

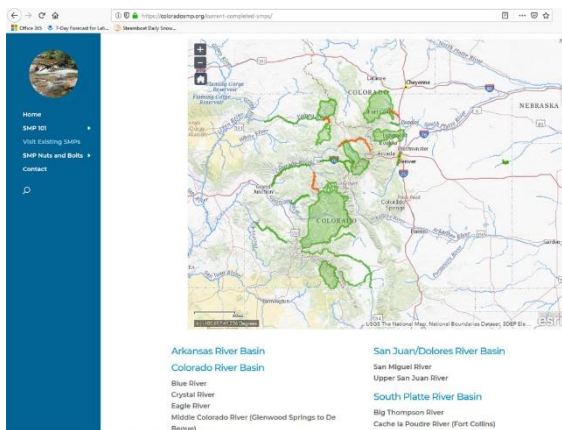


Support for stream
management planning
in Colorado

2020 Coalition Direct Support

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is a stream management plan and why would we undertake one?



Over 20 coalitions have started SMPs. Visit coloradosmp.org to explore their projects, best practices and case studies.

Stream management plans (SMP) are data-driven assessments of river health that help communities prioritize how to protect or enhance environmental and recreational assets in their watershed. A SMP uses biological, hydrological, geomorphological and other data to assess the flows, water quality, and other physical conditions needed to support collaboratively-identified environmental and/or recreational values.

Using this assessment, stakeholders can identify and prioritize management actions to maintain or improve flow regimes and other stream conditions at a reach scale. SMPs are not regulatory, and participation is not required; therefore, community involvement and buy-in is necessary.

SMP efforts can be combined with other kinds of watershed planning including irrigation upgrades, new or expanded storage projects or source water protection. SMPs result in a diversity of projects and next steps. Goals, projects, and outcomes that have emerged from stream management plans include everything from water management objectives to revegetation and riparian restoration work to educational goals and policy changes. Visit coloradosmp.org to read about SMP basics and determine if it is a useful tool for your community.

2. What help can River Network provide?

With support from the Colorado Water Conservation Board and Gates Family Foundation, River Network is enlarging the pipeline of local coalitions that are interested, ready and capable of undertaking stream management plans during CWCB's 2020 grant cycle.

In 2020, River Network will assist up to three coalitions interested in applying for state funds for a stream management plan. The assistance will vary with the needs of the coalitions, but could include engaging appropriate stakeholders, identifying desired goals, writing a scope of work, raising matching funds and writing the grant application.

If the expertise of River Network staff is not adequate to accomplish all needed support, **River Network will allocate up to \$5,000 per coalition to cover time and travel expenses for expert assistance.** The specific type of capacity-building assistance will vary with the needs of the coalitions, but could include:

- Development of communication materials for the coalition to share information with their community members
- Grant writing services to apply for matching funds
- Facilitation services and expenses associated with hosting events to educate and involve stakeholders
- Consulting advice in water rights modeling, in-stream flow leasing, habitat restoration, fisheries management, etc.

If your coalition is led by agricultural stakeholders, additional financial resources are available.

3. What are River Network's expectations of the coalitions?

To be considered for assistance from River Network in 2020, your coalition must have:

- Interest in developing a stream management plan and intent to submit a grant application to CWCB's Watershed Restoration Grant program in 2020.
- The internal capacity (staff time and financial resources) to plan and pursue funding for a stream management plan.
- Have positive relationships with the appropriate stakeholder base.
- A positive track record related to stream health planning, protection and restoration projects (ie: you've done work in this realm before).

4. What resources would we need to dedicate?

To be considered for assistance in 2020, the coalition must have the internal capacity (dedicated time and financial resources) to lead the work to scope and pursue a SMP. River Network will act in a support capacity to the coalition's leadership and will provide advice, direction, and an agreed upon amount of hands-on work, but the responsibility lies first and foremost with the coalition's staff, Board and volunteers.

The resources needed to implement a stream management plan are not insubstantial. It is a strategic, multi-year undertaking that will influence the goals and activities of the coalition. Exact resources needed will vary depending upon how quickly the planning process unfolds, the geographic extent to be studied, the number of stakeholders involved, and the amount of prior data collection and planning accomplished, among other factors. To be conservative, a coalition should have at least .25FTE dedicated to the process for at least two years and some dedicated resources in the budget for stakeholder meetings, communication materials, a review of data needs, etc.

5. What is the timeline and selection process?

River Network will meet with groups to discuss their interest and ability to undertake a stream management plan through **January 30, 2020**. Interested coalitions must complete a short application (**due Feb 15**) that will assess their interest in stream management planning, their current level of engagement with relevant stakeholders, their capacity to receive the needed support and assistance, and their commitment to actively participating. An advisory committee made up of River Network and the CWCB will make the final selection.

6. What coalitions has River Network worked with so far?

Since 2017, River Network helped the following groups submit successful grant applications for SMPs:

St. Vrain & Lefthand Water Conservancy
District

Eagle River Watershed Council

Middle Colorado Watershed Council

Yampa, White, Green Basin Roundtable

Western Slope Conservation Center

Big Thompson Watershed Coalition

White River and Douglas Creek
Conservation District

Mancos Conservation District

Since 2016, our work initiating planning efforts, bringing together stakeholders, and guiding the scoping of projects has resulted in a tripling of grant dollar requests, and has launched over \$2million worth of river health projects.

7. How do I get additional information?

Visit smpcolorado.org for a full guide to the basics of SMPs, and where they are currently happening. Visit rivernetwork.org/resource/stream-management-planning-in-colorado for application materials.

For more information about River Network's support, contact:

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