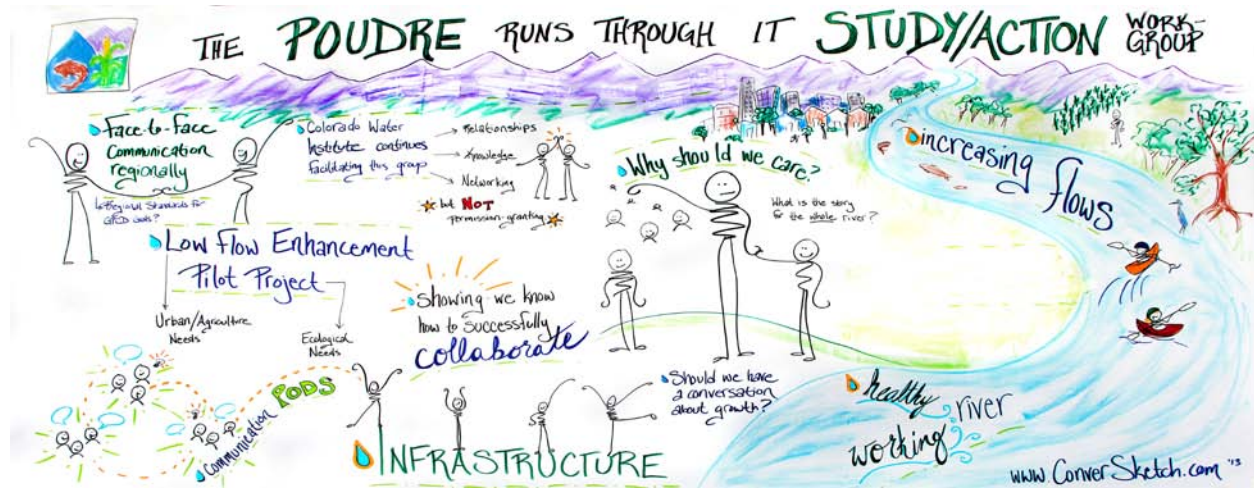


March 1, 2013

The Poudre Runs Through It Study/Action Work Group

SESSION SUMMARY



Graphic artist Karina Mullen captured some of our March afternoon dialogue in color.

And it was certainly a colorful dialogue! After having heard the remainder of the participants' ideas in the morning, the Work Group jumped into the questions, "What do we do with these ideas? Where do we go from here?"

Taping papers to the windows, we grouped participants' ideas into categories, to help us work with them more effectively. See the last page of this summary for the full list of ideas falling under these categories.

- Flows
- Restoration
- Ag Water Enhancement
- Organization & Funding
- Education
- Policy
- Data

Out of our dialogue, two particular topics came to the surface, primarily because of "champions"—individuals or groups who agreed to head up further investigation of that particular topic. However, that doesn't mean we will not return to the other ideas and categories.

"Dan's Group" will continue investigating the idea of ag, urban, and environmental cooperation to improve flows, likely through an instream flow designation for a determined stretch of the river. There would be many hoops to jump through to actualize this idea, but several in the Work Group are working on it, including Dan Brown, Steve Smith, Susan Smolnik, John Stokes, and Dale Trowbridge. They agreed to keep working on the idea and to bring some instream

flow specialists from the State to our next session to help us better understand what the possibilities might be.

“Ray’s Group” formed around the need to determine what kind of organizational structure we might need to make it possible to work on and realize the many ideas we have for meeting our dual goals of a “working river/healthy river” AND what kind of funding mechanism might work—both short-term and long-term. Those who agreed to meet with Ray to delve into this topic were Jim Reidhead and Mark Sears (specifically with their ideas about the Poudre River Trust), John Bartholow, Reagan Waskom, and Doug Robotham.

Thornton was a topic that we agreed was critical to follow through on as well. Mark Koleber, Thornton’s Water Supply Chief, has committed to join us in our April and May sessions to venture into a conversation about potential “win-wins” for the river and for Thornton, given their plans to take their Poudre water south in the future.

A general dialogue about what we might do with the ideas we have generated and where we might go next with our Work Group included some of these words and phrases:

- Articulate to the community need to improve health of river
- Regionally agreed upon gallons per capita per day and accompanying lifestyle change tied to river health
- Big picture group—well funded and staffed
- Start with small projects—small successes
- Organic instead of bureaucratic
- Improve health/respect water rights
- Some areas formerly dry now wet
- Build on the strength of our diversity
- An organization for the Poudre to provide “one stop shopping” for those who want to get involved
- Change structures to allow fish and boat passage
- Volunteers but with some staffing
- Splurge
- Unified coalition and opportunity for collaboration
- Commit to continue
- Not a permission-granting organization
- Improve flows
- River access
- At the table instead of on the menu
- Honesty, straight-forwardness, willingness to listen
- Who has the energy to do what?
- Linkages
- This group can champion those with the ability to go for it
- What is the group giving its blessing to?
- Create a marketplace and let it do its own thing

- Data group is already coalescing on the topic of the Poudre
- Working on flows can include working on structural impediments to flow
- Cannot just tell the public we need these measures, they have to understand WHY
- With each idea, ask the question, “What’s the problem this addresses?”
- If we articulate well, we should be able to get people to buy-in to funding
- No city wants to cease growth or reduce water use if other surrounding municipalities will not also.
- Demonstrate that this group can take on small projects and take big strides in collaboration
- Don’t jump to too large of an implementation piece until we know we have the energy and resources to tackle it
- Identify something and see if we can do it
- We have to establish a way to keep these connections/relationships for our ideas to be actualized
- Keep the conversation going
- We have the right people at the table
- Diverse interests working together is a huge success in itself
- The City is already committed to improving/removing structures in the river—would like to partner with groups and individuals trying to do something for the river, but it’s tough to bring people together. We need to promote or cultivate regional discussion.
- Nothing is going to happen if these disparate groups wanting to work on the Poudre don’t get together, talk, and strategize. Could our group play a role?
- Should we continue for another six months with subgroups tackling action ideas?
- I feel like we are looking for a reason to exist, getting side-tracked
- Should we continue building relationships, knowledge and networking while tackling ideas, and at the same time being available to take on new ideas as they come?
- One thing we could be really successful at is raising money. Diverse interests all buying into one goal and raising money to do so would be extremely powerful.

The April and May sessions will be critical. We will hear from “Dan’s Group” and “Ray’s Group,” as well as Thornton at our next session, and continue strategizing where we go from here. Meanwhile, let’s remember that we have plenty of other ideas on the drawing board and we want to give folks who brought forth those ideas a chance to champion them.

A presentation on the proposed expansion of Halligan and Seaman Reservoirs was given by City of Greeley’s Eric Reckentine and City of Fort Collins’ Donnie Dustin. The projects are currently under review by the US Army Corps of Engineers as part of the NEPA process. In fact, the Corps is doing a cumulative impact analysis that combines the effects of not only Halligan and Seaman but also the NISP project. The Halligan expansion is intended to help the City of Fort Collins better manage its existing water rights by significantly expanding its storage capacity, which currently is limited to Joe Wright Reservoir. The Seaman expansion is intended to help the City of Greeley manage for not only drought but also anticipated growth. Though the two are conceptualized to work in tandem, the two projects could be approved separately.

One of our group members expressed concern when slides showed that “a great part of the river” on the North Fork would likely be inundated by the Seaman expansion. However, other stretches of the North Fork would likely be improved by the project. One of our group members queried whether there would be opportunity at this late date for more participants to come into the projects for the goal of storing water up high to help maintain flows through town. “What if we had 2000 acre feet we wanted to store in Seaman?”

The Hewlett Gulch and High Park Fires of 2012 and their big effect on diversions by the City of Fort Collins, the City of Greeley and the Tri-Districts was the topic of a presentation by Eric Reckentine. He pointed out that a coalition is forming to deal with the problems, called Coalition for the Poudre River Watershed, that is similar to a group formed in the Colorado Springs area called CUSP. Eric suggested that our Work Group might want to collaborate with this group to enhance the river.

NEXT SESSION AND FISHING OPPORTUNITY

We agreed that our April session would include a brief field trip along the Poudre, ending at Odell Brewing Company—thanks to our participant Wynne Odell! In addition, Sean Cronin announced that Rocky Mountain Flycasters will be surveying the group to see who might be interested in taking advantage of his group’s generous offer to assemble a fly-fishing trip.

POUDRE RUNS THROUGH IT IDEAS GROUPED INTO CATEGORIES

Flows

- Working/Healthy River Management Strategies (#31)
- Thornton Water Delivery (#2)(#39)
- Healthy River Improvements Smorgasbord (#26)
- Remove Impediments, Improve Flows (#27) (#36)
- Low Flow Enhancement Pilot Project (#43)
- Flows (#23)
- Smoothing Flows (#7)
- River Safe Zones (#10)(#28)(#37)
- Water Diversions Technology & Funding (#41)

Restoration

- Conservation Banking (#18)
- Dam Rehab (#21)
- Poudre River Canoe Trail (#17)
- Working/Healthy River Management Strategies (#31)
- Healthy River Improvements Smorgasbord (#26)
- Remove Impediments, Improve Flows (#27) (#36)
- Low Flow Enhancement Pilot Project (#43)
- River Safe Zones (#10)(#28)(#37)

Ag Water Enhancement

- Water Bank (#24)
- Poudre Ag/Urban Water Sharing Task Force (#38)
- Irrigation Efficiency Ranking System (#10)
- Poudre Operations Conference Call (#15)

Organization & Funding

- Coalition for the Poudre Water Shed (#14) (#35)
- Working/Healthy River Poudre Fund (#25)
- Foundation for the Poudre (#42)
- Creative Partnerships & Collaboration (#12)

Education

- Treetop Perspective (#8)
- Celebrate the River (#5)(#11)
- Educate! (#29)
- CFS Signage (#6)
- Speaker's Bureau (#13)
- Jaw Jaw Poudre River Forum (#3)
- Underwater View (#9)
- Encourage Conservation—Water Use Apps (#34)
- Poudre River Newspaper with PSD (#33)

Policy

- Encourage Conversation Home Remodel Regulations (#31)
- Lobby for Increased Water Use Flexibility (#16)
- Regional Landscape Codes – State Mandates, State GPGD Requirements

Data

- Define a Healthy/Working River (#22)
- Data Transparency (#20)
- River System Evaluation (#30)
- Poudre River Wiki (#19)