

# The Water Connection/ Urban Waters Partnership

October 20, 2015

1:30-3:00 PM

Aurora Municipal Center

**Meeting called by:** Devon Buckels, TWC/UWP

**Note taker:** Mollie Hayden, SCRGP

**Facilitator:** Devon Buckels, TWC/UWP

**Attendees:** Ashley Grace, Denver Public Works; Melissa Toering, Aurora Water; Bill Battaglin, USGS; Jeff Lakey, LLG International; Bernadette Kuhn, CSU Natural Heritage Program; Mollie Hayden, SCRGP; Rachel Steele, Greenway Foundation; Amy Jacobi, CUSP; Donny Roush, Earth Force; Stacey Eriksen, EPA; Amy Riesbeck, EPA; Karen Hancock, Aurora Water; Sean Lieske, Aurora Water; Barbara Biggs, CDM Smith; Devon Buckels, TWC/UWP

## Meeting Notes

**Agenda item:** Presentation: Evaluating Wetland Condition in Urban Denver      **Presenter:** Bernadette Kuhn, CSU Natural Heritage Program

### Discussion:

- CSU Colorado Natural Heritage Program
  - Provide scientific info. and tools needed to help guide effective conservation action in CO
  - [www.cnhp.colostate.edu](http://www.cnhp.colostate.edu)
- CO Wetland Information Center
  - CO Wetland Inventory Mapping Tool
- Project background
  - Provide current data on condition, rarity, location, acres, and types of wetlands in county
  - EPA Region 8 Grant
  - City and County of Denver
  - 2012-2014
- Purpose and need
  - Wetland services (groundwater recharge, filtration of nutrients and sediment, maintenance of stream baseflow, recreation, etc.)
- Project objectives and outcomes
  - Objectives:
    - Map existing wetlands
    - Evaluate condition
  - Outcomes
    - Managers use info. to prioritize sites
- NWI Mapping Results
  - 2,519 acres of wetlands/waterbodies/riparian features
  - 2.5% of county are wetlands and waterbodies
  - 43% of wetlands are "lakes"
- Landscape position, Landform, Waterbody, Water Flow Path: Estimated Wetland Services
  - Most useful at basin-wide scale
  - Trying to quantify how wetlands functioning
    - Rated on low-, medium-, high-level scale
- Target list
  - Prioritized target list of wetlands for field surveys
- Condition Assessment Methods
  - Ecological Integrity Assessment (EIA)

- Metrics
    - Landscape context
    - Biotic condition
    - Hydrologic condition
    - Physiochemical condition
  - Scoring
    - A-D
  - Results
    - Urban Denver
      - 40 sites
      - 95% Ds
      - 5% Cs
    - South Platte
      - No A's
    - Front Range
      - 32% Ds
      - 62% Cs
      - 6% Bs
    - Mountain Parks
      - Scored higher than Urban Denver sites
- Prioritized list of wetlands
  - Aid in protection/restoration efforts
  - Detailed descriptions of CCD wetlands
  - Overall picture of condition of CCD wetlands
  - Baseline for future studies to determine improvements/declines
- Outcomes
  - Increased understanding of location, extent, condition, type, and rarity of wetland resources
  - Improved wetland protection efforts in project area from stakeholder involvement
- Management Recommendations
  - Water quality improvement
    - Reduce mowing to increase vegetation buffer sizes
    - Re-evaluate herbicide use in highly disturbed habitats
  - Increase forb diversity at restoration sites
  - Protect wetlands from development
- Future Directions
  - Expand wetland condition assessment to other urban areas along Front Range
  - Create more outreach materials for the public

**Agenda item:** Project Sharing / Updates

**Presenter:** Devon Buckels, TWC/UWP

**Discussion:**

- EPA – Stacey Erikson
  - Urban Waters Small Grant RFPs out
  - See Stacey for more information
- Earth Force – Donny Roush
  - Two Urban Waters Small Grants out for programming in Albuquerque and Denver
- CUSP – Amy Jacobi
  - Working closely with watershed coalitions formed after 2013 floods
  - Collaborating w/ Park County on watershed assessment
  - Always doing forestry and fire management
- Denver Public Works – Ashley Grace
  - Updating water quality scorecard
  - Have copies of ultra-urban green infrastructure guide available for people who are interested