

LOWER DOLORES WORKING GROUP FACT SHEET

Meeting #5

April 20, 2009

Potential tools and 319 Watershed Study

Tools for protection of land and water

Presenter: Marsha Porter-Norton
Facilitator for the Working Group

State tools:

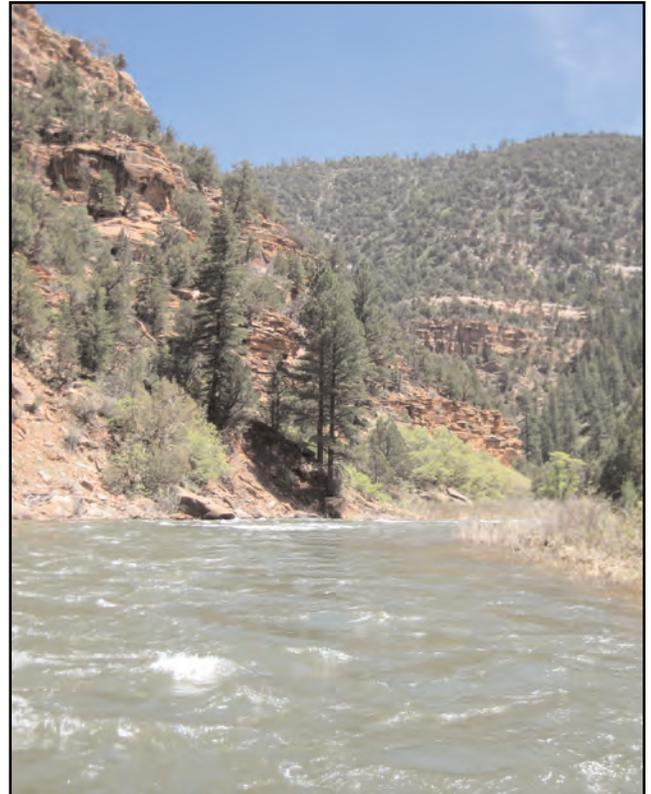
- **The Colorado instream flow program**, a voluntary program by which water rights can be purchased or leased to protect values in a stream. The water is then administered by the Colorado Water Conservation Board. This method primarily protects stream flows.
- **State laws and intergovernmental agreements**, developed on a case-by-case basis.
- **Gold-medal waters designation**, for the highest-quality coldwater fisheries.
- **Outstanding waters designation**, a Colorado Water Quality Control Act classification that is the most protective designation for water.
- **Recreational In-Channel Diversions**, which provide a minimum water right for recreational uses between two points.

Federal tools:

- **U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management resource management plans.** These establish broad guidance for project and activity decision-making.
- **Wild and Scenic River (WSR) designation.**
- **Wilderness-area designation.**
- **Special designations** (e.g., National Conservation Area, Research Natural Area, Area of Critical Environmental Concern). These require legislation.
- **Other special legislation** targeted to a specific area.

County and local tools:

- **Conservation easements on private land.**
- **Local work projects** (tamarisk removal, riverbank stabilization, cultural-site stewardship programs).
- **Land stewardship programs.**
- **County land-use policies.**
- **Local contractual agreements.**
- **Buying land (land acquisition)** from willing sellers.



Marsha Porter-Norton

The Dolores River gorge

The Lower Dolores Management Plan Working Group is working to provide recommendations for updating the Dolores Public Lands Office (Forest Service/BLM) 1990 Dolores River Corridor Management Plan. The Working Group includes diverse stakeholders with many perspectives and interests in the Lower Dolores River Valley. Its goals are to gather information, identify values worthy of protection in the planning area, formulate ideas for protection of the values, and make recommendations to the Dolores Public Lands Office. The Working Group will meet until Fall 2009. Presentations, documents, meeting summaries, agendas and other information related to the Working Group process are posted at <http://ocs.fortlewis.edu/drd/>.

Lower Dolores
Working Group
Members & Alternates

Chester Anderson
Linda Bassi
Steve Beverlin
Ann Brown
Chris Burkett
Jon Callender
Randy Carver
Steve Chappell
Amber Clark
Scott Clow
Clint Cressler
Cole Crocker-Bedford
James Dietrich
Carolyn Dunmire
Nathan Fey
Jim Fisher
Lynn Gardner
Rick Gersch
Art Goodtimes
David Graf
Dave Harper
Vern Harrell
Al Heaton
Shauna Jensen
Rick Keck
Julie Kibel
Gerald Koppenhafer
Ted Kowalski
Tony & Peggy Littlejohn
Andy Logan
Joe Mahaffey
Meghan Maloney
Karel Miller
Ann Oliver
John Porter
Mike Preston
Larrie Rule
Rick Ryan
David Schneck
Lisa Schwantes
Don Schwindt
Leslie Sesler
Jim Siscoe
Bruce Smart
Dale Smith
Doug Stowe
Rowdy Suckla
Steve Trudeau
David Vackar
Chuck Wanner
Mely Whiting
John Whitney
Ernie Williams

Staff

Marsha Porter-Norton
Kathy Sherer
Gail Binkly
Gina Espeland

319 Watershed Study

Presenter: Chester Anderson

Owner/president, BUGS Consulting

BUGS Consulting is engaged in the 319 Watershed Study, a voluntary, non-regulatory watershed planning process for the Dolores River. The goal is to protect or improve water quality on the Dolores River from McPhee to the Utah state line by identifying sources of non-point pollution, identifying best management practices (BMPs) to mitigate those sources, and implementing the BMPs after obtaining funds to do so.

Some sources of nonpoint source pollution are:

- Excess fertilizers, herbicides and insecticides.
- Oil, grease and toxic chemicals from urban runoff and energy production.
- Salts from irrigation runoff.
- Bacteria and nutrients from livestock wastes and malfunctioning septic systems.

Chester would like to receive feedback from throughout the watershed to identify areas of concern.

**To help with the
319 Watershed Study:
Contact Chester Anderson
970-764-7581
chester@bugsconsulting.org**

Working Group discussions and thoughts

- The Working Group emphasized its **concerns about the possible effects of a WSR designation on private property rights** and private landowners. Could such a designation devalue private property?
- It was stated that **water is also a private property right**, as are mineral interests.
- The group said counties' and citizens' interests must be considered, and noted that acquisition of land means a loss of property-tax revenues for counties and schools.
- The group asked for more information in order to evaluate alternatives to WSR designation, and said **all potential management tools should be evaluated in detail** as to their pros and cons.
- It was asked **whether a change in river management is really needed**. One person stated the group should not have a mindset that it has to change current management if things are working well; the river corridor that we recognize as being "wild and scenic" has been in place many years. Marsha agreed that one option is the "null alternative", meaning keeping the status quo.
- However, another person pointed out that the 2007 Draft Revised San Juan Public Lands Resource Management Plan found portions of the Lower Dolores River "suitable" for WSR designation. **If the Working Group does not come up with its own recommendations, then the suitability recommendation** contained in the plan **will move forward**. The Working Group can come up with something of its own that it will be happier with.
- It was suggested that the group **examine the Dolores River according to its different reaches**, all of which have different characteristics and values. There may be an opportunity within those unique reaches to develop different alternatives to WSR designation.

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