

# Mancos River Resilience Project

## Steering Committee Meeting Notes

September 15, 2016

Attending: Bob Marshall, Travis Custer, Kevin Heiner, Gretchen Rank, Marcie Demmy Bidwell, Ann Oliver, Steve Monroe, and Becca Samalski

### **Welcome and Introductions**

- Travis Custer- soil conservation expert. Board member of MCD and President of San Juan Conservation District
- Kevin Heiner- Conservation Legacy
- Gretchen Rank- Mancos Conservation District Executive Director
- Marcie Demmy Bidwell- Mountain Studies Institute Executive Director
- Ann Oliver- Project Manager for the grant. History since 2010 as Project manager with MCD. Served as a watershed coordinator in that capacity.
- Steve Monroe- recently retired from NPS as water program manager for integrated monitoring and inventory.
- Becca Samalski- Firewise Montezuma Coordinator, Dolores Watershed and Resilient Forests Collaborative coordinator. Wildfire impacts
- Bob Marshall- director of Mancos Conservation District, interested in science being useful

### **Purpose of the Mancos River Resilience Group Science Committee**

- MCD initiated a coordinated effort to inventory the river and establish a list of projects for watershed improvements, including irrigation and diversion improvements, and restoration.
- Paul Morey and Mesa Verde National Park initiated this resilience effort recognizing that the Park is part of a much larger system and collaboration is an important tool for individual/park goals.
- The district is becoming more involved in broader issues that affect water in the district. There are important practice (efficiency) and water policy options to improve the overall community and environmental access to water.
- Recognition that climate change and the idea that the future may be different than the past has changed the discussion and the potential goals.

### **Goals of the Mancos River Resilience Working Group**

- Assess current and future conditions of the Mancos River
- Assess the vulnerability of the Mancos River watershed to future changes in the watershed
  - Convene current available science and experts

### **Goals and Activities of the MCD Grant- Task 1**

The goals, objectives and activities are provided as an attachment (Mancos River Overview). The following are questions and clarifying discussion from the steering committee meeting.

## **Questions and Discussion**

- 1. *Is there room for establishing the Mancos community values? Yes, with some caveats***
- 2. *What is the audience for the project? And for the report card?***
  - a. Important to understand the values of the Mancos Valley Community in order to direct the content of the report. At the same time, the challenge is the limited resources of this specific grant.*
  - b. MCD has a vested interest in results and uses their community meetings to share results. Annual meeting is October 29<sup>th</sup>, and presents an opportunity to bring more community members to the table.*
- 3. *What is the project goal and what will it not do? It is important to state upfront that this is information gathering, and not a complete effort by intentional project design. The process is intended to collect and synthesize information that can then support conversations about what to do with this information. Additionally, it will identify data gaps and needs for additional information. Therefore, it will be a living document.***
- 4. *Will this project develop a community process for review and input? What other convenings or planning efforts might be informational for goal setting or value setting that could be incorporated or consulted as a part of the effort?***
  - a. River Walk*
  - b. Town of Mancos visioning process for the town*
  - c. Trail system process*
  - d. Montezuma DOLA Community Economic Development Plan (CEDs)*
  - e. Other efforts and plans are welcome, if identified*

## **Role of the Science Committee Steering Committee**

- Collaborate towards the gathering of existing data and data gaps assessment
- Provide direction for the Mancos River Assessment
- Contribute to the Assessment/report card
- Assist with stakeholder engagement in the development and delivery of the report

## **Current Steering Committee Tasks**

- Develop initial list of community values
- Seek volunteer/partner to check with the community
- Coordinate the synthesis of the assessment

## **Examples of Similar Efforts**

- Community Indicators Report- Steamboat has an example

- Present the state of the resource- winnowed down to a specific list that shed light on community values, without grading or being
- State of the San Miguel- complex and detailed graded report. Based on 5-8 major topics, with 1-4 indicators per topic.
- Fort Collins-

### **Stakeholder Partners**

- Jackson Reservoir and Water Conservancy District
- Town and County
- Trout Unlimited- Garrett, working with ranchers efforts
- Celine Hawkins, TNC (past UMU water rights)
- Colin Larick, UMU water quality, need also Water RIGHTS person
- BLM- need to identify a champion

### **Priority Issues/Values/Resources Assessment**

From the knowledge in the room, we draft the first list of values for the watershed from our existing understanding of priorities and goals developed for the area, either by the Mancos Watershed Plan or other efforts- these values will be circulated for comment. These values are proposed as:

1. Water Quality
2. Water Quantity- as defined by the multiple lenses of users
  - a. Uses- water rights, water supply
  - b. Water uses, water inefficiencies
3. Agricultural values
  - a. Diversions
  - b. Infrastructure and efficiency
  - c. soils
4. River Ecosystem Health-
  - a. Fisheries and aquatic health
  - b. Habitat
  - c. Flora and Fauna
5. Watershed Health- the larger watershed
  - a. Land use
  - b. Forest Health
  - c. Fire in the watershed
6. Community Infrastructure in Watershed- exposed utilities, municipal infrastructure, trails, roads, highway, recreation, wetlands and fens (ecosystem services) (wildfire and post-fire impacts)
7. Economics

### **Future Change (need a different term)**

- Water needs (quantity)

- Wildfire
- Climate change
- Invasives

### **Opportunities for Strategies in the Mancos River by category**

- Manage yields
- Water Conservation
- Water Efficiency
- Restoration tools- beaver, revegetation, thinning
- Information needs (gaps assessment)

### **Science Meeting Format and Agenda**

1. Audience: Science Group, which have been participating at certain Process to catch up new people
2. Format: cover new topics, discussion to support outcomes (below)

### **Science Meeting Outcomes**

1. Agreement on resilience measures (need to select metrics)
2. Agreement on the initial values
3. Agreement on how resources are assessed (measured, graded)

### **Vulnerability Assessments- Current or desired efforts**

- Forest cover changes
- High Value Resources and Assets Assessment (wildfire)
- Post-fire impacts

### **Next Meeting**

1. Set agenda- additional topics needed.
2. Develop a shortlist of metrics-
  - a. Look into “resilience” metrics
3. Clarify what we mean by Science Committee and level of expertise needed
4. Review stakeholder list and develop special invites and recruitment to the meeting