Grand County Stream Management Plan (GCSMP) Update
Stakeholder Engagement Kick-off Meeting
Wednesday, May 3, 2023, from 1:00 to 3:00 PM
Virtual Meeting
Meeting Summary – FINAL

ATTENDANCE

Participants: Jess Alexander, Rachel Badger, Paula Belcher, Travis Bray, Mark Coleman, Brian Craig, Anna Drexler-Dreis, Tony Eason, Ben Felt, Kayli Foulk, Torie Jarvis, Kirk Klancke, Brendon Langenhuizen, Doug Laraby, Abby Loberg, Brandy Logan, Andrew Miller, Neal Misbach, Katherine Morris, Paul Moss, Brian Murphy, Steven Reeves, Becca Rugg, Chris Sammons, Katie Schneider, Celia Sheneman, Jen Stephenson, John Tilstra, Dave Troutman, Jason Turner, Tracey Weddle, Mely Whiting, and Kristina Wynne

Peak Facilitation: Samuel Wallace and Seth Greer

ACTION ITEMS

Peak Facilitation Group	• Share presentations from today's meeting with stakeholders. • Create and share a Doodle Poll with stakeholders for the next meeting. • Distribute the Ideaflip of the current visioning board to participants

WELCOMING REMARKS AND AGENDA OVERVIEW

Samuel Wallace, Peak Facilitation Group (Peak), welcomed stakeholders to the first Stakeholder Engagement Meeting on behalf of the Grand County Learning by Doing (LBD) team. Peak is the third-party, neutral facilitation team.

OVERVIEW OF GRAND COUNTY LBD AND HISTORY OF STREAM MANAGEMENT PLAN (SMP)

Grand County Manager Ed Moyer and Water Quality Specialist Kayli Foulk presented the history and background of the GCSMP, an overview of the LBD organization, and the role of LBD in managing the update to the GCSMP. Below is a summary of their presentation and the following discussion.

- The GCSMP arose in response to Denver Water's Moffat Firming Project and Gross Reservoir Expansion and Northern Water's Windy Gap Firming Project. Grand County decided an approach of negotiation rather than litigation was necessary. The process of drafting the GCSMP began in 2007 and was completed in 2010, making it the first of its kind in Colorado. The GCSMP provided a framework for environmental target flows and restoration projects to maintain healthy streams in Grand County.
- Through two negotiation processes, one with Denver Water and one with Northern Water, Grand County negotiated an estimated $165 million in benefits, assets, and improvements. These negotiations also established two Inter-Governmental Agreements (IGAs), under which LBD was formed. The goal of LBD is to continue to build on relationships and commitments with Denver Water and Northern Water to implement solutions for stream and river health.
- Section II.b of the LBD IGA states that parties will continue to update the GCSMP as new developments in stream conditions and management goals arise. Through these IGAs, Grand County handed the responsibility of updating GCSMP to LBD. LBD is well equipped to manage these updates because of the combined expertise of its member organizations and access to resources.

- LBD is a non-profit, long-term collaborative effort that aims to incorporate the views of diverse stakeholders.
- LBD has been collecting stream data since 2017 and has compiled longer-term data stored in the Grand County Water Information Network (GCWIN) database.
- The long-term goal of the organization is to maintain and, when possible, restore or enhance aquatic environments in the Fraser, Williams Fork, and Colorado River Basins upstream of the Blue River in Grand County. This area is known as the Collaborative Effort Area (CEA).
- LBD's tasks and responsibilities include improving the GCSMP, defining management goals for stream reaches, obtaining and managing funding, developing the annual Aquatic Resource Monitoring Plan and Reports, developing annual Operations Plans, and reviewing the effectiveness of current restoration projects.
- LBD consists of the Management Committee, Technical Committee, Monitoring Subcommittee, Projects Subcommittee, and Operations Subcommittee. The Monitoring, Projects, and Operations Subcommittees all report to the Technical Committee. The Technical Committee advises the co-chairs and Management Committee, which reports findings and decision-making recommendations to the LBD Board. The Board holds the final authority in the decision-making process. Rather than focusing on the culprits of stream and river changes, the structure of LBD is intended to operate on consensus and focus on solutions.
- The Management Committee includes representatives from Grand County, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), Colorado River District (CRD), Northern Water, Denver Water, Middle Park Water Conservancy District, and Trout Unlimited (TU). The Management Committee incorporates organizations with different focuses and areas of expertise to best balance stream and river priorities in the County.
- The Monitoring Subcommittee is tasked with producing two annual documents: The Aquatic Resource Monitoring Plan and the Aquatic Resource Monitoring Report. The Aquatic Resource Monitoring Plan provides the framework for monitoring to identify changes in the environment, foster an understanding of aquatic resources in the CEA, and evaluate the effectiveness of restoration projects. The Aquatic Resource Monitoring Report is compiled annually to inform LBD of undesirable conditions and specific areas that require attention each year. The Monitoring Subcommittee is the project lead for the GCSMP update and will be working closely with stakeholders throughout the process. The members of the Monitoring Subcommittee are Kayli Foulk, Jen Stephenson, Jess Alexander, Katie Schneider, John Ewert, Mary Price, Brendon Langenhuizen, and Mark Coleman.
- The Operations Subcommittee will also be involved in the process. The Operations Subcommittee produces an Annual Operations Plan to maximize environmental benefits, prescribe operating procedures and timelines, and summarize LBD-related operations. They also host weekly Zoom calls to discuss stream temperatures at 10 locations throughout the CEA and coordinate operations to reduce temperatures where possible. Based on the decisions made on these calls, the Operations Subcommittee was able to coordinate the release of 200 acre-feet (AF) from Moffat Reservoir by Denver Water, 1,300 AF from Granby Reservoir to irrigators in Grand County, 400 AF from Windy Gap Reservoir during construction drawdowns by Northern Water, and 500 AF from Wolford Reservoir by the CRD.
- Some recent LBD projects of note include the rehabilitation of a mile of the Fraser River near Tabernash to improve riparian habitat and restore public fishing access. Another recent success was the upgrades to the culvert where Forest Road 128 crosses Church Creek to an aquatic passage culvert, which allows fish and other aquatic organisms to pass

under the road in both directions with ease. The Willow Creek Restoration Project is currently in its design phase, with the goal of accommodating public angling access under Willow Creek Reservoir and restoring a degraded area to address water quality and temperature issues.

- The largest current LBD project is the GCSMP update. The current GCSMP lacks user accessibility and usability due to a lack of stakeholder involvement in the creation of the plan. One of the primary components of the GCSMP update is to include more stakeholder involvement and engagement opportunities through a multi-year plan with two phases. The current phase, Phase 1, includes the Comprehensive Watershed Assessment (CWA) and the Stakeholder Outreach Program. Phase 2 will incorporate the deliverables from Phase 1 to implement the update to the SMP with further consideration from stakeholders.
- The Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) watershed grant provided funding for Phase 1, and the Monitoring Subcommittee is currently in the process of applying for another CWCB grant to fund Phase 2, due July 1.

OVERVIEW OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Samuel Wallace, Peak, presented the overall purpose and scope of the GCSMP update and elaborated on the multiple opportunities for stakeholder engagement throughout Phase I and Phase II of the GSCMP update. Below is a summary of his presentation and the following discussion.

- SMPs are data-driven assessments of river health that help communities prioritize how to protect and manage water in their watershed. The current GCSMP update process differs from this model because it is an update of an already existing SMP that synthesizes new data and stakeholder input.
- The stakeholder engagement component of this process will focus on three topics: objectives, priority areas, and collaborative projects.
- The scope of the SMP is outlined below
    - The GCSMP is an assessment of stream and riparian health. It is not an Integrative Water Management Plan. Integrative Water Management Plan considers strategies to manage consumptive water uses such as irrigation, industry, or drinking water. The focus of the GCSMP update is to address environmental needs to maintain and improve river conditions, not consumptive water needs.
    - The GCSMP must operate within the existing legal frameworks of water rights allocations. It is not an attempt to reverse or halt existing development projects.
    - The GCSMP process is intended to develop communication and implementation strategies to update the existing GCSMP. The GCSMP update is not the development of a new broader watershed plan or similar efforts of larger scope.
    - As part of the collaborative stakeholder process, stakeholders and the community will have the opportunity to be involved in the update and voice their comments or concerns. The priorities of the update are to include a holistic consideration of stakeholders' needs and not to focus solely on the needs of individual stakeholders.
    - The GCSMP update will focus on solutions and collaboration to protect and restore rivers, not identify culprits in river and stream degradation.
    - The GCSMP update is focused on streams and rivers. Issues involving lakes or reservoirs fall outside of the scope of this project.
    - The geographic scope of the SMP is the CEA, not Grand County.
- The stakeholder engagement process will consist of the following three groups.
    - The Stakeholder Group, which will be the largest in size, has open membership. Anyone with a stake in the update is encouraged to participate in this group. The responsibilities of this group are to attend stakeholder meetings; learn about CWA

results, outcomes, and other project updates; provide input and feedback relevant to the GCSMP update; and finally, select representatives to serve on the Advisory Board of Representatives. While not a decision-making body, the Stakeholder Group will have many opportunities to contribute to the update process and interact with one another and LBD.
    - The second group is the Advisory Board of Representatives (Advisory Board), a smaller subset of the Stakeholder Group selected by stakeholders to represent the diverse field of interests involved in the update. The main responsibility of the board will be to synthesize results from stakeholder feedback and the CWA and provide recommendations for the three areas of focus: objectives, priority areas, and collaborative projects. The Advisory Board will mainly be operating in Phase 2 of the project; they will solicit stakeholder feedback as they develop recommendations on objectives, priority areas, and collaborative projects.
    - Finally, the LBD will work with both groups throughout the process. The Monitoring Subcommittee of LBD will act as the project manager, working with the Advisory Board and Stakeholder Group throughout the process. The Management Committee will be responsible for the final approval of documents and deliverables from the update process.
- The project will be divided into two phases, with stakeholder involvement being essential to both. Phase 1, starting with this meeting and ending in the winter of 2023/24, will involve the stakeholder engagement process, culminating in a Stakeholder Engagement Report and the Technical CWA Report.
- In Phase 2, the Advisory Board will synthesize the results from the two deliverables of Phase 1 (i.e., the Stakeholder Engagement Report and the Technical CWA Report) to identify objectives and geographic areas of concern and propose restoration and other cooperative projects. This process will incorporate a cycle of feedback from the larger Stakeholder Group. These recommendations will be submitted to LBD Monitoring Subcommittee, which will provide edits before sharing the recommendations with Management Committee for final approval. Phase 2 of the process will culminate with the GCSMP Update Report.
- During the stakeholder engagement process in Phase 1, stakeholders will have opportunities to provide feedback through stakeholder engagement surveys, focus groups, in-room exercises, and four additional open-house stakeholder meetings. LBD will develop a process for stakeholders to nominate members of the Advisory Board over the next several months.
- The stakeholder engagement process is contingent on certain ground rules that ensure an environment for welcoming and civil discussion. Ensuring that all stakeholders are behaving in a respectful manner, focusing on solutions instead of accusations, and respecting everyone's time, viewpoints, and backgrounds is an essential part of the stakeholder process.
- Peak will serve as the neutral third party for the process. As facilitators, Peak will act as a neutral party to any substantive outcomes related to the GCSMP update. Peak is also responsible for ensuring all meetings are focused, participants stay on-task, and participants adhere to the ground rules of respectful discourse. Finally, Peak will produce meeting agendas, meeting summaries, and the Phase 1 Stakeholder Engagement Report.

Clarifying Questions

Meeting participants had the opportunity to ask clarifying questions about the stakeholder process and the GCSMP update. Questions are below in italics, and corresponding responses are in plain text.

Within the CEA, will the GCSMP update increase its scope and consider additional stream and river health factors that were not considered in the creation of the original GCSMP?
In addition to flows and fisheries, which were the main considerations of the first GCSMP, the update will consider macroinvertebrate habitat, riparian ecosystem habitat, water quality, and water temperature.

Will this process also consider additional, smaller waterways within the CEA as identified by the stakeholders?
This is a good topic for discussion in future meetings.

WORKING BREAK AND VISIONING EXERCISE
During a 15-minute break, participants were encouraged to engage in a visioning exercise using the online tool, Ideaflip. Stakeholders were encouraged to share their high-level visions for implementing coordinated efforts within the CEA in the form of virtual sticky notes laid out on the screen. After reconvening, common subjects of interest were reviewed, and stakeholders were given the opportunity to speak on their ideas or reactions to the responses. Below are key points from the review of the Ideaflip exercise.

- Common themes addressed by participants' visions included fisheries, macroinvertebrate habitat, collaboration, stream flows and temperatures, and climate change.
- One participant stated that their vision for stream and river health is focused on the pristine beauty of Grand County, which draws people from around the world to visit. Their focus is on keeping the landscape beautiful so that it continues to 'wow' visitors.
- Another participant expressed appreciation for a vision that elaborated on collaborative efforts by multiple organizations to leverage funding and capacity.
- A third participant stated their vision to educate residents and visitors on river and stream health.
- Peak will distribute a screenshot of the current vision board to stakeholders.

OVERVIEW OF GCSMP UPDATE CWA
Jen Stephenson, Water Quality Monitoring and Compliance coordinator at Northern Water, and Katie Schneider, Field Conservation Program Coordinator at Trout Unlimited, presented a high-level summary of the objectives and methods involved in the drafting of the CWA. Below is a summary of the presentation and the following discussion.

- The current SMP requires an update for several reasons:
    - Being the first of its kind, the collaborators who created the original GCSMP document did not have the resource of other SMPs to use for guidance. Since the creation of the GCSMP, Colorado's watershed management practices have evolved and improved. There are many tools and resources available now that can refine the original version of the GCSMP.
    - The original SMP design process did not include sufficient stakeholder input. This is now the standard for designing SMPs and is essential for the update process.
    - The conditions of the streams and rivers in Grand County have changed in many ways since the creation of the current SMP, including the effects of the pine beetle epidemic and wildfires. The GCSMP update will incorporate recently collected data that account for these changes.
    - There is a plethora of new data available on the waters within the CEA that needs to be incorporated into managing the relevant waterways.
- In 2017, the Monitoring Subcommittee began the task of compiling and summarizing available data on the CEA's streams and rivers, incorporating data generated by the US

Geological Survey (USGS), GCWIN, CPW, CRD, and Denver and Northern Water. The result was an interactive map available on the LBD website that includes 125 discrete monitoring sites within the CEA. LBD has also overseen the collection of new data where there are gaps in existing research, particularly in the areas of macroinvertebrate habitat, sediment load, and water temperature. Much of this data is available in the GCWIN database.

- The CWA will provide a scientific basis for the update process by synthesizing watershed-scale changes to the CEA and incorporating and analyzing new data within the last 12 years. In 2022, LBD drafted a proposal for the CWA and hired Lotic Hydrological (Lotic) as the technical consultant for this work.
- The CWA consists of four main tasks: 1) a background chapter, 2) data analysis and interpretation, 3) report generation, and 4) the creation of maps and data visualizations. The background chapter reviews changes in river conditions since the inception of the last SMP, including changes in hydrology and land and water use, and includes an annotated literature review to provide a basis for further research. Lotic and LBD are currently in the process of finalizing task 2 and working on task 3.
- The task 2 analysis focuses on five categories: hydrologic characteristics, water temperature, water quality, geomorphic function, and aquatic ecosystem trends. The integrative assessment will synthesize these findings and provide a framework for Phase 2 of the update process. The final report from Lotic is expected in the winter of 2024. In the meantime, a preview of some preliminary research and figures is described below.
    - Hydrologic characteristics and trends include interactions between stages of the water cycle, including streamflow, climate, soil moisture, and snowpack, across different spatial and temporal locations and scales. There is a particular focus on the data in years since the original SMP (i.e., after 2010).
    - Stream temperature data are being evaluated across space and time (specifically from 2008-2021) and compared against Colorado water quality standards. Lotic has created weekly average temperatures and daily maximum temperatures, along with weekly stream quantiles, for ease of comparison.
    - The water quality portion of the assessment evaluates parameters that are of particular relevance to aquatic life and health, including dissolved oxygen, pH, and an expansive list of nutrients and metals. Summary statistics for these data are being provided and compared to State standards.
- Stakeholders can expect three presentations from Lotic to share the findings in greater detail, including one within the next couple of months. The full CWA is expected to be finished by the winter of 2023/24 and will be incorporated in Phase 2 to identify the areas of priority within the CEA.

Group Discussion and Comment

Models representing additional impacts on stream flow resulting from the Gross Reservoir Expansion project and the Windy Gap project would help stakeholders plan for future stream flows. Although these projects will affect findings in the future, the focus of the CWA is to analyze current conditions. LBD operates under an adaptive management process, which involves collecting data and then changing management practices based on monitoring results. The adaptive management approach will continue to track impacts on streamflows over time, which will then inform future management practices. This could be a topic for discussion at future meetings.

NEXT STEPS

- Peak will distribute copies of the three slide decks presented today and the Ideaflip board to the stakeholder distribution list. The Ideaflip board will remain open for a week for those who would like to add to it.
- The stakeholder engagement survey will remain open until May 10. Stakeholders who have not done so are encouraged to complete it at their earliest convenience.
- Peak will distribute a Doodle poll to gauge participant availability for the next stakeholder meeting, which is expected to be in the Grand County area, in person, in mid-to-late June.