

# Stream Management Plan Grantee Project Summary

## St. Vrain & Left Hand Stream Management Plan

### Geographic Description:

South Platte Basin:  
St. Vrain Creek, Left Hand Creek, and  
tributaries

### Size:

About 500 square miles

### Project Homepage:

[svlhwcd.org/stream-management-plan/](http://svlhwcd.org/stream-management-plan/)

### Primary Contact:

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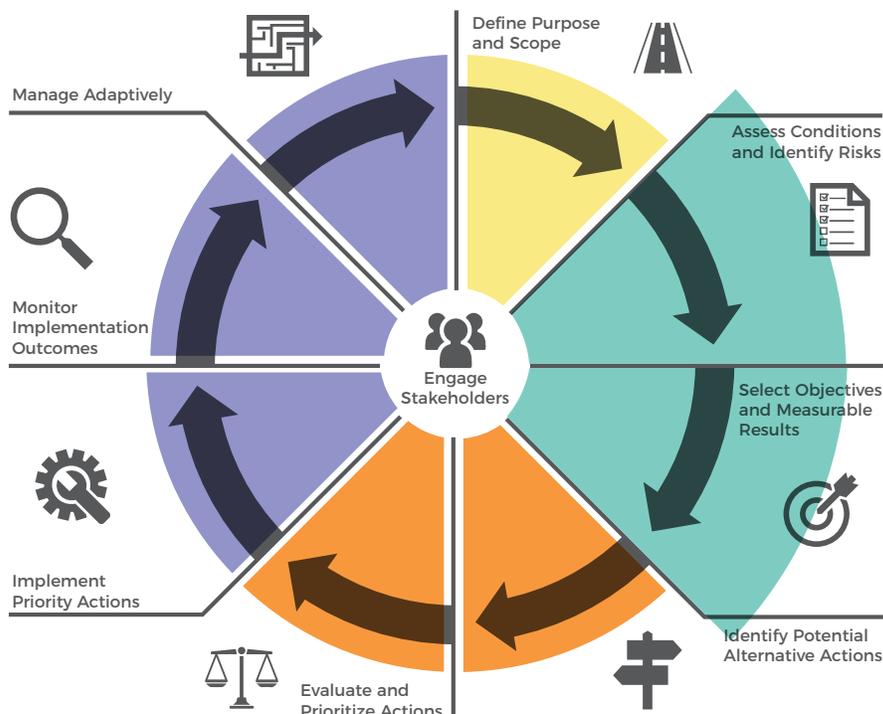
### Project Timeline



### Stakeholder Groups Involved in Planning Process

- Agricultural producers
- Riparian landowners
- Aquatic and riparian science
- Environmental advocacy
- Utilities or other water management
- Recreation & tourism
- Local government & land use planners
- State and federal agencies

### Current Planning Phase



**COLORADO**  
Colorado Water  
Conservation Board  
Department of Natural Resources

## Project Goal Statement

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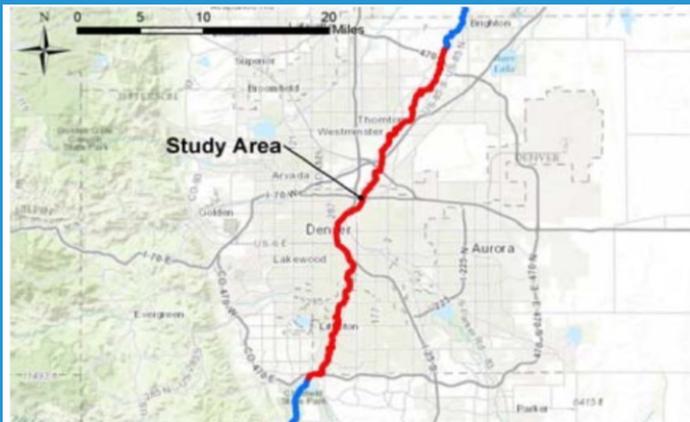
To collaboratively identify projects and management strategies in both St. Vrain and Left Hand Creeks that transition stakeholders from flood recovery to stream health projects that improve environmental conditions in the river while also meeting water users' current and future needs and are aligned with private property rights, public land and resource management plans, and the prior appropriation system.

## Overview

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### Geography:

The St. Vrain & Left Hand Stream Management Plan will encompass South St. Vrain Creek, Middle St. Vrain Creek, North St. Vrain Creek, and the mainstem of St. Vrain Creek to the confluence of the South Platte River, also including the tributary of Left Hand Creek upstream and including its tributaries James Creek and Little James Creek. The St. Vrain Creek watershed receives water from its headwaters in Rocky Mountain National Park and Indian Peaks wilderness and through a transmountain diversion.



### Users:

The St. Vrain Creek watershed (which includes Left Hand Creek) is critical to maintaining the health, biodiversity, character, and economy of communities within the region, including Lyons and Longmont. The creek is home to a diverse population of native fish, receives Colorado River transmountain water,

hosts one of the country's largest outdoor lifestyle festivals, has its headwaters in Rocky Mountain National Park and the Indian Peaks Wilderness, and its confluence in a county that is the largest agricultural economic producing county in Colorado. Further, the watershed has a diverse array of stakeholders that use and derive value from the waters including agricultural users, domestic water providers, and recreational users.

### Need for planning:

The September 2013 flood brought about a reenergized and expansive era of collaboration along with hundreds of millions of dollars for stream restoration. The collaborative flood recovery created a greater level of trust and partnership amongst water users, and many now want to transition to discussions of water management activities that can maximize post-flood projects to further benefit environmental, recreational, agricultural and domestic uses. A stream management plan appears to many stakeholders as a means to facilitate this transition. With such a wide range of uses and an intense focus of study, the St. Vrain poses an excellent opportunity to balance river health with water users' needs through completion of a stream management plan.

## Approach

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The St. Vrain and Left Hand Water Conservancy District is managing the stream management planning effort and hired Biohabitats as the prime consultant on the first phase of its plan. Biohabitats has teamed up with other consultants to complete the assessments, including Wright Water Engineers, Peak Facilitation Group, DiNatale Water Consultants, Open Water Foundation, and Left Hand Watershed Oversight Group.



Project partners have agreed to follow a two-phased approach, the first of which is to better understand environmental conditions and community values. Informed by those community values, the second phase of planning will set specific management objectives by reach and create a work plan to take to implementation.

## Variables and Inventory Assessment Level

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Depending on the purpose and scope determined by local stakeholders, assessments employ different methodologies to evaluate a suite of specific parameters related to stream health and ecosystem goods and services. The comprehensiveness of the data is will vary depending on what is needed to answer core questions addressed by the SMP, ranging from less precise (general, often anecdotal or third-party information) to more precise (data-driven, quantitative metrics). The St. Vrain and Left Hand Stream Management Plan Stakeholder Advisory Group and assessment consultants will finalize their assessment variables and inventory coarseness as they progress through the first phase of planning.

Objectives for Phase 1 include:

1. Develop support from stakeholders and the community at large for projects and management options that improve stream health and water availability for agricultural, municipal and recreational users
2. Create a report using existing data and information, a water users' needs assessment, and river functional health assessment

Objectives for Phase 2 include:

1. Collect additional data on priority reaches as identified in Phase 1
2. Work with stakeholders to select and evaluate specific management objectives for the priority reaches that meet water users and environmental values.
3. Revise the Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plans to reflect the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders for project implementation.

## Budget for Phase 1

Contributing Entity	Amount and Form of Match
CWCB Watershed Restoration Fund	\$150,000 cash
South Platte Basin Roundtable WSRF	\$50,000 cash
St. Vrain and Left Hand Water Conservancy District	\$50,000 cash
City of Longmont	\$17,750 cash
Boulder County	\$17,750 cash
St. Vrain Anglers Chapter of Trout Unlimited	\$ 5,000 cash
JLB Engineering	\$2,500 cash
American Whitewater	\$7,000 in-kind
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$300,000</b>

Photo credits: St. Vrain and Left Hand Water Conservancy District



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