

Yampa Integrated Water Management Plan

Geographic Description: Yampa River Basin – Upper/Middle/Lower Yampa River and Elk River

Size: ~300 river miles

Project Homepage: <https://yampawhitegreen.com/iwmp/>

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Planning Phase: Identify Potential Alternative Actions, Evaluate and Prioritize Actions

Status: Phase I completed March 2022; working to finalize priority actions



Project Goals:

- Identify voluntary actions that the Basin Roundtable can support to make faster progress on the goals in its Basin Implementation Plan.
- Document existing river health conditions and explore actions to improve or protect it in the future.
- Assess irrigation infrastructure and how well it meets water user needs, legal requirements and river health parameters.
- Identify opportunities to use existing or build new storage to meet consumptive and environmental shortages.
- Actively engage roundtable members and other stakeholders.

Overview:

The Yampa IWMP charts a path forward for the basin roundtable to progress on basin implementation plan goals while also building relationships with water users in the basin and responding to their needs. It will outline actions that users can take to protect existing future water uses in the Yampa River Basin and support healthy river ecosystems in the face of growing population, changing land uses, and climate uncertainty.

Approach:

The Yampa IWMP builds on the 2015 Basin Implementation Plan along with additional planning efforts and studies. Prior to preparing a scope of work, the roundtable conducted extensive stakeholder outreach in 2018. Due to the large geography of this project, a two-phase approach was employed. Phase I consisted of stakeholder engagement and a diversion infrastructure assessment, as well as a remote, high-level assessment of stream health in the entire project area. The project then “zoomed into” the middle Yampa segment and conducted fluvial hazard zone mapping and riparian condition scoring. Objectives and recommendations were guided by a set of “Decision Making Principles” meant to ensure that they were actions that water users could support. Three work groups: Ag Infrastructure, Riparian Habitat and Erosion Control, and Shortages and Flows developed objectives and recommended actions and strategies based upon the assessments conducted.

Budget: \$654,750

