

COLORADO **NPS** CONNECTION

News About Nonpoint Source Issues

Spring 2002

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You Can Lead Students to Water, But Can You Make Them Think?

The Creation of the WaterSHED Education Program in Fort Collins

By Kevin McBride, Senior Stormwater Engineer - Water Quality

It was the 1995 Fort Collins Environmental Fair and I was excited to teach people about nonpoint source pollution, about the chemical, physical, and biological impacts on wetlands, rivers and lakes. As an engineer working with urban streams I knew how important a topic this was. I landed a space right next to the Bird of Prey Rescue program, and that meant lots of foot traffic. The display board had great pictures of polluted runoff, stream channelization, along with explanations of what citizens could do about these problems. Hundreds came to see the owls, eagles, hawks and falcons that day. Adults and children gaped and gawked, asked questions and were generally amazed at the beauty of the birds. Few, well perhaps a half dozen, actually stopped to ask meaningful questions about NPS pollution. Obviously, different tactics were going to be needed to engage the general public.

Let's face it, NPS water pollution is not a grab-you-by-the-heartstrings kind of topic. To be honest, it seems that most people are only politely interested (present company excepted, of course). Many people are passionate, however,



Photo provided by Kevin McBride

about the streams they fish in, wetlands they hunt in, riparian areas where they watch birds or rivers they kayak. There seems to be a connection between those who spend time around waterways and their understanding and interest in them. So our efforts turned towards getting people to local water bodies. We decided on a captive audience - school students.

After contacting the school district, it became evident that many interests want the attention of the teachers and their students in order to get their messages across. NPS pollution was not listed as a science topic in either the state science standards or the school district's curriculum. This, I was informed, is what really drives what

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teachers teach. What they teach is in the curriculum, and that is made up of the basic science topics. These include units in plants, animals, water, earth materials, landforms and ecology, in grades 1 to 6, respectively. Of course, these topics are all important to an understanding of NPS pollution.

With the support of the school district's science coordinator, a 319 grant was prepared to fund an educator to pull together activities that would begin to bridge the gap between the world of NPS and what teachers need to teach - science. It was clear that if we help teachers teach science near their schools in local wetlands, creeks and rivers, we could achieve three objectives simultaneously: 1) creating connections between the community and local water bodies, 2) creating an understanding of NPS and 3) improving science education.

We received a 319 grant from the Colorado Department of Health and the Environment in 1996 and continued our partnering with the school district through advertising and selecting our education coordinator, Marcee Camenson. She chose appropriate activities, purchased necessary equipment and contacted interested teachers for field trips. At the same time we worked with field



Photo Provided by Kevin McBride

crews from the Fort Collins Utilities to enhance two of our stormwater detention ponds for use as outdoor classrooms. Changes to mowing regimens, wetland creation and small boardwalks created environments suitable for study. The program's name came from this codevelopment of habitats and education. WaterSHED (Stormwater Habitat Education and Development) was launched.

Since that time, we have worked with the city's parks department, environmental groups, community service organizations and the school district to create five outdoor classrooms at city-owned detention ponds. Seven additional sites along Spring Creek, Fossil Creek and the Poudre River are also commonly used. We recently partnered with the city's Art in Public Places program to create an interpretive center complete with "environmental art" about watershed topics. Last year, the WaterSHED program achieved over 6,500 contact hours with students, teachers and volunteers. Our education program has come a long way from the half dozen people at the environmental fair a decade ago.

This year, two new outdoor classrooms are planned. Teachers today are busy with many demands placed on them by the increased focus on standards and testing. With that in mind, we continue to market our program as one that can help them reach their educational objectives. Based on the number of people experiencing our local waters, we're happy to report that you can lead students to water, and you can help them think.

Resources for Protecting Colorado's Water Free Interactive CD-ROM

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An interactive CD designed to provide information and educational resources to interested individuals, associations, educators, gardeners, landscapers, city planners and the media throughout Colorado.

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e-mail info@ourwater.org
or call (303) 861-5195**

Save These Dates

10th National Nonpoint Source Monitoring Workshop

Monitoring and Modeling from the Peaks to the Prairies

September 8-12, 2002

Beaver Run Resort, Breckenridge, CO

Session Topics include:

- Stream Restoration
- Inactive Mine Remediation
- NPS Modeling
- BMP Implementation and Evaluation in Agriculture, Silviculture and Urban/Construction
- TMDL Development
- Public Information/Education

For more information: www.ctic.purdue.edu/NPSWorkshop.html

2002 South Platte Forum

October 23 and 24, 2002

Raintree Plaza, Longmont, CO

Topics will include:

- Integrating Habitat Protection with Agricultural Production
- Colorado's Climate Changes
- Fouling Your Nest
- Redefining Beneficial Use of the South Platte Basin
- Protecting Our Future

Registration - \$85 before Oct. 1, \$100 late registration

To register or for more information contact Jennifer Brown at (970) 213-1618, e-mail southplatte1@yahoo.com, or visit <http://southplatteforum.colostate.edu>

2002 NPS Forum

Restoring Impaired Waters

October 29 and 30, 2002

Colorado Springs, CO

For more information contact Laurie Fisher at (303) 692-3570

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The Colorado NPS Connection provides timely information about nonpoint source issues to interested groups, agencies and individuals. It does not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the League of Women Voters of Colorado Education Fund or project funders. Articles for publication may be submitted via e-mail to info@ourwater.org for consideration.

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NPS funding overview and new sources to tap

By Barry Cress,

Colorado's Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) administers several programs that can be used to support non-point source (NPS) or watershed-related projects. These include the Energy Impact Assistance Fund, the Water Pollution Control Revolving Fund and Colorado Heritage Planning Grants.

The Energy Impact Assistance Fund (EIAF) supports a wide range of local planning and public facility projects. By statute, these funds are to be distributed to political subdivisions that are socially or economically impacted by the development, processing, or energy conversion of minerals and mineral fuels. Over the past decade, the program has made several awards for watershed and NPS projects, such as:

- Upper Colorado River Basin Water Quality and Quantity Planning. The project involved the development of a model for predicting future water quality and quantity impacts associated with various water uses and a comprehensive multijurisdictional planning process to resolve conflicts through a structured decision-making process. A grant of \$50,000 was provided to match local funds of \$201,000 for this \$251,000 project.
- Region 12 Water Quality Management Plan. The project elements included establishing a mechanism to generate local funding for the water quality program at the Northwest Colorado Council of Governments, and developing a model regional water quality (208) plan. A grant of \$35,000 was provided to match \$35,000 in other funds for a \$70,000 project.
- Summitville Contamination Study. Grant dollars of \$97,328 were provided to the Alamosa-La Jara Water Conservancy District to fund Summitville Downstream Impact Studies in cooperation with the Colorado Departments of Agriculture, Public Health and Environment, and Natural Resources.
- Upper Animas River Watershed Coordinator. The project funded a watershed coordinator who managed grants for mine site remediation throughout the Animas River watershed. Grant dollars of \$118,302 were provided to match local funds of \$17,800 for a total budget of \$136,102.

The Water Pollution Control Revolving Fund is Colorado's state revolving fund formed pursuant to the federal Clean Water Act. It is jointly administered by DOLA, the Water Quality Control Division (WQCD), and the Colorado Water Resources and Power Development Authority (CWRPDA). While the program has provided hundreds of millions of dollars for sanitary sewer projects around the state, it has had limited involvement in funding NPS projects. However, for 2002, many projects that qualify as NPS needs are identified and listed as eligible in the state's "Intended Use Plan" for the program. The Intended Use Plan can be found under "Programs/WPCRF" on the CWRPDA Web site at www.cwrpda.com.

One of DOLA's newer funding programs is the Colorado Heritage Planning Grant program, which was created along with the Office of Smart Growth in 1999. The grant has funded a watershed planning project in the Cherry Creek basin, which involves the City and County of Denver, Arapahoe County and Douglas County. It proposes to develop an intergovernmental agreement among the jurisdictions to guide development and conservation measures in the Cherry Creek Watershed. The project will also include a study on establishing a continuous greenway along Cherry Creek. Grant funds awarded totaled \$30,000.

For more information on these programs check out DOLA's Web site at www.dola.state.co.us. You can also contact Barry Cress at (303) 866-2352, or via e-mail at barry.cress@state.co.us, for details and contacts for all of the programs.

The Colorado NPS Connection newsletter is also online at www.ourwater.org.

To receive the newsletter via e-mail, or for an e-mail reminder that a new issue is available to view on the Web, please send your name, e-mail address and preference to cwpp2@aol.com.

Does your community need grant and/or loan funds for water, wastewater or nonpoint source projects?

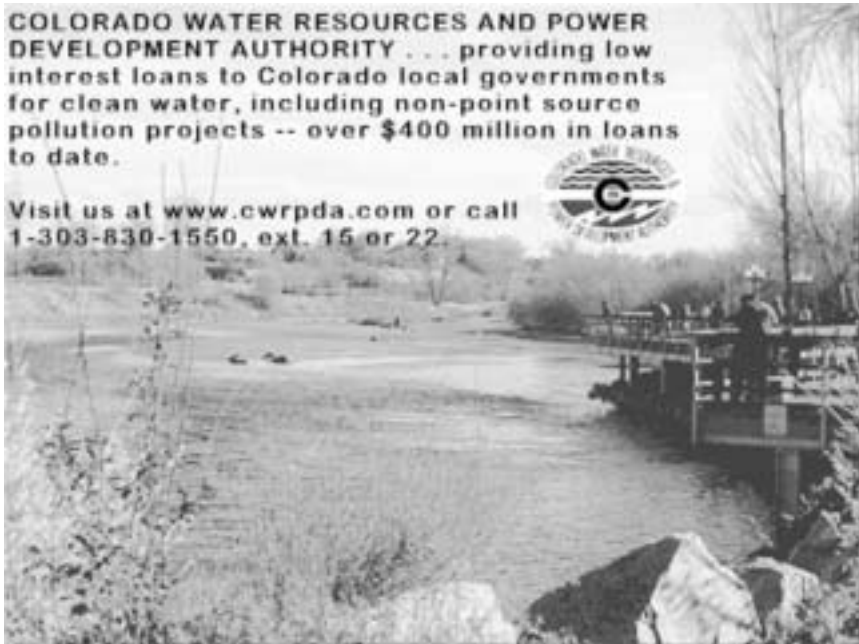
The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's Water Quality Control Division (WQCD) offers four different funding sources:

- The Water Pollution Control Revolving Fund provides low interest loans to publicly owned facilities for the construction of wastewater, stormwater and nonpoint source projects.
- The Domestic Wastewater Treatment (DWWT) Grant Program provides financial assistance to governmental agencies and counties on behalf of unincorporated areas for planning, design and construction of eligible DWWT projects serving a population of not more than 5,000 persons. Funding is dependent upon appropriations from the state legislature.
- The Drinking Water Revolving Fund provides low interest loans to governmental agencies for the construction of water projects for public health and compliance purposes. Ineligible projects include dams, water rights or reservoirs; and projects needed primarily for growth or fire protection.
- The Drinking Water Grant Program provides financial assistance to governmental and not-for-profit public water for consolidation, planning, design and/or construction of water treatment systems serv-

ing a population of 5,000 or less. Again, funding is dependent upon appropriations from the state legislature.


To be eligible for funding, the project must be identified on the eligibility list developed by the WQCD. To check whether your community's needs are currently identified, you may view the current eligibility lists for the four funding programs on the Internet at the Department of Public Health and Environment's regulation index page at: www.cdphe.state.co.us/op/waterqualityregs.asp

If you have an eligible project that is not currently identified on one of the lists please contact the WQCD. A thorough and accurate identification of local water and wastewater system needs may also improve the share of funds that Colorado receives from the EPA in future years to capitalize its revolving funds. For additional information, or to provide project information, please contact Donna Davis-Bodnar or Debbie Stenson at the Water Quality Control Division (303) 692-3562.



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Small – 2" x 3" (business card size)

One issue \$40

Four issues \$120

Large – 4" x 3"

One issue \$65

Four issues \$200

For more information, contact Cynthia Peterson at (303) 861-5195 or cynthia@ourwater.org.

Who ya gonna call?

NPS information and education coordinator is in the know

by Laurie DiBattista

Loretta Lohman explains her lengthy title - nonpoint source information and education coordinator for Colorado State University Cooperative Extension - simply.

"I'm a fact and contact resource for people," says Lohman, who has been at the job for two years.

On any given day, she may deal with water providers, watershed coordinators, educators, green companies, politicians, and local, state or federal agencies.

"I bring together people who have the ability to fill in gaps in the (NPS) program and make things happen."

One of those gaps is the need to educate new homeowners, especially in water sensitive areas, about ways to avoid polluting groundwater. So Lohman is developing workshops that may feature CSU's Cooperative Extension, water utility companies, the Colorado Water Protection Project and members of the green industry.

She has already developed resources to help spread the word about water pollution, including a CD with PowerPoint presentations that can be used to inform the public about what NPS is and ways people can prevent it.

Well grounded in water issues, Lohman says she has worked on Environmental Protection Agency-related projects since the federal agency was first established. After working for two years at the Denver Research Institute on an economics project that related to water, she took six months off to finish a master's degree in political science at the University of Northern Colorado.

Then she returned to the institute and worked on a project that dealt with the salinity of the Colorado River - a subject that would become part of her University of Denver Ph.D. dissertation.

A research-oriented person, Lohman has gathered over 500 videos, manuals and documents that deal with NPS issues "in one place, all for the first time." They are avail-



Photo provided by Loretta Lohman

able on loan and will become the database for a future Web site she plans to design.

Years ago, before water issues became the focus of her career, Lohman thought her life would center around politics. In 1970 she ran for the Colorado legislature but lost.

"It was what I thought I wanted to do with my life, represent the people within government," she says. "I grew up in a politically active family with a grandfather and great-grandfather on both sides holding local elective office in Illinois. Our dinner table discussions were most often about political and social issues."

Today, Lohman practices the NPS messages that she preaches.

An avid gardener, she has Xeriscaped the entire yard of her Littleton home, which attracts hawks and other birds, squirrels and butterflies. Watering, which is kept to a minimum, stays in the yard and off the sidewalk; water from the central air conditioner is collected and put out for the birds; and the dog's unused water is poured on potted plants.

"Besides a job, nonpoint source is a big part of my life," she says.

To contact Lohman, e-mail her at llohman@coop.ext.colostate.edu or call (720) 913-5285.

Surface Water Quality Standards hearing information and materials are available

In an effort to assure that all interested persons receive notice of Water Quality Control Commission hearings regarding surface water quality classifications and standards, the commission is developing new distribution lists for each of its relevant regulations. If you are interested in receiving these notices, please send an e-mail to Diana Glaser at diana.glaser@state.co.us that includes your organization's name, a contact person, phone number, fax number, e-mail address and mailing address, and list each of the following regulations for which you wish to receive notices.

If you prefer, you can complete the form on the bottom half of this page and mail it to Glaser at 4300 Cherry Creek Drive South, Denver, CO 80246-1530, or fax it to her at (303) 691-7702.

To expedite distribution of notices, it is the commission's hope to rely on distribution of notices by e-mail to the maximum extent possible. However, if you do not have easy access to a computer and prefer to receive notices by traditional mail, please let her know.

If you would like more information about the Water Quality Control Commission and its activities, please consult its Web site at www.cdphe.state.co.us/op/wqcc/wqcchom.asp. The information on this Web site includes a schedule of hearings for each of these regulations. Or, you can call Glaser at (303) 692-3469, or the commission's administrator, Paul Frohardt, at (303) 692-3468.

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- Basic Standards and Methodologies for Surface Water, Reg. #31 (5 CCR 1002-31)
 - Classifications and Numeric Standards for Arkansas River Basin, Reg. #32 (5 CCR 1002-32)
 - Classifications and Numeric Standards for Upper Colorado River Basin and North Platte River (Planning Region 12), Reg. #33 (5 CCR 1002-33)
 - Classifications and Numeric Standards for San Juan River and Dolores River Basin, Reg. #34 (5 CCR 1002-34)
 - Classifications and Numeric Standards for Gunnison and Lower Dolores River Basins, Reg. #35 (5 CCR 1002-35)
 - Classifications and Numeric Standards for Rio Grande Basin, Reg. #36 (5 CCR 1002-36)
 - Classifications and Numeric Standards for Lower Colorado River Basin, Reg. #37 (5 CCR 1002-37)
 - Classifications and Numeric Standards for South Platte River Basin; Laramie River Basin; Republican River Basin; Smoky Hill River Basin, Regulation #38 (5 CCR 1002-38)

Organization _____ Address _____

Contact Person _____

Phone _____ City _____ Zip _____

Fax _____ E-mail _____



NONPOINT SOURCE RESOURCES

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U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region VIII

Kim Larson
• (303) 312-6212

Colorado Water Resources and Power Development Authority

• (303) 830-1550 ext. 15 or 22
• www.cwrpda.com

COLORADO WATERSHED COORDINATORS

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Lower Colorado Basin

Dan Beley
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RESOURCES

Capacity Building Resources Web Site

Provides a compendium of Web-based and printed resources and tools.
www.epa.gov/owow/nps/capacity/index.htm

Colorado Household Chemical Waste Collection Events or Facilities Web Site

www.cdphe.state.co.us/hm/hhwcollect.asp

Earth 911

Enter a ZIP Code and get local information about household hazardous waste collection and recycling.
www.earth911.org

Water Efficient Home Web Site

<http://h2ouse.org>