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Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources



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Division of Local Government

**Colorado Water and Land Use Planning Alliance Workshop**  
Wednesday, March 7 | University of Denver, Sturm College of Law

**Meeting Summary**

**Participants:**

Tim York (Aurora Water), Drew Beckwith and Amelia Nuding (Western Resource Advocates), Susan Daggett (RMLUI), Andre Dozier (CSU), John Duggan (CDPHE – WQCD), Stu Feinglas (Westminster), Greg Fisher (Denver Water), Jim Holway and Erin Rugland (Babbitt Center), Torie Jarvis (NWCCOG-QQ), Peter Kinney (Metro Mayor's Caucus), Rocky Piro (CO Center for Sustainable Urbanism), Peter Pollock (Lincoln Institute of Land Policy), Jayla Poppleton (Water Education Colorado), Flo Raitano (DRCOG), Jeremy Stapleton (Sonoran Institute), Susan Wood (APA Colorado), Kevin Reidy (CWCB), Anne Miller and Logan Sand (DOLA), & Matt Mulica and Jonathan Geurts (Keystone Policy Center)

**Next Steps and Action Items**

- CWCB and DOLA will convene the two sub-groups within a month to begin making progress on their respective work plans
- CWCB and DOLA will organize an in-person in June

**Notes**

Kevin Reidy opened the meeting and summarized the origins of the Colorado Water and Land Use Planning Alliance. The group met initially in December and aligned on the common goal contained in the Colorado Water Plan which states that “By 2025, 75 percent of Coloradans will live in communities that have incorporated water-saving actions into land-use planning.” They discussed what a successful integration plan would look like and how to track toward the goal. The group asked the CWCB and DOLA to determine an appropriate structure under which to form a strategic alliance.

The facilitator (Matt Mulica) initiated a round of introductions, and participants reflected on activities that they have recently undertaken related to the integration of land and water planning. It was noted that much good work continues to be developed on this issue.

Kevin Reidy introduced a proposal for the Alliance to develop a best management practices (BMP) program, to coordinate between those who are already conducting education and outreach on incorporating water into land use planning.

Anne Miller emphasized that the overall purpose of such a program would be to help local planners/governments help the state make concrete progress in achieving the goals of the Colorado Water Plan.

Alliance member discussed strategy with Kevin and Anne, including the following questions and responses.

- How did a BMP program emerge as the strategy, and were other options considered?
  - o A strategy like this one, in which a collection of resources and ideas were compiled into a single playbook, has worked well in promoting water efficiency.
- Does this strategy include a plan to influence policy?
  - o Developing a coordinated set of materials will build the collective message and credibility necessary for any future policy recommendations.
  - o Also, one of the purposes of convening the group is to determine and recommend policy, either within state agencies or via legislation, which will help accomplish the shared goal

The group considered whether there is a need for a coordinated set of BMPs. Alliance members offered the following comments.

- Yes, there is a need for a coordinated set of BMPs, both to educate planners and to build political support.
- Municipalities want a menu of options rather than mandates, resources that will enable them to identify the smartest way forward. Decision support tools in particular will help municipalities with less capacity.
- The key word we have used is “coordinated.” This group should avoid trying to create a single resource to supplant those already in use, not only to save time but also to maintain a diverse set of resources and delivery mechanisms to respond to a diverse range of needs.
- It would be helpful if this group could compile and organize the existing resources into a step-by-step how-to guide for planners as well as water providers.
- A useful model might be the Boomer Bond, an evaluation process designed to determine how well multiple government departments are prepared to handle an aging population.
- Time spent in technical assistance is sometimes more influential than funding as a motivator for action on complex topics like this one.
- Building awareness is the first step, generating the attention and motivation necessary to welcome more detailed information.
- The facilitator captured the following sequence that could help frame the implementation process:
  - o Program awareness
  - o Training materials
  - o Guidance documents
  - o Decision support tools
  - o Policies, codes and plans
  - o Technical assistance
  - o Measurement toward goal

The group reviewed the proposed subgroups that are being set-up as part of the program development phase as outlined in the chart below. A conversation ensued regarding whether these were the appropriate initial subgroups.

- The group agreed that the two proposed subgroups make sense to pull together the tools and resources
- After the informational resources and tools have been organized and/or developed, additional efforts can be focused on outreach, implementation, and technical assistance
- This group needs a clearer understanding of what metrics need to be tracked to determine the progress made in reaching Water Plan goals.
- The program should also plan to target builders/developers, so that water use is considered at the design stage rather than just during planning and permitting.
  - o It might help to reach developers if this group set up a label (e.g., Water Sense) that represents BMP attainment and might be marketable to consumers.
  - o Such a program label might also be connected with tap fee discounts.
- Consultants are another potentially influential audience that could also be a target audience as they often help write comprehensive plans.

Group members split into two subgroups to discuss information resources and data and modeling.

*Note: please see the following link to access the working documents for the two subgroups:*

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1bclqpp\\_v4lznwid7I21QX2XT5yU0uLlj8tfaTVGBK5s/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1bclqpp_v4lznwid7I21QX2XT5yU0uLlj8tfaTVGBK5s/edit?usp=sharing)

**Information Resources Subgroup**

The information resources subgroup discussed how to compile and evaluate the existing resources being used to communicate water information to those involved in land use and development decisions. The subgroup identified the following rubric for categorizing resources, which is designed to identify gaps in coverage.

**Resources Rubric**

- Audience targeted
- Format and delivery
- Content is beginning or advanced – level of detail

To test the usefulness of the rubric, the subgroup used it to categorize three resources, including the soon-to-be-published WRA Manual, the Growing Water Smart trainings offered by the Sonoran Institute, and the trainings offered by DOLA and CWCB.

<b>Resource</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>Format/delivery</b>	<b>Level</b>
WRA Manual	Planners already familiar with 101 material on water and land use planning	10-15 chapters, includes a buffet of strategies backed up by case studies	Meant to be used as a reference rather than a curriculum. Very detailed.
Growing Water Smart training, Sonoran Institute	Land use planners, local gov't, and water providers with plans to implement water saving strategies in the	Workbook and webinars	Advanced, with an emphasis on how to adapt the planning process and communicate with the

	planning process		local community
Trainings, DOLA – CWCB	Planners, local gov’t, water providers	3 introductory and 2 advanced 1-hour webinars; 3 2-3-hour interactive modules	Emphasis on establishing “do-it-yourself” confidence for planners; desire to establish a train-the-trainer model, as well

From these three examples and others the group was aware of, subgroup members identified the following potential gaps in resources.

- Resources for developers
- Connection with certification standards (e.g., LEED, STAR communities, etc.)
- Engagement with decision makers
- Connection into a step-by-step, how-to process

The subgroup identified the following next steps.

*Near term next steps*

- Keystone will create a sample matrix based on the resource evaluation rubric developed by this group, to be considered on their first call.
- Once the matrix has been populated with applicable resources, group members will write abstracts featuring the highlights and relative usefulness of each resource.
- The subgroup will draft a one-pager of persuasive outreach language to build awareness and serve as an introduction to the need for the resources.

*Mid-term objectives*

- Build a framework that illustrates how various comprehensive plans support the overall Water Plan goals.
- Consider connecting these goals and resources with Colorado Climate Compact communities.
- Establish a recognition program to celebrate communities that have taken the steps recommended by the BMP program.
- Determine the number of communities needed to meet the goal of 75% adoption set by the Alliance and track progress made towards this goal in a public-facing space such as a website.

**Data and Modeling Subgroup**

The data and modeling subgroup discussed the current tools and models that are available and their capabilities. The following capabilities were listed as being currently available or being developed in existing tools:

- Water consumption data by land use type
- Relationship between housing product types and pervious area
- Linking land use characteristics and water use
- Aerial photography to determine pervious area

- Predictive models for transportation
- Exploratory scenario planning tools to better plan for uncertainty

The subgroup discussed what capabilities would be useful to land use and water planners in terms of model development. They determined that while they may have suggestions or thoughts, that prior to initiating a model development process that it would be most useful to survey land planners and ask what capabilities they would like to see in a decision support tool or multiple tools.

Next steps for the subgroup include:

- Develop a list of all currently available decision support tools and models along with their specific capabilities for the subgroup to review
- Convene a call of the subgroup
- Convene a meeting of land use and water planners to determine what may be useful to them and specifically what questions do they need help in answering at various
- Potentially develop an electronic survey that can gather results from a broad audience
- Collaborate on the development of a decision support tool(s)

Draft BMP development program

