

COLORADO **NPS** CONNECTION

News About Nonpoint Source Issues

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Information exchanged at first Colorado Nonpoint Source Forum

By Cynthia Peterson, Project Manager, Colorado Water Protection Project

The first Colorado Nonpoint Source Forum was held Oct. 29 and 30 at the Arvada Center for the Arts and Humanities and the Denver Regional Council of Governments. Over 70 participants from around the state gathered for the event sponsored by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's Water Quality Control Division, the Colorado Nonpoint Source Council, the League of Women Voters of Colorado Education Fund and the Colorado Water Protection Project.

Carl Norbeck, Watershed Section Manager of the Water Quality Control Division (WQCD) welcomed participants and outlined the work to be accomplished. In their opening remarks, Colorado Nonpoint Source Council co-chairs Gene Schleiger of the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District and Jeannette Hillery, League of Women Voters of Colorado, stressed the need for a team approach for NPS projects. They also noted that the NPS program continues to evolve.

David Holm, Director of the WQCD, gave the keynote address on the state of Colorado's water quality. He noted that 60 percent of remaining water quality issues are nonpoint source in nature. For these types of problems, regulatory programs are of limited use,



Laurie DiBattista

Gene Schleiger welcomes attendees to NPS Forum

he stated. He also emphasized that NPS projects must have measurable results to quantify their effectiveness. On a topic that would be repeated throughout the day, he mentioned that increased focus and funding will be given to the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) program in the future.

For a federal perspective, Kim Larson, NPS Project Officer for the Environmental Protection Agency Region 8, discussed the Environmental Protection Agency's role in NPS management. In reviewing the program since its inception in 1987, she has seen a change from EPA playing an adversarial role to one of partnership. She thinks that the federal program has improved due to state involvement.

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She discussed successes in Colorado and finished her remarks with, "The Colorado NPS Program: It Works, Use It."

Laurie Fisher, Colorado NPS Coordinator for the WQCD, discussed the state's NPS program. She noted that funding for the program has increased over the last three years, but that uses are restricted for some of the money. She reviewed the program goals, which are: restore waters impaired by nonpoint sources, prevent future impairments, a statewide education effort, and site-specific restoration efforts. She noted that mining is the primary source of impacts to the state waters with 604 river and stream miles and 142 lake acres affected. She also listed impacts from agriculture/silviculture, urban and construction runoff and hydrologic modifications. Noting that NPS pollution is "people pollution," she said getting the right people the right information at the right time is a critical goal of the program's information and education work. In conclusion, she noted some changes and challenges facing the NPS program, including increasing focus on TMDLs, linkages to source water protection and Endangered Species Act consultations.

Russ Clayshulte, Environmental Resource Manager for Denver Regional Council of Governments, provided information about the Colorado Nonpoint Source Council, which proactively promotes a voluntary and cooperative NPS water quality program. The 25-member council also advises the WQCD about the NPS program and NPS pollution in Colorado. He noted that the goal of the group is to promote an effective NPS program designed to achieve and maintain beneficial uses of the state's water. Council members come from diverse federal, state and local agencies, watershed groups, environmental organizations and include other interested stakeholders.

Total maximum daily load program

The topic of TMDL planning was of interest to many participants. Kathryn Hernandez, EPA TMDL Specialist/Nutrient Coordinator, and Phil Hegeman, TMDL Coordinator for the WQCD provided details of the program. They said that the federal Clean Water Act requires states to identify waters that do not, or are not



Laurie DiBattista

Colorado Mountain College student Don Stephens views exhibit at Colorado NPS Forum

expected to, meet applicable water quality standards. Hernandez stated that use, numeric, narrative or anti-degradation standards must be used for evaluation. These waters are compiled into the 303(d) List of Impaired Waters (303d List). Hegeman noted that most listings are due to, or involve, NPS pollution.

He explained the timeline for updating the state's current 303d List and the process for EPA approval. He also discussed the 2002 Monitoring and Evaluation List (M&E List) that will be used for tracking and assessing those waters for which there is some indication of possible nonattainment.

Hernandez noted that TMDLs are not self-implementing, however they set the stage for regulation by the states. Both speakers emphasized that the TMDL program will comprise a large part of NPS activities in the future.

Colorado projects: past and present

Clayshulte and Larsen returned as "Regis and Kelly" for a showcase of NPS projects, past and present. They observed that often projects that have to work through problems and changes are more successful than those that

go according to plan. They said that NPS areas of concern in Colorado are mining and agriculture; nationwide, concern centers on agriculture and urban runoff.

They compared the types of programs funded by 319 grants, with watershed and information/education projects being most numerous. Demonstration, assessment, technical assistance and groundwater projects were funded less frequently. They also dispelled the common perception that projects along the Front Range are funded more often than those in other parts of the state.

After mentioning many successful projects, they summarized the traits of all good projects: partnerships, creativity, local empowerment, outreach, monitoring, funding and problem solving.

The four watershed coordinators for the WQCD, Kathleen Reilly, Bill McKee, Dick Parachini and Dan Beley, joined in the discussion and remarked on successful projects they have seen. They also listed a number of challenges facing projects, including population growth and the increase in water-related recreation needs, lack of funding to solve identified problems, keeping key stakeholders involved and encouraging more local ownership of projects.

Funding sources for projects

Fisher, along with Zeke Ward, Chairman of the Willow Creek Reclamation Committee and Richard Fox, National Director of Trees, Water and People spoke about fundrais-

After stating that there will never be enough government or foundation money to meet all water quality needs, Fox concluded, "If you want a river of money, you need a lot of diverse income streams."

ing, one of the most challenging tasks of local watershed organizations. They discussed traditional funding sources, such as NPS grants, U.S. Department of Agriculture programs, EPA consolidated grants and the state revolving loan fund. They also highlighted nontraditional funding sources, such as individuals, corporations, and bequests. All speakers agreed that it is vital to cultivate a wide variety of funding sources, especially when a grant match is needed.

Ward, a successful fundraiser, mentioned a side benefit of fundraising discovered during the Willow Creek project. He found that funding sources often become long-term project supporters.

Fox mentioned that watershed organizations often have two challenges: raising enough money and doing it consistently. He noted that for such groups, growing can be dangerous, but not growing is fatal. After stating that there will never be enough government or foundation money to meet all water quality needs, Fox concluded, "If you want a river of money, you need a lot of diverse income streams."

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Nonpoint Source Hall of Fame

By Cynthia Peterson, Project Manager, CWPP

The first inductees to the Nonpoint Source Hall of Fame were announced at a reception following the Nonpoint Source Forum in October. The Colorado Nonpoint Source Program initiated the program to recognize significant efforts to protect the waters of the state. Awards were given in three categories: individual, organization and project, as well as a special individual recognition. The honors were given to:

Gene Schleiger, Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District. Schleiger has been one of the co-chairs of the Colorado NPS Council for more than 10 years. He has logged thousands of miles, both in state and across the country, promoting project opportunities, allaying fears about "government intrusion" and providing a voice from the "real world" at regional and national meetings.

Denver Regional Council of Governments. Russ Clayshulte, longtime member of the Colorado NPS Council, accepted the award on behalf of DRCOG. The organization has supported the NPS Council by contributing a consistent "address" for meetings, lending stability to the group's efforts

and providing significant leadership to the urban and construction aspects of the program. The value of these contributions has exceeded \$50,000 over the years.

League of Women Voters of Colorado. The League has supported the activities of the NPS Council for a number of years, with Jeannette Hillery recently serving as co-chair. The organization has become a significant implementation play in the information and education areas of the program. Through the League's Education Fund, the Colorado Water Protection Project has taken the message of preventing polluted runoff to citizens throughout the state.

The Badger Creek Project. This project was recognized for its work in the Badger Creek watershed restoration effort. It exemplifies the attributes of a successful project through partnerships, a well-defined and broadly accepted problem, and self-sustaining program activities. Finally the watershed showed an impressive recovery, with increased vegetative cover, increased plant species diversity and more sediment being trapped.

Greg Parsons. Special recognition was given to Greg Parsons for leading the state in NPS management since 1987. Parsons, who is newly retired from his post as watershed section manager for the Water Quality Control Division, was honored for his diligence in establishing a well-functioning NPS program within the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. His exceptional ability to work with, and garner support from, various competing interests involved in the NPS arena was also recognized.

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AMERICANS' 'RIVER IQ' IS LOW

Most are unaware of NPS Pollution

A new national poll, conducted by the National Geographic Society, shows the public is overwhelmingly supportive of protecting and conserving rivers, but most people lack basic knowledge about America's waterways and are unaware that many of their daily actions may have negative effects on rivers and watersheds.

A key finding of the study was the respondents' lack of awareness of watersheds, and that individual and collective actions have a profound effect on the health of rivers. For example, only slightly more than half the respondents (56 percent) could correctly define the term "watershed."

Only 36 percent of respondents knew that nonpoint source pollution is the largest source of water quality problems for rivers and the major reason that 40 percent of our rivers may not meet water quality standards for fishing or swimming. One in seven (15 percent) knew that the greatest source of river pollution is people's actions in the watershed, while nearly three times as many (44 percent) incorrectly identified industrial sources as the biggest culprit in polluting waterways.

Nearly 9 out of 10 respondents (86 percent) were unfamiliar with the term "nonpoint source pollution," and few, if any, understood that people contribute directly to it. For example, 59 percent did not know that runoff from farms causes more river pollution than industrial sources, and 42 percent incorrectly thought water that goes down storm drains is treated at water treatment plants.

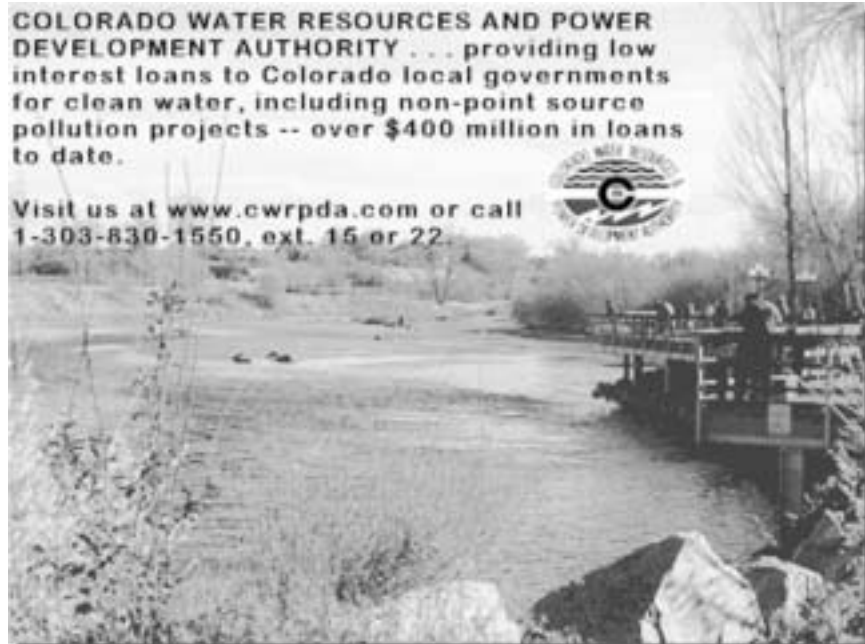

A positive finding was that nearly one in five respondents (19 percent) was very interested in becoming an active river advocate and two-thirds (65 percent) said they were interested in becoming more personally involved in conserving and protecting rivers.

Barriers to becoming involved included a perceived lack of respondents' time (53 percent), lack of information about how they can help (35 percent), and lack of awareness about the scope of the problem or the impact they could have (34 percent).

"What we need to get across is that everyone's small actions have greater impacts downstream," notes Rebecca R. Wodder, president of American Rivers, a leading national river conservation group and a member of the River Council. "We're connected by rivers to each other, to our proud history and to the people who will enjoy these rivers long after we're gone."

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Colorado Watershed Assembly Conference brings groups together

By Tempra Board, Director of Development for Trees, Water & People

The second annual conference of the Colorado Watershed Assembly (CWA) was held Sept. 7 and 8 in Frisco. More than 110 people from across Colorado attended, including watershed coordinators, government agency staff, and water and river protection activists.

State Sen. John Evans addressed the packed conference room at the Holiday Inn while the first snow fell outside, saying that the CWA and individual watershed groups are critically important to the future of Colorado's rivers, streams and other natural resources. He said that Colorado's legislators need to be better educated by their constituents on water issues, and that the CWA is in a great position to make that happen.



Photo provided by Tempra Board

The two-day conference featured workshops and a chance for watershed groups and agencies throughout the state to network - something geographically diverse groups often don't get a chance to do.

"I think that the conference was a tremendous success," says CWA president Richard Fox. "We have been greatly impressed with the multitude of offers from so many people willing to step forward and work with us to protect Colorado's rivers and streams."

The conference featured topics important to local and statewide efforts, including workshops on how to finance watershed projects; using technology; water quality and quantity issues; building stakeholder involvement; partnership opportunities with land trusts; and working effectively with state and federal agencies.

Among the groups presenting workshops were the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, the Colorado Coalition of Land Trusts, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Great Outdoors Colorado, River Network, Colorado State University Cooperative Extension, The Nature Conservancy and a host of local watershed organizations.

The CWA was formed in 2000 as an "organization of organizations," representing more than 40 watershed and river protection groups and other nonprofit conservation organizations in the state.

The mission of the assembly is to support collaborative efforts to protect and improve the conservation values of the land, water, and other natural resources of Colorado watersheds.

Break-out Groups Add Value to NPS Forum

Cynthia Peterson, Project Manager, CWPP

Three break-out workshops were offered on the second day of the Colorado NPS Forum in October to address the needs of particular audiences.

Section 319 Grantsmanship: How to Apply for a Nonpoint Source Grant

Randal Ristau, WQCD, and Kim Larson, EPA Region 8, presented a workshop that gave an upbeat overview of seeking 319 grant funds. They looked at national EPA guidance for the NPS Program for fiscal year 2002. They went over the new, short proposal requirement and timelines for applications. In addition, they discussed types of efforts that are appropriate for NPS funding. A walk-



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