



## AGENDA

Left Hand Watershed Center  
BOARD MEETING  
2:00-3:30 pm, September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
Via ZOOM call

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82864200091?pwd=WEVERUtxTEQ3ei90TXhjWFhaOEtHdz09>

Meeting ID: 828 6420 0091

Password: 366572

Welcome and Introductions	Christopher Smith	2:00 PM
Public comments on items not on the agenda	Christopher Smith	2:05 PM
Left Hand Watershed News	All	2:10 PM
Approval of Minutes: August	Christopher Smith	2:20 PM
Update from St. Vrain Left Hand Water Conservancy District	Sean Cronin	2:30 PM
Projects Update	Jessie Olson	3:00 PM
Adjourn	Christopher Smith	3:15 PM

NOTE: The Watershed Center will make reasonable accommodation for individuals with known disabilities at meeting and events per our non-discrimination notice. Visitors needing accommodation are encouraged to contact any staff member to request such accommodation 48 hours in advance of such event.



09/08/2020

To: Left Hand Watershed Center Board of Directors

From: Jessie Olson, Executive Director

RE: September board meeting agenda items

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## Meeting Minutes

Draft meeting minutes for August are attached (attachment 1) for review and approval.

## Board Items

- Third quarter financial report will be included in the October meeting packet.
- Finance committee will meet in October to discuss the draft budget.
- Sean Cronin with St. Vrain Left Hand Water Conservancy District will give an update to the board this month.
- I've started reaching out to board partners to schedule an annual end of year presentation and request 2021 funding.
- We're beginning to gear up for Colorado Gives Day (December 8<sup>th</sup>) and developing post card mailers to request funding. We expect to send those out in November. We will also proactively reach out directly to potential donors in advance of December.

## Project updates

### 1. Adaptive Management, Stewardship & Monitoring

Field season continues! Here is an update:

- We've continued field data collection in Left Hand and St. Vrain, collecting instream habitat data, pebble counts, and photo monitoring.
- Staff oversaw contract botanists this past month who surveyed all of our vegetation plots in Left Hand and St. Vrain.
- Benthic macro invertebrate surveys paired with water quality sampling are planned for this month in St. Vrain and Left Hand.
- We're planning a volunteer after school monitoring event in September in Lyons as we wrap up the last few habitat surveys in the Lyons area.
- We expect to wrap up all field work by the end of October.

We've started planning for several fall stewardship projects in Left Hand and St. Vrain:

- We completed warranty site walks with Left Hand Excavating and subcontractors for the Legacy project this past month. Contractors will begin vegetation maintenance activities for those projects this month. There may also be additional instream repair work.
- Our weed control contractor will complete mowing and reseeding on Left Hand and St. Vrain project sites over the next couple months.

- We're planning a planting event on Left Hand Creek with a Boy Scout troop this month.
- We're planning a volunteer "after school" project on Left Hand Friday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> from 1-4 PM where we will make and install willow waddles along the pond edge at our Legacy project site 1. This should be a fun family friendly project!

## **2. Adaptive Management at Scale**

- We've had several partner meetings to begin outreach for the project.
- Staff received and compiled all the results from the partner surveys and began preparations for a larger kick off meeting planned for in late September/early October.
- We've received expected 2020 match funding for this project from all partners except the City of Boulder and Boulder County. Boulder County contracting is underway and City of Boulder expects to make their committed contribution to the project in 2021 or 2022.

## **3. Bureau of Reclamation Water SMART Grant: Watershed Restoration Plan**

- The project will contribute \$100,000 toward development of a Watershed Restoration Plan for the St. Vrain Basin. This project also helps fund organizational development, partnership building and development of conceptual restoration designs. We've started this project this past month by meeting with partners and continuing partnership building.

## **4. Community Science**

- Front Range Watershed Days is this week (Saturday, September 12<sup>th</sup>)! We've been very busy getting ready for this event and organizing the many logistics required with leading a bio blitz in four watersheds. Lyons schools will be filming the event to help capture content for students to use via virtual learning this year. We've received sponsorship from six entities (at \$500 each).
- We're planning three volunteer events in September and October as noted in item 1 above.
- We've been invited to contribute a series of watershed-related articles to the Lyons Recorder. Our first one will be published in October.
- We continue to distribute monthly e-newsletters.

## **5. Mines, Water Quality Monitoring & Analysis**

- We started our EPA Technical Assistance Grant this month last month and are finalizing contracting for our selected technical advisor(s)- Pinyon and Ryan-McKnight. We expect to kick off the project shortly after contracting.
- We've increased our water quality sampling frequency in the watershed thanks to new funding from Left Hand Water District so that we can document mine related impacts during low flow conditions.
- We assisted Left Hand Ditch Company this month by collecting water quality samples within the Lake of the Pines ditch where there was a concern of a sewage leak near the ditch.
- We continue monthly water quality monitoring using River Watch and continue to communicate with the EPA/CDPHE regarding water quality concerns below Captain Jack.

## **6. Fish Passage Feasibility Study and Education Initiative**

We're wrapping up the Fish Passage feasibility study this week and expect to have an update to the board in the next couple months.

## **7. SVCC & St. Vrain Partnerships**

- We've been working with contractor Flywater to complete the comment response and update

designs after receiving the first round of comments from landowners. We expect to submit our Hazard Mitigation Review application to Boulder County within the next couple of weeks.

- Two entities committed cash match funds for our CWCB grant for Science, Stewardship and Education within St. Vrain Watershed. Both donations are still pending and may not come until 2021. This includes a pending CEMEX donation of \$15,000 and landowner (Matt Rooney) contribution of \$10,000. Assuming these donations do actually come through, this should not affect our ability to complete the project as scoped in the grant proposal.
- We continued coordination with CDOT hwy 7 project along the South St. Vrain Creek.

## **8. Forest Health**

- Recent forest fires have highlighted the need to continue our focus on Forest Health initiatives in the watershed.
- Coordination and communication within the St. Vrain Forest Health Partnership has been slowed by recent fires and COVID response but we were able to make progress this past month in finalizing the group's partnership plan and approach for working together for the next two years. We will now begin reaching back out to the larger group to get feedback on the plan and approach and begin implementing the plan. We welcome feedback from all (see attachment 2).

## **Other Items**

- As discussed last month, we are working with Greener pastures to update our website again. We expect to complete this work this month. In addition, we will work on developing a "virtual" annual report this year instead of a printed report. We expect this will appear as a page of the website that will highlight the year's accomplishments. We expect to complete this by October.

## **Attachments:**

1. BOD August Meeting Minutes
2. St. Vrain Forest Health Partnership Plan

**Attachment 1**  
August Board meeting minutes



## Board Minutes – June 16, 2020

### **Attendees**

1. Chris Smith
2. Kathy Peterson
3. Jessie Olson
4. Yana Sorokin
5. Deb Hummel
6. Sue Schauffler
7. Barbara Luneau
8. Roger Loving
9. Mark Schueneman
10. Monica Bortolini
11. Chuck Oppermann
12. Gabe Tuerk (joined at 2:10)
13. Ken Lenarcic (joined 2:15)
14. Lauren Duncan (joined 2:30)
15. Audrey Butler (joined 2:45)

### **Welcome and Introductions**

- Chris S called the meeting to order at 2:05.

### **Public comments on items not on the agenda**

- Chris S asked for comments not on the agenda. None were added.

### **Left Hand Watershed News**

- Chris S opened discussion about Left Hand Ditch Company's maintenance work. Jessie explained that Ditch Company is conducting standard maintenance at Left Hand Park Reservoir which required them to drain the reservoir. This is resulting in high flows in the creek. After reservoir is drained, instream flows are expected to be typical of what occurs after the irrigation season. James Creek is not impacted by this and Lake Isabelle has not been drained yet.
  - Mark asked how this will impact irrigation rights. Kathy explained that this is an ordinary operations and maintenance activity and will zero out everyone's storage. Kathy noted it will be helpful to have Terry offer some education information in the winter about how the whole system operates. Others agreed that would be helpful.
  - Roger asked if the reservoir is entirely drained and Kathy said that typically some water is left. Chris S clarified that the reservoir only has natural fill and that the repair had to do with the head gate.

- Jessie added that Sue and staff had a call with EPA and CDPHE so that they were aware of the change of flows. They are planning to do water quality sampling next week during the new base flow conditions. They are also continuing to work on the in-tunnel treatment system and they are simultaneously getting the temporary water treatment plant operable again as backup during the work. Chris S asked if EPA typically lowers the amount of water that they let out of the mine during the non-irrigation months and others responded that they did not. Jessie will forward on future communications. Jessie added that this highlights the importance of notifying the community ahead of expected changes in flow.
- Jessie noted that the forest health MOU was signed by parties in the county and it seemed like it was overall a success.

### **Approval of Minutes**

- Kathy moved, Sue seconded, to approve the minutes from the June 16 meetings with date correction edit; the motion carried unanimously.

### **Financial Report**

- Jessie went over the summary page of the financial report line by line. She noted we are at the halfway point.
- Chris S asked about zero spent in some of the unrestricted fundraising categories and if the minimal unrestricted general fund revenue was related. Jessie noted that we are primarily using grant dollars to pay for fundraising since we have current funding sources that allow for fundraising but we should also focus on gaining more revenue in the unrestricted donations category. Kathy suggested that we reach out to potential donors sooner about Colorado Gives Day. Jessie agreed and suggested that targeting individuals with capacity to make large donations would be great, and she would appreciate being introduced to those individuals. Gabe echoed Kathy's idea to reach out sooner.
- Sue moved, Chris seconded, to approve the second quarter financial statements as presented; the motion carried unanimously.

### **EPA Procurement**

- Jessie and Yana went over the procurement process for the EPA TAG.
- Roger made motion, Sue seconded, to follow the award recommendation of the selection committee with the additional direction that if the two selected teams can't split the tasks the committee could select just one of the two teams; the motion carried unanimously.
- Jessie shared the resolution and Chris S confirmed that he would sign the resolution.

### **Watershed Days Update**

- Jessie described the approach for watershed days, focusing just on the bioblitz component. She asked for feedback on proceeding and noted that it would be helpful to have members provide some information to participants about watershed topics and particular areas of expertise.
  - Chris S noted that he had no objections to staff proceeded with planning and other agreed.
  - Jessie went over various contributors and participants. Some board members offered to help. Jessie confirmed that kids are welcome.

### **Annual Report Update**

- Jessie suggested that instead of a full-blown annual report, this year we could focus on a website update with a virtual annual report/webpage and an additional mailer.
  - Kathy suggested using post cards as the mailer so it's not something that needs to be opened.
  - Jessie clarified that the website is being updated with new name, new branding taglines, and new language around our service areas. This would also include a page with 2020 accomplishments rather than a printed annual report.
  - Others agreed that a mailing/post card is a good idea supported with social media posts about the updated website and annual report.
  - Jessie confirmed that all agreed to this approach.

#### **Other**

- Chris asked for any other updates. Gabe noted that there are a lot of people recreating at Buckingham Park and he thinks is a good time to remind people to support their watersheds. Others agreed and discussion ensued. Jessie will look into putting information about the Watershed Center at Buckingham Park.
- Jessie noted that she doesn't anticipate any voting items in September. Kathy suggested sending just an update packet instead of a board meeting. Others agreed that would be helpful and we could have a board meeting if something comes up.

#### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 pm.



**Attachment 2**

St. Vrain Forest Health Partnership Plan



# **St. Vrain Forest Health Partnership**

## **Project Information & Partnership Plan**

### **September 2020**

#### **Introduction**

Federal, state, and local partners have long recognized the St. Vrain Basin as a critical landscape at risk for catastrophic wildfire, yet lacked resources to address the issue. However, the USFS and NRCS's recent award of the Joint Chiefs funding provide a new catalyst (and the necessary resources) for partners to address this issue. In 2019, partners formally joined to restore landscape-scale forest health and resilience throughout the St. Vrain Basin, with a strong foundation of community support. Today, the St. Vrain Forest Health Partnership includes participation from diverse federal, state, local, and community representatives throughout the St. Vrain Basin.

#### **Context**

Our partnership focuses on the 625,000-acre St. Vrain Basin, which is at risk for catastrophic wildfires that will have devastating effects on landscape values. The basin is a vital resource for our ecosystem and community. The headwaters extend to the continental divide in Rocky Mountain National Park. A large portion of the basin is a Research Natural Area (RNA), which is designated for non-manipulative research, education, and the maintenance of biodiversity. The basin also serves as a critical corridor for big horn sheep migration. Within the RNA, prescribed fire may be used to improve habitat for bighorn sheep to perpetuate and restore natural conditions. In the heart of the basin, Button Rock Preserve is the primary water source for 100,000 domestic water users and provides regional recreational to over 60,000 visitors annually. Further, the watershed is popular place to live, with thousands of full or part-time community members and private properties. Yet our montane forests have become dense and overcrowded, increasing their vulnerability to large wildfires, insect epidemics, and disease, particularly in the face of climate change. As catastrophic wildfires become increasingly common in the west, this threat is acutely evident in our basin where a major wildfire has not occurred in 20 years. Experts also note that high incidents of lightening in the area make the area particularly susceptible to a future wildfire.

#### **Vision**

Our vision is a healthy and resilient watershed that can sustain wildfire and other natural disturbances to protect communities, keep water supplies reliable, and support diverse flora and fauna for current and future generations.

#### **Mission**

Our mission is to bring together diverse stakeholders and community members to collaboratively plan and implement cross-jurisdictional landscape-scale forest restoration in the St. Vrain Basin that prepare the landscape and community to receive wildland fire as a natural part of the ecosystem.

## **Team Member Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Partnership Structure**

The Partnership involves over 30 stakeholders with diverse backgrounds including USFS, NRCS, State Forest Service, Boulder County, City of Longmont, Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, local towns, conservation districts, water districts, fire districts, police departments, schools, environmental groups, and private landowners. The Watershed Center, a nonprofit that works to protect and restore watersheds for people and the environment using a collaborative and science based approach, leads partnership coordination. However, the informal governance structure fosters a collaborative leadership and ensures participatory engagement from a diversity of partners. While decisions are made by individual entities, the partnership allows collaboration across boundaries to create the greatest impact and landscape-wide benefits. Additional partnership building will entail reaching out to new stakeholders to maximize basin-wide representation and formalizing partner roles and responsibilities.

### **Left Hand Watershed Center**

- Lead coordinating entity
- Received funding via Colorado Water Conservation Board and the USFS to lead project coordination and outreach.
- Manage funding, grant administration, and ensure that funding criteria are met and project is complete within scope and budget.
- Main point of contact for all team members.
- Keep all members of the team in the loop on project progress, timeline, and more.
- Strive for open and transparent communication between all team members.
- Facilitate discussions between stakeholder representatives and community members.

### **Agency Representatives & Landowners**

- Collectively, agency representatives and landowners own land in the entire project area. Each landowner is considered part of the project team. Landowners:
  - Attend meetings and/or participate in surveys to help team develop a watershed wide vision.
  - Assist in developing overall project goals and desired conditions statements.
  - Participate in writing, reviewing, and/or commenting on draft restoration plans.
  - Assist in keeping the project on schedule by being responsive.
- Communicate information and obtain feedback from respective agencies as appropriate.
- Communicate questions and concerns to Watershed Center project manager.

### **Community Representatives**

- Community representatives strive to help us understand diverse community perspectives relevant to the project, and ensure a long lasting solution is developed with broad community support. The partnership strives to include representation across diverse geographies and neighborhoods. Community representatives will:



- Attend meetings and/or participate in surveys to help team develop a watershed wide vision.
- Assist in developing overall project goals and desired conditions statements.
- Participate in reviewing and commenting on draft restoration plans.
- Assist in keeping the project on schedule by being responsive.
- Communicate information back and obtain feedback from their respective communities.
- Communicate questions and concerns to Watershed Center project manager.

### **Technical Representatives**

- Technical representatives provide technical expertise necessary for the team to understand and use the best available science. These representatives may have specialties from ecology, botany, wildlife biology, forestry, ornithology, hydrology, watershed science and more. Technical representatives will:
  - Attend meetings and/or participate in surveys to help team develop a watershed wide vision.
  - Assist in developing overall project goals and desired conditions statements.
  - Participate in reviewing and commenting on draft restoration plans.
  - Assist in keeping the project on schedule by being responsive.
- Communicate information and obtain feedback from their respective communities and/or relevant technical groups.
- Communicate questions and concerns to Watershed Center project manager.

### **Communications Representatives**

- Communications Representatives are public affairs officers and/or communication specialists for representative agencies. Communications Representatives will:
  - Collaborate on and develop communication strategies, key messages, materials, etc.
  - Distribute materials to participating internal and external representatives
  - Leverage social media platforms.

## **Partnership Process and Schedule**

### **Approach**

- Our goal is to achieve broad support among basin wide communities by working collaboratively to develop a shared vision and desired conditions statement(s) to ensure the long-term health and resilience of our forests. Throughout the process we strive to include diverse scientific and community perspectives.
- We expect to select priority restoration locations with a range of representative conditions within the watershed (from upper to lower montane and from developed to undeveloped) to describe the range of desired future conditions within the watershed and/or the expected ecological trajectory.
- Following development of the desired conditions statements and project prioritization, landholding entities will work to collectively develop implementation (restoration) plans.



Partners will also collaborate in developing an adaptive management framework, to assess how well restoration efforts achieve the desired future conditions and/or are on the trajectory toward achieving the desired conditions.

- Meetings are expected to take place via zoom and by participating in on-line surveys.
- Participation is voluntary.
- Throughout the project, we will reevaluate and update this project charter as needed.

## **1. Mission and Vision Statement —August-October 2020**

Partners will work collaboratively to confirm the partnership vision, mission, and approach. The draft vision, mission and approach included in this document was developed by the partnership steering committee in spring/summer of 2020. The steering committee used input provided by the entire group during the visioning session in February 2020. Now, the steering committee is seeking feedback from the entire group.

### **Timeline/Actions**

- Update [www.watershed.center](http://www.watershed.center) website with current project information. (August/September 2020)
- Email a project update to current participants/stakeholders. (September 2020)
- Develop on-line survey to ask project partners for feedback on mission, vision, goals, structure, and approach. (September/October 2020)
  - Ask who else should be included in these conversations.
  - Ask to distribute to their networks.
- Use social media platforms, neighborhood mailing lists, US Postal Service, etc. as appropriate to contact residents in planning area announcing partnership & opportunity for community representative's to participate. (September/October 2020)

## **2. Desired Conditions Statement – September 2020 - April 2021**

In concert with task 3 below, we will work with partners to define the desired future conditions within a range of representative priority areas. The group will aim to select representative areas across lower and upper montane forest types, and from developed to undeveloped lands.

Colorado Forest Restoration Institute (CFRI) will help the group build off of and utilize the best available science (including information from the Upper South Platte Partnership) and will coordinate with the larger Front Range Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project.

Historical forest stand reconstruction data will be used as a basis for desired conditions descriptions, while also considering future long term ecological trajectory of the landscape. Partners will work to find actual reference stand conditions within the watershed using aerial imagery, LiDAR, field recon and/or local knowledge to describe the range of desired conditions.

### **Timeline/Actions**

- Steering Committee Zoom Meeting to confirm approach and assign tasks to lead prioritize workshop and desired conditions workshops. (September 2020)
- Prioritization & Desired Conditions Workshops (October 2020-February 2021)



- Socially distanced (or virtual) field trip to sites with “reference” desired conditions (October-November 2020)
- Develop *DRAFT* Purpose and Need and desired conditions statement(s) in coordination with CFRI and technical experts, incorporating goals from stakeholders and community members. (February 2021)
- Obtain feedback on *DRAFT* Purpose and Need and desired conditions statement(s) from project partners (March 2021)
- Develop final Purpose and Need and desired conditions statements (and illustrations as funding allows) based on feedback from project partners. (April 2021)

### **3. Identify Priority Areas – October 2020 - April 2021**

In concert with task 2 above, partners will work to define priority restoration areas within a range of representative conditions. The group will aim for representative areas across lower and upper montane forest types, and from developed to undeveloped lands. The group will start with [PODs](#) developed by CFRI, and prioritize down to 10-100 acre level units.

- Survey and/or Zoom Workshop as described in task 2 above to define project/geographic priorities within planning area. (October 2020-February 2021)
- Develop prioritization criteria & priority map for restoration implementation (February-April 2021)
- ID funding sources and funding plan for restoration implementation (and potential match funding sources) (March- June 2021)

### **4. Project Restoration Planning – April 2021 - August 2022**

In concert with tasks 2 and 3 above, project partners will define the proposed restoration actions and adaptive management process that will be used to achieve desired conditions within the planning area. Priority areas defined in task three will be used as actual on the ground examples to describe the range proposed actions (and adaptive management approach) in the planning area. Planning will be done at appropriate scale and level of detail necessary to complete the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) proposed action and scoping letter.

- Project partners will define restoration actions and adaptive management process within in planning area as appropriate for NEPA (April 2021-August 2021).
- USFS will initiate public scoping as required by the NEPA (August-October 2021)
- USFS will complete environmental analysis as required by the NEPA, informed by collaborative partnership and feedback received via scoping process.
  - Release draft decision for public comment (Winter/Spring 2022)
  - Release final decision (Summer 2022)

### **5. Project Implementation**

Landholding entities work collaboratively to further develop site specific project implementation/restoration plans for priority project locations, relying on input from technical experts, and in consideration of the range of desired conditions.

- Develop project implementation plan for partner review/feedback (On-going)



- Monitor treatment outcomes and utilize an Adaptive Management Process as appropriate, (On-going)

**6. Future Phases TBD**

- ID targeted neighborhood outreach strategies based on the geographic priorities identified in step 3 above.
- Define on-going collaborative process to implement an annual adaptive management process.

**St. Vrain Forest Health Partnership- Current Members**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Steering Committee Member?</b>
Left Hand Watershed Center	Jessie Olson, Yana Sorokin	Yes
USFS	Angela Gee, Kevin Zimlinghaus, Chad Buser, Mark Mendonca	Yes
NRCS	TBD	Yes
Boulder County	Stefan Reinold, Scott Golden, Eric Lane	Yes
Wildfire Partners	Jim Webster	Yes
Boulder Valley and Longmont Conservation Districts	Chad Julian	Yes
Colorado State Forest Service	Ben Pfohl	Yes
City of Longmont	David Bell, Ken Huson, Danielle Levin	Yes
Rocky Mountain National Park	Doug Watry	Yes
Colorado Forest Restoration Institute	Tony Cheng	Yes
Lyons Fire District	TBD	Yes
St. Vrain and Left Hand Water Conservancy District	Sean Cronin	
Town of Lyons Ecology Board	David Batts	
Allenspark Fire District	Gary Maguire	
Lyons Fire District	TBD	
Boulder County Sherriff's Office	David Buchanan, Seth McKinney	
Left Hand Fire District	Chris O'Brien	
Left Hand Water District	Jason Whitmore	
The Nature Conservancy	Paige Lewis, Rob Addington	
Pinewood Springs Resident & SVVSD employee	Sarah Wegert	
Lyons Resident & author of Allenspark CWPP	Ron Gosnell	
Allenspark Resident	Mary Stern	



Raymond Riverside Resident & St. Vrain Creek Coalition Board member	Bill Ellis	
Part-time Allenspark resident and retired USFS employee	Sally Collins	
Longmont resident & Nature Conservancy Employee	Paige Lewis	
Allenspark Resident	Robert Kerr	
Additional Landowner residents TBD (e.g. Meeker Park, Big Elk Meadows)	TBD	
Colorado Parks and Wildlife	Mark Leslie	
Colorado Native Plant Society	TBD	