

South Platte River Urban Waters Partnership (SPRUWP)
Federal Partners Meeting
March 19, 9 am – 12 pm
Meeting Summary (As of 4/8/16)

Participants

- CSFS: Keith Wood and Susan Matthews
- EPA: Stacey Eriksen and Judy Bloom
- NPS: Alan Ragins
- USFS: Dana Coelho and Rick Cooksey
- USGS: Bill Battaglin
- Facilitator: Laura Sneeringer, CDR Associates

Agenda

- Status update on the SPRUWP coordinator role and current efforts
- Agency-specific current activities and expectations for resources and involvement
- Discuss next steps for the SPRUWP

Action Items

- Keith, Dana and Stacey will develop talking points and communication strategy for describing the coordinator transition. They will ensure there is an opportunity to thank Devon for her service at the June UWP meeting.
- Keith and Dana will search for old CDC Foundation proposals that went unfunded and send to Chris Poulet.
- Keith will distribute the Natural Capital Grant Scope of Work.
- Themes from Sept. 2016 Leadership Team interviews will be distributed.

Status Update on the SPRUWP

Keith Wood, Susan Matthews, Dana Coelho and Stacey Eriksen provided an overview of how and why the coordinator position will be changing in June 2016.

The second 6-month contract with The Greenway Foundation (TGF) will expire on June 30, 2016, and there is no further federal grant funding to support the current coordinator position. CSFS, USFS and EPA continue to receive monthly updates from Devon and Jeff on the status of Work Plan activities. It is expected that TGF, and The Water Connection initiative, will continue to be partners engaged in the SPRUWP. There have been challenges over the past two years in a constantly evolving partnership environment.

CSFS is interested in sustaining capacity in watershed forestry, including SPRUWP coordination. A new coordinator would likely plug into a number of watershed partnerships, and not just be focused on the SPRUWP. We need to continue the conversation about what skills and qualities are needed in a SPRUWP coordinator. We all recognize the value a coordinator can bring to the effort.

Agency-Specific Current Activities and Future Expectations

Each agency provided a brief overview of:

- Current efforts related to the SPRUWP
- Expectations for future involvement in activities and/or available resources to support activities

- Level of support from local and national levels

ATSDR

- Creating a water unit in their organization nationally. This is driven by Flint, water-borne illness, pollution, etc. Water contamination issues are the focus.
- There continues to be national level support and Chris will have staff time.
- The SPRUWP proposed ideas to CDC Foundation in the past. There is continued interest, though a national scope may be more competitive (e.g., tie to Water Quality Assessment Tool).

EPA

- EPA is institutionalizing the Urban Waters Program and Urban Waters Federal Partnership and continuing to invest in it. Headquarters is working with OMB to define the program and create performance measures. The program is now within the Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watersheds (OWOW). It has been part of the Office of Water. Other small programs will be consolidated with urban waters in an Office of Water reorganization.
- Stacey has received clear direction from Headquarters to reinvigorate the SPRUWP.
- Priority topics for funding include projects that involve environmental justice, environmental education, green infrastructure, and water quality monitoring. Some specific resources are Urban Waters Small Grants (expect to get 2-3 in EPA Region 8 this cycle), National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grants, and support from the Urban Waters Learning Network.
- EPA has requested \$30K to continue the Water Quality Assessment Tool and funding to provide facilitation support to the SPRUWP.
- The National UWP Workshop will be held in July in Washington, DC.

CSFS

- Keith is leading the CO Natural Capital Grant. A contract with ESF is just being initiated.
- Priorities include revision and implementation of the Forest Action Plan, watershed forestry, stormwater management, and forest and grassland restoration.
- Resources are available now from a variety of sources to support a coordinator position, though more may be needed to continue this role in the future.

NPS

- RTCA staff are the ones that are involved in SPRUWP efforts. Staff support community driven programs that are focused on greenway and parks connections. They provide outreach and education support more than technical assistance.
- The SPRUWP and Urban Waters Federal Partnership are concepts NPS wants to support, but they are not a funded agency priority or an explicit part of the agency's [urban agenda](#). There are no NPS properties in the S. Platte Watershed.
- Some relevant projects that RTCA is involved with include:
 - [GOCO Inspire Coalitions](#) – Opportunity to connect youth and diverse audiences with trails and open space. There are multiple coalitions in the watershed: Westwood Neighborhood, Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge, Cole Neighborhood, Westminster, and Jefferson County.
 - Helping to build a volunteer program for habitat restoration with the Butterfly Pavilion, City of Westminster.
 - Planning support to Adams County to connect the Clear Creek Trail with the S. Platte Trail.

- JeffCo Open Space and Conifer are developing a master plan for Beaver Ranch in Upper S. Platte. It is primarily focused on fire treatment via demonstrations for private land owners.

USFS

- USFS is having a higher-level conversation about how to support urban areas, and it continues to be supportive of SPRUWP and Urban Waters Federal Partnership goals. It is easier to support projects when you can demonstrate they are working across boundaries and have local buy-in. Regional and National leadership remains supportive of Dana's engagement in this and other urban endeavors.
- Urban and Community Forestry funds have remained stable and have been used to fund grant programs. USFS is a funding and reviewing partner for [National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Grants](#) and reviewing partner for the EPA Urban Waters Small Grants.
- Focus is on sustainable community forestry programs, environmental education, and connecting people with the outdoors (especially in environmental justice communities).
- Relevant Projects:
 - Natural Capital Grant (USFS funding)
 - Collaborate with NPS and others on National Get Outdoors Day
 - Every Kid in a Park and More Kids in the Woods, Children's Forest Corridor
 - Megaregions, Urban Field Stations
- Collaborative Restoration Workshop is scheduled for April 2016 and will discuss UWP, hosted by National Forest Foundation.

USGS

- There is no designated FTE or funding to support SPRUWP efforts, however Bill's boss has allotted him some time out of overhead. There is also this type of support at the national level. Funding requests have been made the last three years, but they have not been approved. If funding was approved, it would be through the Co-Op Program which allows USGS to match 30-40% as long as work is related to the mission.
- There is support from Tom Iseman and Lisa Pelstring at DOI, and a new initiative is being created that sounds similar. It's related to federal agencies working with companies.
- Relevant projects:
 - Water quality assessment
 - Bear Creek
 - Stock show redevelopment discussions
 - Water quality monitoring as part of other work.
- The Baltimore UWP has an existing relationship with USGS that was expanded upon.

Consider Re-engaging:

- FWS has land within the boundary and active projects (e.g., Rocky Mountain Arsenal, Three Ponds).
- USACE – it is hard to coordinate since their regional office is in Omaha.

Discuss Focus Areas/ Next Steps

The group agreed that during this transition time it is best to focus on a few areas - the Water Quality Assessment and Natural Capital Grant (note that ESF will be engaging SPRUWP partners as part of their scope). It's also critical to have a communication strategy for the coordinator transition and to find a way to thank Devon for her service at the June UWP meeting.

After a new coordinator is in place, the SPRUWP may want to identify additional focus areas. There was energy around increasing environmental education efforts and connecting technical and education efforts to help distribute information more effectively. New potential focus areas include invasive species and fire preparedness issues. The importance of coordinating with the Upper S. Platte was also noted.

Other ideas include:

- Topic-focused networking events
- Presentations about Water Quality Assessment and Natural Capital Grant at full partnership meetings that describe how partners can be involved