

Meeting Summary

Advisory Committee Meeting #3

Date, Time: Thursday, August 31, 2017, 1:00 AM-3:00 PM

Location: Crawford Room, Centennial Hall, 124 10th Street, Steamboat Springs, CO 80487

Meeting Purpose

Review and discuss: 1) the existing data sources and reports for the Yampa River Health Assessment and 2) the draft Community Engagement Plan.

Action Items

- Consultants to finish up stream health assessment report and distribute to Advisory Committee
- Julie/Kelly to schedule next AC meeting and Community Workshop

Attendees

Kelly Romero-Heaney, City of Steamboat Springs

Ben Beall, City of Steamboat Springs

Scott Cowman, Routt County Environmental Health

Brian Hodge, Trout Unlimited

Dan Chovan, Yampa Valley Fly Fishers/TU

Jules Poma, Friends of the Yampa

Kevin McBride, Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District

Marsha Daugherbaugh, Community Agriculture Alliance

Geoff Blakeslee, The Nature Conservancy

David Graf, Colorado Parks and Wildlife

Zach Smith, Colorado Water Trust

Nicole Seltzer, River Network

Julie Baxter, Acclivity

Seth Mason, Lotic Hydrological

Mark Beardsley, EcoMetrics

Agenda Items

Updates on Other Yampa River Initiatives

- Application for accommodation tax for

Results from 2017 Community Survey for Steamboat Springs conducted by City

- Overall, survey indicates the value the community places on river health and the expectation for the City to manage this resource.
- Respondents ranked management of the health of the Yampa River as 5th in importance among city services listed (49% essential and 39% very important). They ranked management of recreation activities on the Yampa River as 29% essential and 47% very important.
- Respondents ranked quality of services in managing the health of the Yampa River has 20th in list of city services (13% excellent and 50% good). The quality of management recreation activities was ranked as excellent by 12% and very good by 52%.
- Respondents ranked “Improve and protect the health of the Yampa River” as the most important action for the city government to take among the actions listed (48% essential and 35% very important).

- “In an analysis of quality and importance ratings, Yampa River health management was categorized as higher in importance and lower in quality; this is a service unique to Steamboat Springs that residents value, and on which the City might also want to focus more attention and/or resources.” - Steamboat Springs 2017 Community Survey Executive Summary.

Draft Plan Goals for Consideration

Overall goals for plan developed from common themes of the core interests or goals for the plan from each stakeholder group as identified by their Advisory Committee representative. Goals also developed to align with three other key planning documents: Yampa River Management Plan (2004),

Committee comments:

- Assessment is building upon work that has been done, shouldn't be seen as new.
- Specifically include alignment with other plans in #5
- Is it appropriate for goals to be vague? Seems very lofty for this specific scope.
- Should we specifically call out water rights protection?
- Should we specifically address goal to identify “preferred target flows”
- Do goals adequately address overall purpose of addressing changing climatic conditions and drought?

Revised draft goals

- Build upon a science-based assessment of river system conditions and needs to inform decision-making and long-term monitoring
- Improve water quality and preserve and enhance healthy aquatic and riparian habitat
- Protect a strong local economy, particularly the agriculture and recreation sectors
- Meet regulatory responsibilities
- Establish integrated and flexible management strategies that align with other planning efforts and strengthen resilience and sustainability
- Foster a culture of shared stewardship of the Yampa River among stakeholders and community members

Preliminary River Health Assessment Findings

Mark and Seth presented framework for assessment, which included 19 reaches within 5 river segments and a score for the level of impairment across 10 variables and 28 sub-variables indicating stream functionality. Some highlights of discussion included the following:

- In the Chuck Lewis segment shows degraded morphology and structure, intense gravel mining in the 70s changed the river. Also, there is a narrow functional floodplain due to levee-type embankments such as railroad
- In town, very artificial environment, river cut off from floodplain, infrastructure to protect structures. Stream stability and resilience lower.
- Below town, good riparian forest and potential area of restoration

Community Workshop in November

- Steamboat Springs Community Center, 6:00-8:00pm on a weeknight. Exact date to be determined.
- Advisory Committee encouraged to attend to help communicate project purpose and learn more about the health assessment findings

- Intended Outcomes:
 - Provide info on project purpose
 - Educate about river health assessment grades
 - Understand areas of greatest concern and community values in river and its management
 - Improve awareness of different types of management strategies and tools
 - Get input on levels of support for different types and additional ideas/opportunities

Next Steps

- Distribute Yampa River Health Assessment Report for Advisory Committee review
- Work with technical stakeholder groups to identify metrics and criteria for setting targets
- Discuss findings with Yampa/White Basin Roundtable, Friends of Yampa, and Yampa Valley Flyfishers.
- Meet with Local Government & Land Use Focus Group to identify interests, issues, and opportunities
- Schedule next AC meeting and community workshop.

