



**South Platte River Urban Waters Partnership
Quarterly Partnership Meeting**

Thursday, February 16 from 1:30-3:00 pm
Large Room, Denver REI Flagship, 1416 Platte St, Denver, CO
80202

Meeting Summary (As of 2/23/17)

Agenda

- Natural Capital Resource Assessment Update
- Water Quality Assessment Update
- Advisory Committee Status Update
- Partnership Updates
- Ideas for Future Meetings

Natural Capital Resource Assessment Update

Dana Coelho provided an overview on the purpose and expected outcomes, approach and current status. The primary objectives of this effort are to develop: 1) an asset map of the natural resources present in the watershed (within 3 subareas) that describes their economic value and 2) a prioritization tool that helps determine how to focus investments. The contractor will be sharing draft economic information soon and the entire effort should be completed in mid-2017. A handout was provided that shows which economic services are being included, and a stakeholder remote meeting will be held soon to discuss in more detail. More information is available at: <https://www.epa.gov/urbanwaterspartners/south-platte-natural-capital-project>.

Water Quality Assessment Update

Ben Tyler provided an update. The Water Quality Assessment is meant to share basic information in an understandable format with links for more detailed information. It can be used by the public to understand the safety of nearby water bodies, by educators to demonstrate the benefits and impacts of restoration projects in order to obtain more funding, and serve as a resource for the state legislature. The tool includes data from 2009-2014 and draws from a range of data sources, such as EPA, USGS, Denver Environmental Health, Groundwork Denver, and other contributors to the Colorado Data Sharing Network. New data is being added on nutrients and pharmaceuticals and personal care products.

The tool is just beginning to be shared with external audiences; it was shared at a Urban Waters Partnership training workshop and Natural Monitoring conferences. The next phase is doing more outreach about this resource. Some ideas included:

- Add a link from the Denver Water Source Water Protection Plan. More information is available at: http://thewaterconnection.org/wq_tool/.
- Christina Bum offered to share a brief overview at the upcoming Writing in the Watershed course.

- Donny Rolsh has schools in mind in which he may be able to use it. He will share insights at future meetings if he does.
- Action Item: Water Quality Assessment Team - Develop brief blurb about the Water Quality Assessment Tool so people can add it to their websites.

Advisory Committee Status Update

The Advisory Committee (Stacey Eriksen, Dana Coelho and Keith Wood) provided a brief update. The Urban Waters Partnership still continues to be a priority for the Forest Service and EPA, though there is still some uncertainty as the new administration gets settled. It is an official program at EPA, which is helpful. The Advisory Committee is still securing funding to support a coordinator. Until that time, Laura Sneeringer from CDR Associates will facilitate quarterly partnership meetings and help compile information for e-mail updates. The Advisory Committee is also working on developing an updated Work Plan for the Partnership, which is meant to be a dynamic/ living document.

Partner Updates

- **Aurora Water** is trying to finalize its Source Water Protection Plan. They are also formally establishing a watershed program and are working on re-establishing wetlands in 3 areas through wetland banking.
- The **Healthy Headwaters Alliance's** 12th Leadership Convening will be held March 31 in Aurora, CO. Panels include: Looking Ahead – Healthy Headwaters & Front Range Water Supply; New Partnerships - Front Range Changing Demographics & Political Landscape; The Challenges Ahead – Forest Health & Water Supply Collaborations; Fast Times – Scaling Up Financing for Forest Health & Resilient Water Supply. View the [agenda](#) and [register here](#).
- **USGS** is initiating an urban water runoff monitoring assessment going. Some monitoring will be done at Sun Valley.
- **Earth Force** was awarded an UWP Small Grant in order to further its education opportunities. Earth Force develops toolkits for teachers that are focused on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) knowledge, civic responsibility and environmental interest. They are working on stormwater education approach. Some students have recently finishing up a rain garden and will be measuring the amount of water that will be treated every time there is a rainstorm. They work with 28 schools in the Denver Area (approximately 2000 students).
- The **Bluff Lake Nature Center** is a 123-acre wildlife refuge and outdoor school. They are in the midst of a year round lake project to reestablish a levee and dredge the lake. They are in the midst of revegetation, adding a recycled water line (in coordination with Denver Water), and installing trash catchment near the entrance as they've had issues with trash getting into the wetlands.
- The **Rocky Mountain Land Library** is renovating historic ranch properties in an effort to educate people about the land. They are having a launch party to raise funding for the Cooks House at South Park's Buffalo Peaks Ranch on February 23, 6:00-10:00 pm, Hostel Fish, 1217 20th Street, Denver, CO. They are also working on a walking series. It would be interesting to have SPRUWP partners join in order to share their expertise with participants.
- **Denver Water** is working with Groundwork Denver to do some lab work related to human impacts on Bear Creek. As part of the Source Water Protection Plan, Denver Water has MOUs

with counties and they will work together on implementation. Denver Water will develop an annual water health report. They also partner with the USFS on the Forests to Faucets Program and will provide another \$16.5 million match this year.

- **Denver Public Works** is focused on green infrastructure throughout the city. Last summer a stormwater fee was approved which brings capital funding for green infrastructure projects. It provides guaranteed funding for 5 years and a few projects are under construction this year. They also recently released their “Ultra Urban Green Infrastructure Guidelines” and “How to Put Successful BMPs in Parks” publications. They are in the midst of working on an Implementation Plan and the first Working mostly on public land... and in the future will working on private land. Some example areas are Sun Valley, possibly Colfax Bus Rapid Transit, and Sloan’s Lake outfall.
- Katie Spahr from the **School of Mines** is working on a research project to a regional decision support tool. She is working with a Science Advisory Board and will be reaching out to local municipalities to ensure it is a practical tool. There will be future Stormwater Symposiums to highlight work being done at Mines.
- **Groundwork Denver** received a UWP Small Grant to investigate septic systems in Sheridan. They are hiring high school students to help and Metro State University is helping to mentor them.
- The **Denver Metro Nature Alliance** has hired a contractor to support a strategic planning process to implement their vision for every person in the metro area to be connected to nature within a generation.
- The **Colorado Environmental Film Festival** is happening on February 23-25, 2017, in Golden, CO. If anyone would like to attend the VIP speaker panel on Thursday, February 23 they should contact Dana Coelho. Details [here](#).

Topic Ideas for Future Partnership Meetings

- University panel to share highlights of relevant initiatives
- Presentation by Earth Justice students (Donny)
- Sterling representative to share experience (Donny)
- Informal event at Buffalo Peaks Ranch with a presentation by the Rocky Mountain Land Library and Aurora Water on wetlands efforts
- Update on Forest Health Headwaters Projects
- Discuss if/what education efforts could look like.
- New partner presentations

Participants

Aurora Water	Mike McHugh
Bluff Lake Nature Center	Ron Mirinda
Bluff Lake Nature Center	Tom Seagroves
City and County of Denver, Public Works	Ashlee Grace
Colorado School of Mines	Katie Spahr
Colorado State Forest Service	Keith Wood
Consensus Building Institute	Laura Sneeringer

Denver Water	Christina Bum
Earth Force	Donny Roush
Greenway Foundation, Capitol Representatives	Marge Price
Groundwork Denver	Andrea Savage
Leonard Rice Engineers	Ben Tyler
Rocky Mountain Land Library	Joe Davidson
US EPA	Stacey Eriksen
US EPA	Paul Garrison
US EPA	Colleen Rathbone
USFS	Dana Coelho
USFWS	Krystal Phillips
USGS	Bill Battaglin