could be on how to ensure projects address that specific topic. For instance, one topic might be how to look at point vs. non-point source contamination. We could develop a consensus on that topic so when a project arrives we already have a position.)

How can others who are not experts participate in topic specific meetings?

(NPSMA – We could post meeting minutes on the NPS Colorado web site. We could have multi-theme or general meetings periodically as well as topic-specific meetings.)

How the NPS Alliance structures itself will be based on consensus of the group, not mandated by the NPSMA.

Attendance at NPS meetings is part of the job for some, but not for others. Some members may have to argue with their host organization to be able to attend. The chance to obtain funding has been part of that argument in the past, but that is shifting. What argument can go back to our organizations now? What about non-regulators and land-use agencies? What is the potential payback for attending these meetings?

It's not issue of recognition. How do we contribute to the NPS Program and what do we get out of it?

Speaking for those not paid to be here, what is our role? How do we sustain our involvement where the financial pay-off may come once every five years?

(NPSMA – The states see value in every participant's contribution. The NPS Program has to exist in the real world and have value to all. The NPSMA needs public-at-large accountability. Diversity of participation will create a better process.)

The question is larger than the state. It is also a National question – NPS Program sustainability. We need to reframe the problem on the ground and determine ways to address it. CDOW is at the table as a beneficiary and sometimes as polluter. We need to reframe the question. What is our role in the problem? What is our contribution to the solution? What level does it makes sense for my organization to work at - state-wide, local? Who traditionally shows up at meetings? Who is missing?

The NPS Alliance and NPSMA have the same goals. Lucia's remarks indicate that NPSMA is now on the same page that the Alliance has been on for a while. The Alliance is no longer wondering if we have the same goals. NPSMA is still understaffed, but so is the Alliance. The Alliance is not all together yet, either. We need to move forward one step/project/ at a time. NPSMA wants to be an equal partner in the NPS Program, not the leader, and the structure of the new program will develop organically. NPSMA is an equal partner, but a key one, and brings critical resources, funding, authority, etc. to the program. We need to build on what has been done in the past. I like that NPSMA will not dictate the structure of the NPS Program. The key is communication.

The key is creating an organic structure that plugs people in at the right time and in the right space when and where it makes sense. Each member needs to figure out where and how to do this best. Some may plug in at the state level only, others at the local level only, still others at both or some combination thereof - i.e. where mining is the key issue involved or in a key watershed.

The missing piece for the NPS Alliance is how to dance with NPSMA. NPSMA says that it wants to dance, so we have to figure out how.

NPSMA has said what the watershed groups needed to hear. CWA has little history with the NPS Council. CWA has just joined the NPS Alliance. CWA's purpose is to get more information out to local watershed groups. What needs to happen is for information and capacity to get down to kitchen table level. Individual people out there don't know what information is out there. There are lots of important technical minds in the NPS Alliance. By focusing on an individual basin or locality we can get measurable results. It seems like NPSMA and the Alliance are on same page and heading down the same road.

This year has been tough. The NPS Council/Alliance is a dynamic group. There tends to be a small number of people on technical subcommittees. If the Alliance is going to move forward, we need to bring in everyone who is needed. We have to start pushing technical folks forward rather than relying on NPSMA to do it. A format is needed and then we see who plugs in. A format will provide deadlines, structure, etc. Some may not get funding this cycle, but at some other point, they might. All have expertise in some area, which brings broader perspective to all projects.

NPSMA pointed out that we need to make sure we do have a few things that hold us together.

- Schedule, leaders and structure for meetings.
- A quick and easy place to communicate schedules, meeting dates and times, etc.
- Creative ways to keep the NPS Management Area's message alive and out there.

NPSMA does have specific needs from Alliance, such as technical support. We need to ensure stakeholder groups include all important participants. NPSMA sees a lot of value in stakeholder involvement and cannot do it all by itself.

There needs to be a structure and we need to see how it all will fit together (NPSMA, NPS Alliance and others). If there isn't going to be a structure, it will be hard to justify why we come

here and it will be hard to move forward. One question about structure is how many task force work groups will there be, how often will they meet, what is their relationship with the Alliance?

Proposed Alliance Structure Presented by Barbara Horn

Proposed organizational chart and visual representation of how things might work.
(NPS Alliance proposal with visual available at <http://www.npscolorado.com/> .)

The new Alliance is not about boxes, it's organic. We need some structure to hold the space for conversations to take place and to be effective. This is the role of the Operational Executive Committee. The NPS Alliance is in flux, just like the NPSMA. It needs a champion to lead it as it morphs into a functioning structure from the current conceptual idea (see above).

Operational Executive Committee - It will hold the space for primary meetings of the Alliance and for the subgroups as well.

Outreach Subcommittee - Reflects need to get to local level. Address weakness of old council structure. Next meeting as Alliance is to figure out how to do this for the Colorado Basin to support FY08 projects. How much I&E would be done is up in the air. The needs to be established along with input from the NPSMA.

Monitoring & Assessment Subcommittee: How do we address: Scale? What works? Engage experts at table to help everyone story of how we are cleaning up water.

Watershed Plan Subcommittee - provide support to local groups. This is a very complicated effort.

Then there will be themes to be addressed in meetings or a series of meetings. We can create subgroups as needed at various levels.

The NPS Alliance has discussed assistance with monitoring and coordination with the Monitoring Council, which is a new idea. I think the Alliance also feels strongly about offering technical support. This might be wonderful for project managers, but for new people, a broader perspective helpful. This broad perspective was one of the old Council's biggest strengths.

The NPSMA is constrained in what it can do, but the NPS program is bigger than that and the Alliance can help with that. It is not as constrained.

Funding for the NPS Program has not yet been addressed. Some feel should be self funded.

Primary group should not advise the state how to focus on on-the-ground. It should hold its own space and get to the local level. The NPSMA and the Alliance can be brought in as equal partners. Think comprehensively, could this apply to programs other than NPS?

For now the Alliance needs to focus on next big thing - Colorado Basin - as messy transition continues there.

The prior leaders of the Council will make themselves available in the transition period but can not continue as the only leaders of the new Alliance. These leaders are valuable resources and are willing to help. The focus needs to be on collaboration and bring others in. Others will need to take up leadership roles in the new Alliance. Technical subcommittees may need to be self facilitated and take responsibility for what need to do. Don't wait to be told what to do. Encourage others to step forward.

The Alliance transition team is open to everyone. The core Council members plus Jeff and Jacob have stepped forward. We are still working on how to get the word out more widely.

It seems that NPSMA is stating that there will never be enough staff or funding to deal with all of the NPS issues we have on the table. Everybody needs to be involved. How and who will be the communicator needs to be addressed. Funding needs to be put up. If there is not funding for the Alliance, but instead funding goes to CWA, it won't work. We need a dedicated individual to provide the Alliance structure. CWN and/or CWA will be advisors.

Have not heard "state needs you" has heard "state respects you". Not the same. NPSMA doesn't really need us.

The Council had structure, but all it had to do was project reviews. The Council was not working toward anything. The Alliance has a focus - things that need to be done.

NPSMA wants technical groups to help with policy. The Alliance wants to work on the ground. It seems there is disagreement about what needs to be done and how to move forward.

DRMS is more than willing to plug in where needed. We are not hung up on what that looks like. DRMS is available on multiple levels. We have a limited role. If needed, just call.

NPSMA's talk was broad. We don't need to start with whole, huge picture. We can start with specific tasks to accomplish and create a structure to make that happen. From the Alliance's point of view, that task right now is how to reach out to Colorado Basin.

Focus on smaller things and work toward bigger things, but someone must be responsible for communication, which has not yet been addressed.

Colorado Basin is not in the loop yet. See a lot of positive in today's talk. Using existing efforts for leveraging is good. "Jello" (proposed structure for the new Alliance) thing confusing, but maybe the Alliance should adopt the metaphor. Maybe lack of structure is strength rather than a weakness. Structure provides comfort to me as an engineer. Blend the two approaches - flex and fill in where needed plus have some structure.

NPSMA suggests that as we consider how to move forward that we think about the dynamics of how we make progress, which is important. NPS is complicated and constantly changing. We should take on tasks together and see how things go, little by little, so we'll develop. It's a big process and a long-term one.

Next Steps

November 21, 2007

NPS Alliance Meeting – Topic: Colorado Basin
9:30 AM @ Colorado Division of Wildlife

November 30, 2007

Abstracts/Technical Approach Proposals Due

December 12, 2007

Abstract/Technical Approach Advisory Meeting

1:00 PM @ BLM

Will have time slots by subject matter based on what abstracts are received.
Arkansas/Rio Grande Basin is a priority, but projects can come in state-wide.

January 8, 2008

NPS Program Response to Abstract Submitters

January 22, 2008

NPS Alliance Meeting – Topic – NPS Program Priorities/Tasks/Structure

Jacob Bornstein, Leader (Colorado Watershed Network)

Maureen O'Reilly, Facilitator (EPA)

9:00 – 11:30 @ USFS

Action item: Send your ideas and/or agenda items for the 1/22/08 meeting to Loretta Lohman by January 5, 2008. lorettalohman@comcast.net. Topics to consider: 1) What should be the NPS Program's top three priorities; 2) help define the new NPS Program structure/ share what works best for you/your organization; 3) define the role your organization plays in the new structure.

Already on the Agenda:

Top Three Priorities

Funding for the Alliance and NPS Activities

List Serve Progress

Results of the Outreach Meeting

Communications

Jacob, Lucia, Barb and Jeanette will teleconference to develop (and distribute) a final agenda before the January 22, 2008 meeting.

List Serve Development – Dave Kanzer, Loretta Lohman, Lucia Machado.

All subcommittee members will receive notification of plans developed at today's meeting. Each of the former NPS Council technical subcommittee chairs have agreed to take the lead on this task.

Loretta agreed to contact the Agriculture and Urban subcommittee members about today's developments and to bring these subcommittee members to the table at future meetings until they establish chairs. (There are currently no chairs for the Agriculture or Urban subcommittees.)

Loretta will develop an "all and sundry" e-mail list including all the old NPS Council members and add to it newer Alliance members. She will need help. Contact her with your up to date information.

Kathleen – Offered to help set up meetings and provide other communications support as needed.

Facilitator: Maureen O'Reilly (EPA)

Note Taker: Marcella Hutchinson (EPA)

Attendees: Lucia Machado, Bonnie Pate, Kathleen Reilly (CDPHE); Barb Horn (CDOW); Bette Blinde (Colorado Foundation for Agriculture); Angela Medbery, Barb Williams? (Sierra Club); Holly Hyuck (CDOT), Larry Mugler (DRCOG), Dave Kanzer (Colorado River Water Conservation District), Jeff Crane (Colorado Watershed Assembly), Jacob Bornstein (Colorado Watershed Network), Jeanette Hillary (League of Women Voters), Robert Sakata (Colorado Water Quality Control Commission, Sakata Farms); Joan Carlson (USFS), Bruce Stover (CDRMS), Rich Muzzy (PPACOG), Karma Anderson (NRCS), Connie O'Neill (North Front Range Water Quality Planning Association)