

Chapter 5 – Partners

The Clean Water Act Section 319 describes the responsibility of the State Nonpoint Source Programs to engage, solicit and consider the input of local, State, and Federal organizations in the creation of a Nonpoint Source Management Plan. The guidance also dictates that:

“Utilization of local and private experts in developing and implementing a management program under this subsection, a State shall, to the maximum extent practicable, involve local public and private agencies and organizations which have expertise in control of nonpoint sources of pollution.”

In 1996, the EPA issued national guidance that contained specific requirements and instructions for updating State NPS Management Plans. This guidance described nine key elements for effective management of NPS pollution. The second element of this guidance states: *The State strengthens its working partnerships and linkages with appropriate State, Tribal, regional, and local entities (including conservation districts), private sector groups, citizens groups, and federal agencies.*

Colorado understands the intent of these mandates and the importance of integrating partners into a successful NPS program. Differing viewpoints, new technologies and strategies for addressing NPS pollution, cost/resource sharing, and local knowledge are some of the benefits enjoyed through collaboration to achieve the ultimate goal of water quality restoration and protection.

5.1 Colorado NPS Program Strategy on Partnerships

The NPS program maintains and cultivates numerous relationships with local, State and Federal partners. These relationships are dynamic and respond to the NPS needs of the partnering agency and the NPS program. The NPS program relies on partnerships to develop, maintain and enhance its program and move forward to accomplish its goals. The importance of quality partners in the NPS program is most overtly recognized in that Colorado must partner with project sponsors to implement on-the-ground and planning efforts designed to protect or restore water quality. Beyond this project level partnership, the NPS program is assisted by many groups that provide feedback to the NPS program on ways to improve application/reporting aspects of the program, trends in NPS work statewide and provide technical expertise on NPS BMP implementation/planning. Table 5.1 (Colorado NPS Partnership Benefits) captures many of the benefits the Colorado NPS program receives through its partnerships with project sponsors, partnering agencies and nongovernmental organizations. Table 5.2 (Action Items to Maximize the Benefits of Participation) details the means in which Colorado NPS program will maintain and improve the benefits yielded from partnering with others outside of the Program. Appendix H highlights many of the partnerships in which Colorado NPS is currently involved.

TABLE 5.1 - COLORADO NPS PARTNERSHIP BENEFITS	
Program Area	Benefit to Colorado NPS Program and Partners
Development	Provide insight on emerging NPS issues.
	Local knowledge of issue and affected area.
	Shared mission and goals of NPS reduction/water quality improvement.
	Insight on how Colorado NPS application process/actions/decisions affect other organizations.
	Feedback on how Colorado NPS process/actions/decisions can be improved or modified.
	Ability to assist in NPS outreach efforts to increase participation.

TABLE 5.1 - COLORADO NPS PARTNERSHIP BENEFITS

Program Area	Benefit to Colorado NPS Program and Partners
	Insight on Federal level NPS priorities and actions that lead to consistency between the levels as well as to jointly partner for complementary activities and programs.
	Assistance in resolving potential inconsistencies between Federal and State NPS programs.
Implementation	Practitioner point of view/lessons learned.
	Cost/Resource sharing.
	Technical expertise to refine restoration plans.
Monitoring and Evaluation	Ability to conduct long term monitoring to assess project effectiveness.
	Ability to promote and enforce environmental covenants.
	Development of BMP efficiencies for use in technical review of project plans.
Reporting	Accurate measurement of load reductions to meet EPA reporting requirements.
	Lessons learned section in final report allows the sponsor to review the project and the process.

TABLE 5.2 – ACTION ITEMS TO MAXIMIZE THE BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION

Program Area	Action item
Development	Reach out and invite new members that bring differing viewpoints and perspectives to NPS management to participate in the Alliance or other means to contribute to NPS.
	Maximize the Alliance ability to perform outreach to potential project sponsors by providing the Alliance with target communities/impairments derived from internal prioritization efforts.
	Focus internal project area/impairment prioritization efforts to provide clear direction of the NPS program and our areas of importance to better inform partners of NPS goals and Program Direction.
	Further engage local governments in the collaborative approach to addressing NPS issues in Colorado.
	Continually update the NPS Colorado Website to provide for better information sharing of our program and provide a tool with which consumers of the information may provide feedback to the NPS program.
Implementation	Maximize benefits derived from the establishment and continued participation in technical committees or subgroups such as the Sediment Task Force.

TABLE 5.2 – ACTION ITEMS TO MAXIMIZE THE BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION

Program Area	Action item
Monitoring and Evaluation	Engage academic institutions to support the scientific-based evaluation of BMP effectiveness in NPS programs.
Reporting	Continue to ensure Project Sponsors provide to Colorado Data Sharing Network or EPA Ambient Water Quality Monitoring System (AWQMS).

5.2 - Collaboration with the United States Environmental Protection Agency

The Agency (EPA) provides funding for the NPS Programs via cooperative agreements with the States. Under CWA Section 319, states, territories and tribes receive grant money to support a wide variety of activities including technical assistance, financial assistance, education, training, technology transfer, demonstration projects and monitoring to assess the success of specific nonpoint source implementation projects. EPA also supervises the implementation of the NPS program according to the Nonpoint Source Program and Grant Guidelines for States and Territories, October 2003 and approves individual PIP. Other EPA programs also sometimes provide support for watershed efforts or individual projects, though other EPA funds cannot be counted as match. Examples include Brownfields site assessments at legacy mine sites, Brownfields grants for remediation of priority legacy mine sites identified in watershed-based plans, and direct monitoring support from the Region 8 laboratory. EPA also provides a national database to track and report NPS grants and projects.

This database, the Grants Tracking and Reporting System provides a framework for the NPS program to track and monitor progress on sponsors projects. In addition, GRTS is a tool for developing summary reports critical to demonstrating fiscal accountability, project focus on NPS issues, load reductions, and associated reports for each project. These documents are used internally by the State to track progress, by EPA to report to Congress and for the NPS coordinators to share information with project sponsors. The database has a public access portal, where the public at large can login as guests and read grant and project-specific information.

5.3 – Collaboration with the Colorado NPS Alliance

A main component of Colorado NPS program to collaborate with and engage local and government entities is accomplished through the Colorado Nonpoint Source Alliance (Alliance). The Alliance is a volunteer advisory group that meets quarterly and for consultation on proposal abstracts and proposal review. The primary function of the Alliance is to provide technical input on implementation activities, watershed planning and education/outreach projects. It serves the NPS program by providing technical assistance, practitioner point of view, and collaboration with NPS efforts from other agencies and through the promotion of NPS activities to colleagues and the general public. The Alliance provides comments to the WQCC and interacts with watershed groups and other stakeholders as part of the state program’s public outreach. As of December 2010, over 61 participants were involved in the Alliance, from over 50 organizations including federal, state and local government, nonprofit organizations, universities and private citizens