

White River Planning Advisory Committee Meeting
September 12, 2019
6:00pm @ Fairfield Community Center
Meeker, CO 81641

Alden Vanden Brink	Don Reed	Rusty Lloyd	Nicole Seltzer
Brett Harvey	Forrest Nelson	Steve Hale	Janelle Urista
Brian Hodge	Linda Masters	Terry Smalec	Monique Katlin
Callie Hendrickson	John Leary	Travis Day	
Chris Collins	Marc Etchart	Tristan Nielsen	
Colton Brown	Neil Brennan	Vince Wilczek	
David Graf	Ron Reich	Walt Proctor	
Deirdre Macnab	Rosaly Coombs	Mike Dillon	

Welcome and Introductions: Facilitator, Linda Masters – CSU Extension Director, welcomed everyone. She reviewed the ground rules and expectations of the committee meetings.

Background:

- Nicole Seltzer – River Network
 - o Stream Management Plans (SMP) use assessments to analyze holistic river health and recreation goals
 1. According to Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) 2018 Guidance, a SMP should:
 - a) Involve stakeholders to identify environmental and recreational values/objectives that are locally important;
 - b) Assess existing biological, hydrological, and geomorphological conditions at a reach scale;
 - c) Identify flows, other physical conditions, or projects needed to support environmental and recreational values;
 - d) Prioritize alternative management actions or projects to achieve measurable progress toward maintaining or improving flow regimes and other physical conditions.
 - o Integrated Water Management Plans (IWMP) take the concept of SMPs but widens it to assess a wider array of needs.
 - o It is important that the group assesses existing conditions of a stream/geographic area
 - o There are over 20 existing plans in Colorado
 - o Recommendation: Groups taking on a planning effort should get through the planning process, then identify and prioritize projects to start on
- * See website www.whiterivercd.com for River Network’s Presentation
- Phil Brink – Colorado Cattlemen’s Ag Water NetWORK
 - o Ag involvement in SMPs, IWMPs, etc. is crucial
 - o Phil’s 2019 project: WMP and SMPs-Outreach and training to the ag. community
 1. A survey was distributed by the Colorado Cattlemen’s Association to:
 - a) Assess ag familiarity with watershed management plans
 - b) Help identify water-related priorities of ag
 - c) Guide outreach and training opportunities
 2. Outreach: Raise awareness and understanding among ag producers
 3. Training: Train ag-oriented individuals interested in coordinating/leading/volunteering locally on watershed and SMP planning and implementation.
 - o Increasing demand for water results from population growth; tourism; irrigation; wildlife and threatened and endangered species; and oil and gas.
 - o Planning is key to minimizing crisis and conflict

- When Planning process is started, identify “low hanging fruit” to get the implementation process started sooner.
 - Colorado’s water plan goal: To have 80% of locally prioritized rivers have SMPs and 80% of critical watersheds have Watershed Management Plans (WMP)
 - Summary of 2019 Ag Producer Survey (Statewide) results: go to www.agwaternet.org
 1. Facts: 330 responses were received. 288 responses were used.
 2. Highlights:
 - a) 42% (of 288) have 1-250 acres for ag production
 - b) ~50% irrigate 1-250 acres of land. ~15 % irrigate none
 - c) Most popular water-related challenges that people would most like to improve upon were delivery infrastructure, water quantity, water storage and irrigation efficiency.
 - d) Popular priorities of a WMP were to preserve and enhance existing uses (agriculture, etc.); add more water storage; improve irrigation infrastructure; and create a drought contingency plan.
 - e) 81% (of 36 responses) think local conservation districts should lead planning efforts
 - f) Only 6% are “very familiar” with what a WMP is and what it is intended to accomplish, 47% are somewhat familiar
 - g) 95% were somewhat interested or very interested in participating in a local WMP initiative
 - h) Meetings for planning process need to be short and productive and avoid hunting, calving, irrigation and harvest seasons.
 - There are several funding options for several projects (i.e. assessment of irrigation infrastructure and irrigation upgrades; channel and bank improvement/stabilization; storage studies; water delivery system improvements, etc.)
- * See website www.whiterivercd.com for CCA’s Presentation

Project Purpose:

- Terry Smalec – Vice President of Douglas Creek Conservation District (DCCD)
 - Explained that the White River and Douglas Creek Conservation Districts (Districts) came up with the following statement which they believe will best serve Rio Blanco County.
 1. “To protect the present and future health of the White River while ensuring respect for local customs, cultures, property rights, and water uses.”
 - The goal of the project is to identify what local needs can be met through the development of a plan and to determine community support for the effort.
 - The Districts’ goal was to create an advisory committee made up of individuals from various interests and water uses, therefore the White River Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) was designed

Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) Purpose:

- Marc Etchart – President of White River Conservation District (WRCD)
 - A big thank you to all who are on the committee for their time and commitment
 - The Districts believed this project should be a locally led effort.
 - PAC is made up of approximately 16 stakeholders within the White River Basin who represent agriculture, land and water right holders, municipal/industrial, and recreation/environment.
 - PAC members are dedicated individuals, representing various interests, and are willing to devote the time and effort necessary to help the process be successful.
 - The Districts worked hard to ensure that the PAC is well balanced geographically in Rio Blanco County and that members have a strong knowledge of water, water planning efforts, local customs, and cultures.
 - All stakeholders and interested parties will have ample opportunity to provide input throughout this process.

Big Picture and Schedule:

- Callie Hendrickson – Executive Director for the Districts
 - o Information will be gathered by interviewing approximately 30 people, recommended by the PAC, within the county
 - o PAC Meetings: PAC will determine the meeting schedule and location will rotate between Meeker and Rangely.
 - o At least four public meetings at four different locations will be held within the county to best reach all citizens.
 - o Once a rough draft of a Plan is created, the PAC can put it on the District’s website to provide one more opportunity for the public to comment.
 - o The Districts’ website (www.whiterivercd.com) has a new page for this project where meeting notices, notes and other information will be posted to.
 - o If the PAC has any additional resources where the PAC and public can go to find additional information related to this project, please send that to the Districts’ email (whiterivercd@gmail.com) and staff will post it to the website.
 - o Review on Roles and Responsibilities of the PAC
 1. Primary PAC members have the option to select an alternate who can fill the primary position’s place if they are not able to attend. It is imperative that the alternate is up to speed on where the committee is at in the process, so explanation is not needed during meeting times. If members need more information, they should contact the Districts’ board members or staff.
 2. The PAC members were asked to do as much research on their own time as they can. Districts’ staff will provide research information and links to assist.
 - o Monique Katlin – District Conservation Technician (DCT), will be researching existing water projects in Rio Blanco County (RBC), which will give the PAC an idea of what has already been done so efforts are not duplicated but improved.

9/12/19’s Meeting Purpose:

- Linda
 - o Purpose of this meeting is to:
 1. Form and inform the PAC
 2. Define roles
 3. Define various planning options to consider

Roles, Rules and Set-up for running the meeting:

- Linda
 - o Extension/Linda Masters
 1. Facilitator – ensure all are heard, information is documented, timekeeper, etc.
 2. Keep a schedule for mailings and other deadlines – maintain calendar, meeting etiquette and rules.
 - o Districts
 1. Coordination/Administration
 2. Fiscal agent
 3. Note takers
 4. Conduct interviews and create interview summary for PAC to review
 - o PAC Members
 1. Learn all you can about SMP, IWMP, WMP, etc.
 2. Identify two questions to be asked during interviews. Goal is to have a list of approximately 10 questions to take to interviewees.
 3. Identify two individuals to be interviewed. Goal is to interview approximately 30 people within RBC.
 4. Review summary of interviews
 5. Encourage public to attend the public meetings and provide input

6. Attend public meetings
 7. Review the draft report from the contracted facilitator
 8. Consider any comments received via website on draft report and approve the final report that will be provided to the WRCD and DCCD Boards
 9. Alternate members should attend meetings as much as possible, so they are ready to engage in this process any time the primary member is not in attendance but are asked to allow the primary member to sit at the table and vote if they are in attendance
 10. Guide the process of determining what the community wants
- Public
 1. There will be a public comment period at the end of the planning meetings and alternates will have opportunity to provide input at this time as well.

Differences between SMP, WMP, and IWMP:

- Nicole and Phil
 - Scales of watershed planning: channel scale, reach scale, watershed scale
 - Types of plans: SMP, IWMP & WMP
 - Beneficial to start looking at a large geographic scale to assess/inventory all resources
 - Two tier approach evolving:
 1. Rio Grande restoration project, initiating three individual SMPs to focus on specific areas, similar to Arkansas River
 2. Watershed Collaborative
 - Difference between SMP and IWMP (SMP goals and methods pyramid)
 - IWMP assess a wider array of needs
 - IWMP allows opportunity to find multi benefit projects
 - Website: coloradosmp.org
 1. Basic info on SMPs
 2. Library of existing water plans which were funded by the State.
 - First, identify projects/improvements the community wants to do rather than try to fit them into a scaled project
- Questions:
 - What is the general timeline for a Plan to be completed?
 1. It depends on the group's direction, geographic area, projects, low hanging fruit, etc. Two years seems to be a good baseline and average cost could be approximately \$150,000. State funding could fund approximately 50% other funding sources could potentially cover 25%, local funds may be needed to fund the other 25%.
 - Goal of PAC is to identify main concerns and if community wants to move forward?
 1. Yes. PAC should come up with two people to interview and two questions to ask interviewees to get a baseline idea/starting point. The PAC was provided with sample questions from other groups' interviews

Tasks for meeting:

- Linda
 - Determining how the PAC makes decisions – Consensus or majority?
 1. The PAC supports: Striving for consensus. If consensus is not met, then refer to Robert's Rules of Order.
 - Educate ourselves on various planning efforts and needs
 1. What, and how much, information does the PAC need to make decisions?
 - a) Monique will be synthesizing information from existing projects. Since there are several existing projects, the suggestion was made that the PAC should find topics that they/the community are interested in then dive into research on those specific projects.

- b) Interview questions: should be created to be open ended to gather input to best gain knowledge on commonalities of goals between citizens. Staff and facilitator will compile interview questions from PAC members and eliminate any duplicated questions. The PAC will approve the final 10 questions.
2. Communications among Districts, PAC and Facilitators will be had via email.

Tasks to complete before next meeting:

- Linda and Callie
 - o Identify approximately 30 people (2 per PAC member). Send to whiterivercd@gmail.com by 9/26/19.
 - o Determine approximately 10 questions (2 per PAC member) to ask during interviews. Send to whiterivercd@gmail.com by 9/26/19.
 - o Submit news article to newspaper summarizing this meeting.
 - o Share article with chamber of commerce
 - o Share information and meeting notices on social media
 - o PAC members should share meeting information and schedule with their respected entities/boards/etc.
 - o Research other White River basin plans and water plans existing around the state.

Next Meeting:

- 6:00 in Rangely
- Tristan – WRCD and DCCD Manager, will send a Doodle Poll for members to select days of availability
- Meetings will be posted on the Districts' website, around Meeker and Rangely and on social media.

Final Notes:

- This planning effort will only move forward if it is what the Community wants
- The Community will decide if WRCD and DCCD Boards are best suited to drive the process or if there is another entity that would best serve the Community.
- The idea of a SMP came from the State, plans are not required, and no one will force the Community to do one.
- There are several funding sources to assist with many types of projects and planning process.