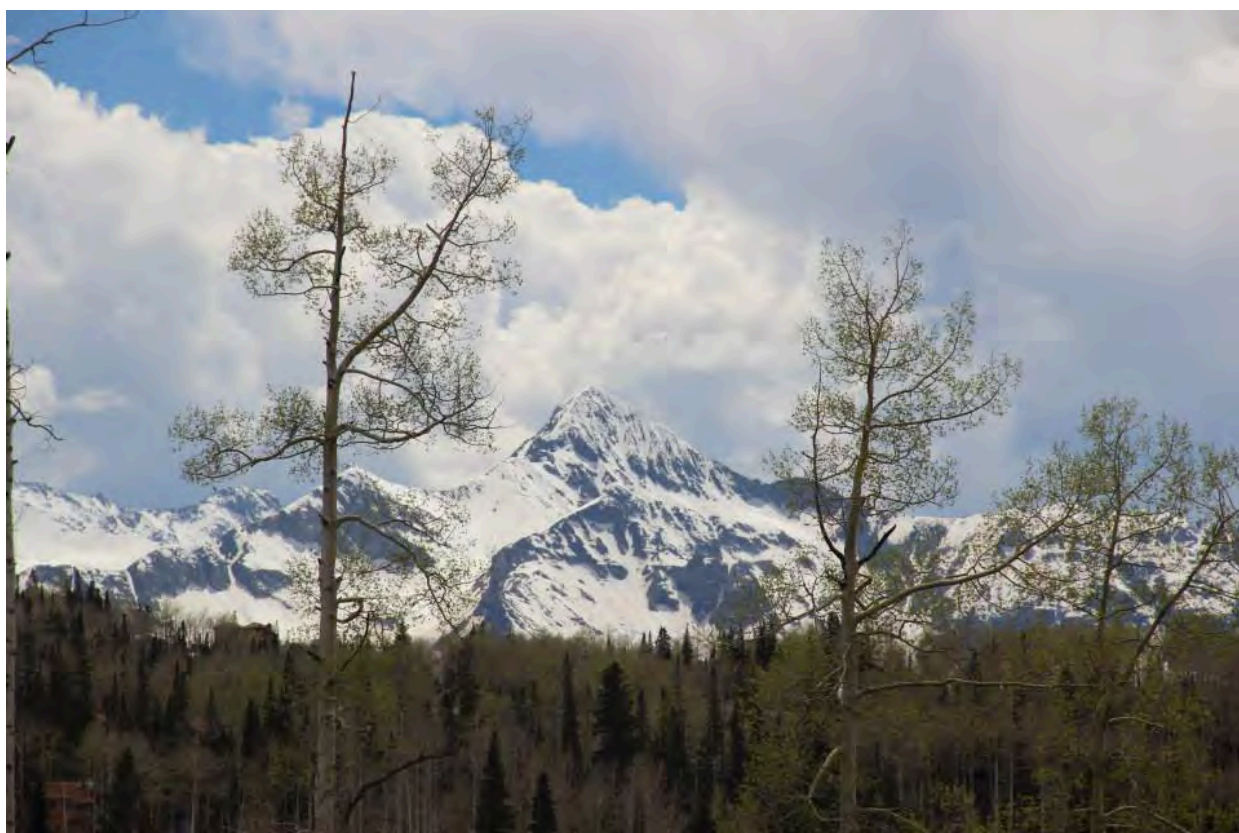


Watershed Wildfire Protection Group

Situation Assessment and Final Report



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In Partnership with:

The Watershed Wildfire
Protection Group (WWPG)
and the Colorado State
University's Center for
Collaborative Conservation

In Fulfillment of Requirements for:

NR-543B Collaborative
Conservation

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We would also like to take a moment to recognize that Rich Edwards and various other members of WWPG shared much of the information in this document with our group and we would like to thank them for their insight on their organization, the work they are doing and the natural history surrounding this topic.



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Figure 1 a map of Colorado fed water systems

Colorado Watersheds

A lifeline for millions

The state of Colorado contains seven primary water providers in the Front Range: Aurora, Boulder, Colorado Springs, Denver Water, Fort Collins, Northern Colorado, and Westminster. These providers receive their water from 10 different watersheds located in the Rocky Mountains, which provides roughly two-thirds of the drinking water for Colorado residents (Front Range Watershed Protection Data Refinement Work Group, 2009). As a result of wildfires in Colorado, there are increased threats to these watersheds, especially in terms of water supply and infrastructure due to sediment and ash deposits, erosion, and flooding. Coupled with climate change impacts such as increased droughts, the watersheds and forests in Colorado are at a higher risk for wildfires to threaten watershed health and viability.

Growing concerns sparked by the most catastrophic wildfire seasons Colorado had ever experienced in 1996 and 2002 (The Buffalo Creek and Hayman Fires, respectively) propelled the need for discussions regarding potential measures to protect the watersheds in Colorado (Edwards, Richard M., 2016). In 2004, the Colorado Front Range Roundtable met for the first time. The purpose of this meeting was to bring a diverse group of stakeholders together to address forest health on the Front Range in Colorado. There were many events that lead up to these initial meetings, but one that was at the forefront of everyone's mind was the fire season of 2002, which had been one of the worst fire seasons Colorado had ever seen (Edwards, 2016).

Continued...

The Colorado Front Range Roundtable's mission is to “engage communities and foster support for the implementation of forest management goals that help protect communities and restore forest health” (Colorado Front Range Roundtable, n.d.)

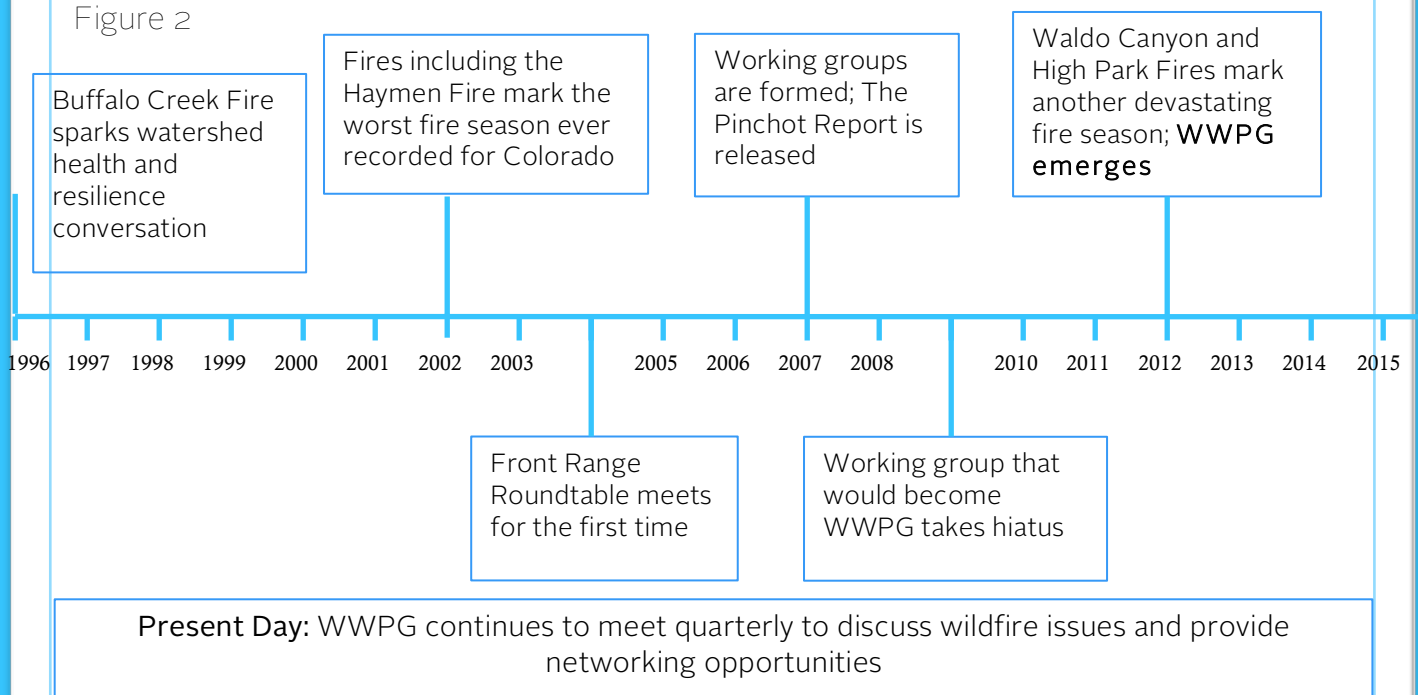
The Pinchot Report, published in 2007, indicated potential management techniques, strategies, recommendations, and costs associated with mitigation projects (Protecting Front Range Forest Watersheds from High-Severity Wildfires, 2007).

The release of this report prompted smaller break-off groups formed to address potential risks and hazards that wildfires pose to watersheds on the Front Range. One of these groups would eventually become the collaborative we know today as WWPG (figure 2).

Watershed Wildfire Protection Group

A Timeline of Major Events

Figure 2



By 2009, the working group activities waned. However, following another devastating fire season in 2012, the group came back together in order to address new and growing watershed concerns. Upon reforming, core members developed a mission, vision, and goals, and took on the name: Watershed Wildfire Protection Group (WWPG). Growing to over 50 members working towards watershed and wildfire protection, members included federal agencies, private organizations, utilities companies, local governing bodies, and nonprofit organizations. These various groups were all focused on creating networking opportunities in order to fund watershed health and management projects on the ground (Edwards, 2016).



WWPG

WWPG is a collaborative working group consisting of a diverse members base that has representation from organizations located throughout the state of Colorado. The group's primary purpose is to connect practitioners to potential funders in order to protect watershed and forest health from catastrophic wildfires (WWPG CSFS, n.d.).

WWPG fills a unique niche in the world of collaborative conservation. They provide an important forum for conversation and networking between organizations who are all working towards the same goal---healthier, more resilient forests and watersheds across the state of Colorado (WWPG CSFS, n.d.).

WWPG's Three Main Components:

"Our **mission** is to promote healthy watersheds by facilitating education and awareness; and facilitating prioritization, implementation, and monitoring for people and wildlife (Fish & Aquatics, for the West, Mammals, Next Generation, Public, Recreationists, Rivers & Streams).

Our **vision** is to protect Colorado's water supplies and critical infrastructure from catastrophic wildfire and other threats by maintaining healthy, resilient watersheds through collaboration, implementation, leveraging, and education.

Our **primary** goals are to connect implementers with funders, provide education and outreach, and maintain a statewide focus."
(WWPG CSFS, n.d.)

In 2012, the state of Colorado experienced one of the most devastating fire seasons in recorded history. More than 138,000 acres and over 600 homes and buildings were lost, and the overall health of many watersheds was jeopardized (American Planning Association, 2016).

As a result of this fire season, and several before it, many groups around the state were working on issues that included forest health, fire mitigation, and watershed sustainability. As such, a group of inspired individuals decided that it was necessary to create a place where all of these projects could come together. The Watershed Wildfire Protection Group, as we know it today resurfaced to connect those addressing issues around watershed and forest health. There were many agencies involved in the creation of the WWPG collaborative. Some of the core members included the US Forest Service, Colorado State Forest Service, Aurora Water, JW Associates, and Denver Water. Since its formation, WWPG has grown to include over 50 partners in various projects across the state of Colorado.

A Unique Working Group

WWPG is unique in their structure and function as a working group. Diverse stakeholders involved in WWPG meet quarterly in various locations across Colorado, making it a priority to hold at least one of these meetings on the Western Slope--the area where most of Colorado's water comes from. These meetings are imperative for the group's operations, because they provide a platform for networking opportunities as well as identifying and maintaining critical watersheds. Watershed analyses are performed and this information is, in turn, shared with the group. Members funding watershed and forest health projects can connect with partners who are executing the work on the ground. These meetings also provide an opportunity for partners to share project and legislative updates as well as success stories and best practices for conducting restoration and mitigation work.

The protection of Colorado's watersheds is critically important. Colorado contains the headwaters for 19 US states and 4 Mexican states (Rich Edwards, personal communication, January 28, 2016). It is vital that Colorado preserves and protects these watersheds to ensure they are healthy for the benefit of millions of citizens. While watershed protection is clearly a benefit for water users everywhere, it has many economic benefits as well. Many water providers are involved with WWPG because wildfires are expensive and dangerous to water supply infrastructure. At the end of the day, a healthy forest equates to a healthy watershed, something that everyone can benefit from.

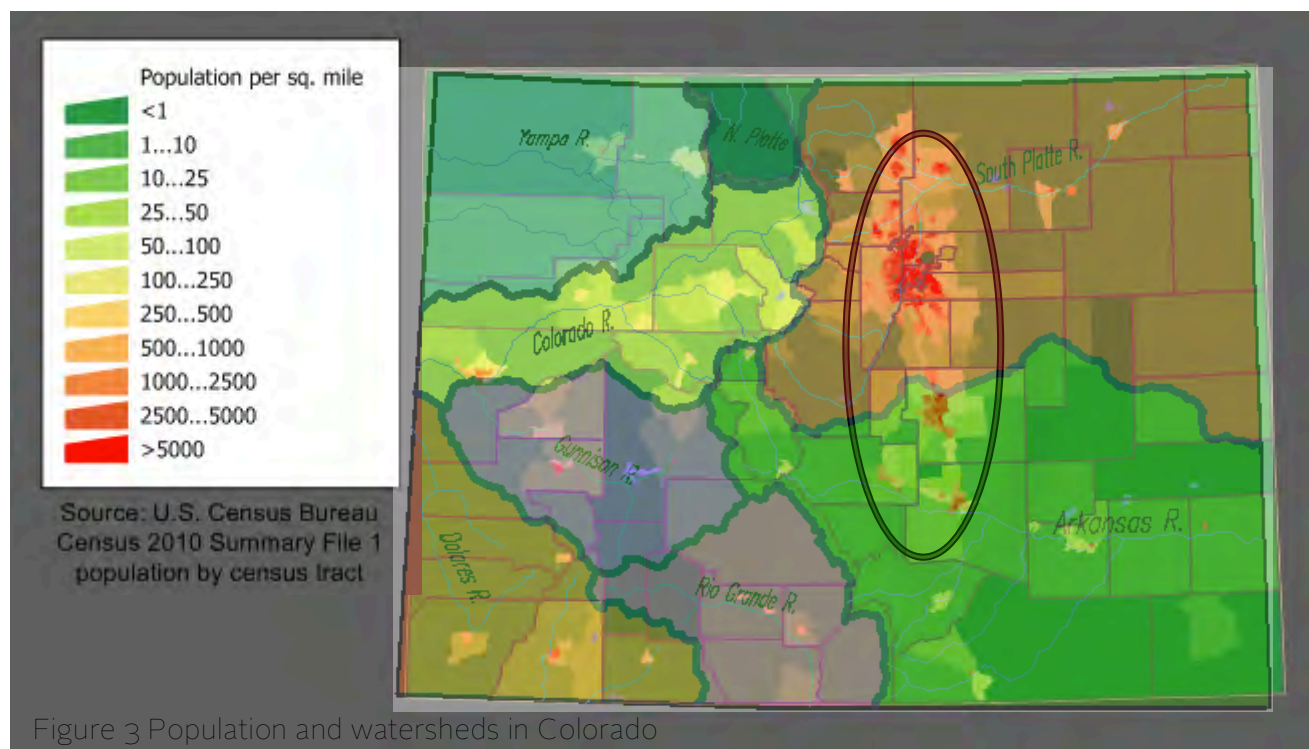
Fire is a critical and natural part of a forest's ecosystem. Fire returns nutrients to the soil, supports the growth of native plants by removing undergrowth, and lowers the likelihood of a catastrophic fire occurring by reducing fuel build up. However, due to a long history of fire suppression in the Western United States, a change in the state's climate, and the spread of the mountain pine beetle, Colorado's wildfires are no longer normal. A once rejuvenating process, fire is now large in scale, high intensity, and devastating. Currently, the largest threat to watersheds across the state of Colorado is wildfires (CSFS, n.d.).

WWPG is working hard to address watershed and forest health in relation to wildfires across the state of Colorado. This group's important role as a networking organization will be explored in more detail throughout this document, as will some suggestions for the group as they move forward in their role as a collaborative working group.

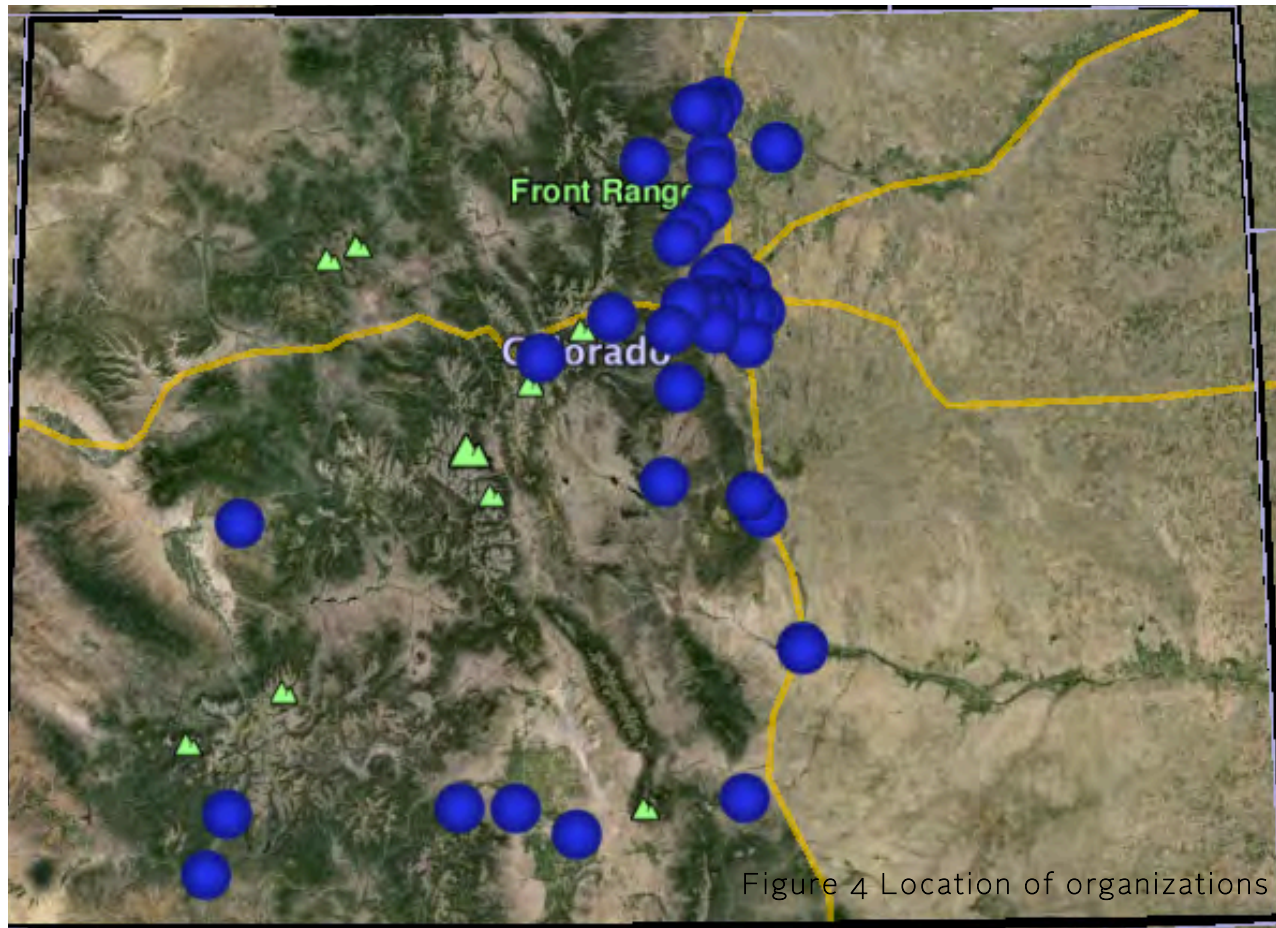


Stakeholders and Participants

Everyone who depends on the health of Colorado's watersheds can be considered a stakeholder in the work that WWPG is facilitating. The member base is primarily located on the Front Range, but WWPG draws members from all over the state. A focus on the state as a whole is important because watershed, human, and forest health are interconnected throughout Colorado---almost 80% of the state's population lives on the Front Range of Colorado, but 80% of the state's water is actually coming from the Western Slope (Rich Edwards, public communication, January 28, 2016). Harmonious collaboration is critically important.



As it can be seen in the map image above, the majority of Colorado residents live within a small area on the Front Range (seen in the black oval). The overlay on this map shows the water distribution across the state. It should be noted that most of the watersheds are located in relatively unpopulated areas.



Locations of organizations who've attended WWPG meetings



Who's Coming From Where?

As mentioned earlier, many of the organizations that participate in WWPG are located in the Front Range. In addition to these members, there are representatives from all over the state of Colorado. One of WWPG's main goals for the growth of their organization is to expand their member base around the state, specifically to engage more of the Western Slope. Currently, there are six

organizations from the Western Slope that occasionally participate in quarterly meetings.

- Chama peak Alliance
- San Juan Headwaters
- Rio Grande National Forest
- Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project
- Rio Grande Watershed Emergency Action Coordination Team
- West Range Reclamation Office

Meeting Statistics

Number of Meetings Attended by WWPG Members

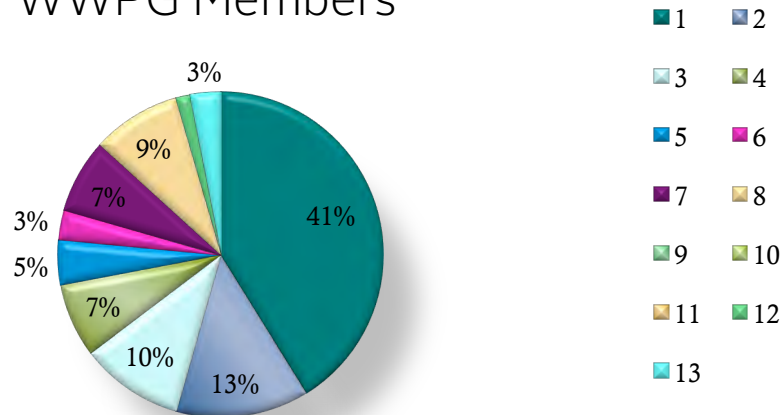


Figure 5

Areas of Interest Represented at Meetings

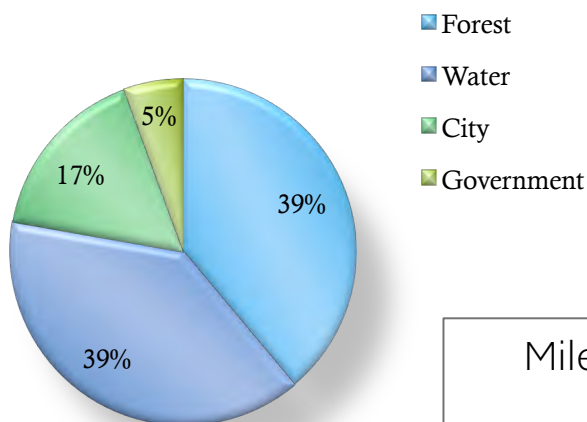


Figure 6

These charts only further the understanding that WWPG has a diverse group of participants hailing from across the state of Colorado. They show that there are various industries and interests [Figure 6] represented at the meetings, that there is a high turn over in attendance, 41% of partners only attend one meeting [Figure 5], and that members are coming from far and wide to attend [Figure 7].

*Miles driven are representative only from the spring 2016 meeting where they began to record them.

Miles Driven to Meeting by Members*

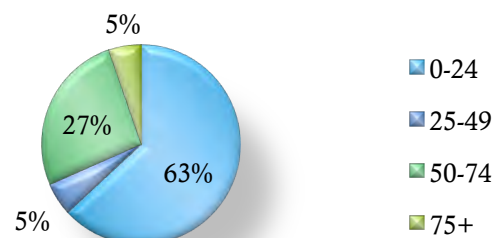


Figure 7

WWPG Regional Project Partners

American Water Works Association
Aurora Water
Bear Creek Watershed Association
Bureau of Land Management
Bureau of Reclamation
Center for Collaborative Conservation
City of Fort Collins
City of Northglenn
Clear Creek County
Coalition for the Poudre River Watershed
Coalition for the Upper South Platte
Colorado Parks and Wildlife
Colorado Springs Utilities
Colorado State Forest Service
Colorado State University
Colorado Timber Industry Association
Colorado Tree Farmers
Colorado Bark Beetle Cooperative
Colorado Conservation Exchange
Colorado Dept. of Natural Resources
Colorado Division of Water Quality
Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control
Colorado Forest Restoration Institute
Colorado Water Conservation Board
ConstruKs
Denver Mountain Parks
Denver Water

FireWise of Southwest Colorado
Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership
Front Range Roundtable
Greeley Water
Jefferson County Parks & Open Space
JW Associates
National Forestry Foundation
National Park Service
Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District
Project Learning Tree
Pueblo Water
Rio Grande Basin Roundtable
Rio Grande Watershed Emergency Action Coordination Team
Rocky Mountain Research Station (USDAFS)
San Juan-Chama Watershed Partnership
San Juan Headwaters Forest Health Partnership
Senator Cory Gardner's Office
Senator Michael Bennet's Office
South Platte Enhancement Board
The Nature Conservancy
Urban Waters Partnership
US Forest Service
Warner College of Natural Resources
West Range Reclamation
Xcel Energy

WWPG Regional Project Partners



**San Juan Headwaters
Forest Health Partnership**

**WARNER COLLEGE OF
Natural Resources**



Colorado State University



**WEST RANGE
RECLAMATION LLC**



Coalition for the
**Poudre River
Watershed**





Analysis and Assessment

Methods

The research we conducted focused on understanding the role and objectives of WWPG through a combination of document analysis, meeting observations, and participant interviews. We first began the process by engaging in a conversation with Rich Edwards, one of the founders of WWPG, to gain information about the group's origin, history, mission, and values. We then compiled this information to create a situation assessment of this collaborative working group. This preliminary assessment provided us with an overall picture of the roles WWPG plays in watershed protection in the state of Colorado. To obtain a more inclusive picture of WWPG and the role that they play in watershed health and wildfire prevention, we were also interested in learning more about the value that members

saw in being a part of this unique networking group. Therefore, we conducted five semi-structured interviews with various affiliates and members of WWPG. The interview questions were based on gaps identified from our situation analysis such as the process of WWPG and the future of the organization. We then transcribed and coded each interview using qualitative methods. These codes allowed us to organize and identify key themes from the interview responses. From these interviews, and our own research and observations, we identified common themes that guided a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) assessment of WWPG. This assessment served as the basis for some of our recommendations for the group.

Analysis and Assessment

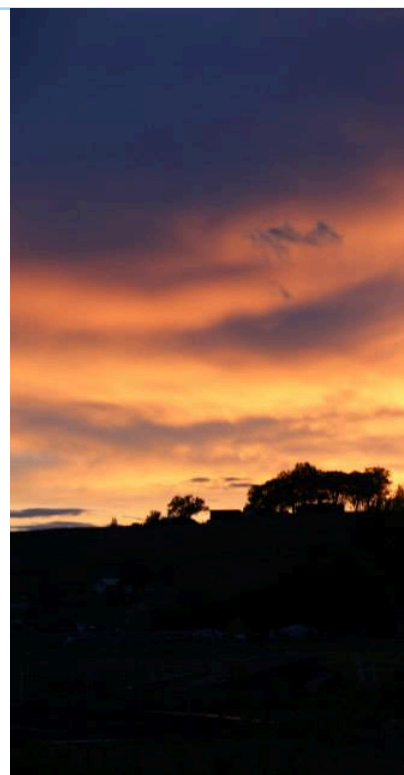
When describing the WWPG organization, many respondents used the words “diverse entities,” “communication,” “connection,” and “science-based.” It seems that the general consensus is that WWPG is a collaborative group consisting of diverse entities that have a stake in watersheds, forestry, and wildfire in Colorado. Through communication, outreach, and working together, WWPG is able to effectively use financial and social resources to maintain critical infrastructure and ecosystem health from uncharacteristic or catastrophic wildfires. One interviewee stated that a goal of WWPG is to “*treat forests and manage infrastructure to ultimately have economic and social benefits to the citizens of Colorado*” (WWPG member 5, personal communication, March 22, 2016).

Through the interview process, there was agreement that the completed risk assessments allowed WWPG members to determine specific areas where organizations should focus their work.

Many of the interviewees stated that identifying priority areas and matching expertise with the funding to certain projects is extremely valuable. Also, after these projects are initiated or completed, WWPG members mentioned that sharing information about what worked and what didn’t and then taking the lessons learned really allows WWPG to be more effective. For example, one member stated “*we want to take experience to places that haven’t had fires, but with our expertise, we can provide examples, steps, and tools to be better prepared*” (WWPG member 3, personal communication, March 21, 2016).

One of the key areas we focused our interview on was to inquire about future engagement and any challenges relating to project implementation. Based on the responses, a majority of interviewees identified that there was limited engagement from Western Slope affiliates.

Representation in WWPG is not entirely at a statewide scale and is centered mainly on watersheds and organizations located in the Front Range. Overall, respondents believed that a presence on the Western Slope would be beneficial, but stated that challenges may arise logistically with engaging the Western Slope due to limited capacity in terms of funding and personnel, a larger and dispersed landscape, and the fact that the WWPG core is located in the Front Range.



Summary of Interviews



"I would describe WWPG as a collection of diverse entities that have a stake in water quality and water quantity in Colorado. It's the bringing together of people with these diverse interests to try to effectively use financial and social resources [to] continue funding, find new funding and come up with alternative sources, so that we can continue to build on the momentum we are creating."

WWPG Member 5



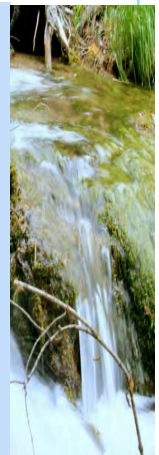
Figure 8 Word Cloud built from Interviews

Five Main Themes

The qualitative analysis of these interviews revealed five major themes relating to the structure, process, and success of WWPG. Based on questions such as "what are you hoping to get out of WWPG" and "what is the role of WWPG," key themes included communication, support, outreach, information sharing,

forest and watershed protection, risk mitigation, and collaboration. The five themes we felt it was most beneficial to look deeper into are:

A Shared Goal
Funding Outreach
Diversity of Stakeholders
Information Sharing
Networking



A Shared Goal

Mission Needs Shared Vision Goals Common Interests

WWPG has a shared commitment to the protection of Colorado's forests and watersheds. This collective focus allows the group to have specific and obtainable goals and objectives. WWPG is able to effectively prioritize funding and projects based on the needs of the watershed or forest. Every individual in his or her interview discussed this natural science focus in terms of watershed protection, forest health, and wildfires. This united goal allows WWPG to emphasize their efforts toward a collective vision that directly translates to effective results.

"The mission statement clearly identifies what each entity wants from WWPG and what they can bring to the table."

WWPG Member 5

Funding Outreach

Learning Consulting Funding Grants

Limited funding inhibits project initiation and completion, and therefore, WWPG members must prioritize which projects receive funding and how to allocate those funds. One of the main goals of WWPG is to connect implementers with funders. Interview responders demonstrated a continuous need for funding sources as well as a desired need to connect other WWPG members with funding sources.

"It is good to have a unified force where we are not outcompeting each other for funding. We try to support each other by beneficially sharing federal funds and prioritizing areas to benefit all the folks who live in the area."

WWPG Member 3

Diversity of Stakeholders

Diversity Levels of expertise Strengths

WWPG's key participants emanate from various agencies and organizations with specialized interests: water, forest, fire, infrastructure, city, state, federal, and legislation. Multiple interviewees stated that the diversity of the group allows different knowledge to be shared and synthesized together to fit the goals and mission of WWPG. With different entities, WWPG is able to get the right people at the table to discuss mutual concerns, as well as share power and pool resources to be as effective as possible. The group's diversity in stakeholders allows for multiple viewpoints and resources to be shared which can spark innovation, risk-taking, and responsive action (Cheng et al. 2015)

"It's the bringing together of people with these diverse interests to try to effectively use financial resources and use social resources."

WWPG Member 5

Information Sharing

Education Expertise Legislative Updates Technical Presentations

Ideas, knowledge, research, and key updates are shared during quarterly meetings within the group to inform constituents about past, present, and future projects as well as funding opportunities. A majority of interview respondents stated that these updates keep people informed about current scientific knowledge, treatments, and techniques.

"We meet quarterly and share experience about issues around the state."

WWPG Member 3

Networking

Communication Group Interactions Sharing Support Consulting
Player Relationships Player Involvement Connection to Funders

A majority of interviewees implied that members within the WWPG group interact with each other to exchange information and develop contacts and partnerships to help each other with various needs. This relationship building creates respect and trust within WWPG, which ultimately influences group representation, willingness to listen, and a sense of ownership of the process. One interviewee stated that “you keep building and building connections and then finally you can get the ball rolling.”

“We are a communication and connection group so we take water groups and try to connect them with other people who are doing similar things so they can learn from these and do a better job of working together.”

WWPG Member 3





Analysis and Assessment

Next Steps

The mark of any successful collaborative organization is that they are ever growing. As a part of our analysis of WWPG, we analyzed ways that the group could continue to grow in order to meet their goals as an organization. To help guide our understanding of where growth might be needed, and to help develop ways to facilitate that growth, we performed a SWOT analysis. A SWOT analysis is a way of evaluating an organization's internal strengths, weaknesses, external opportunities and threats. Through the use of our SWOT chart, we were able to synthesize information gathered from our research, interviews, and observations to develop recommendations for building upon WWPG's strengths and identifying opportunities for growth.

SWOT Analysis

<p><u>Strengths</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creates a forum for networking amongst various groups/organizations/agencies 2. Sharing of relevant information between WWPG members with common goals 3. Keeps members up to date on policy and legislation news and voting outcomes 4. Diversity amongst members includes public and private sectors, ranging from utilities and local governments to state and federal agencies 5. Updates keep members informed about various watershed projects around the state and best practices 6. Core group of participating members 	<p><u>Weaknesses</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Concern about being a group with a statewide focus not having statewide representation 2. Level of participation by members who can not attend meetings in person <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ---Phone call quality ---Limited ability to engage in conversation 3. Time between meetings and attendance fluctuation might make cohesion from one meeting to the next more difficult
<p><u>Opportunities</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage more of the state (specifically the Western Slope) in the conversation on watershed/wildfire issues 2. Prioritize as a collaborative where funds will be spent 3. Inform policy makers by helping stakeholders speak with a unified voice 4. Learn from similar groups, sharing best practices, possible funding sources, and new management strategies 	<p><u>Threats</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Possible overlap with other similar watershed/wildfire groups...i.e. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ---The Front Range Round Table --- Fire Adapted Colorado 2. Limited and often unreliable funding 3. Staying relevant to members to maintain participation 4. Laws, regulations, and policies surrounding water rights in Colorado

Strengths of WWPG

Networking Relationship Building Communication Funding

One of WWPG's greatest strengths is the way they create a forum for agencies and organizations interested in forest and watershed health to come together and share knowledge. Networking amongst people with similar goals and objectives encourages cooperation towards those shared goals. For example, when mentioning what would happen if WWPG did not have clear goals, one member stated that *"success falls apart when the goals becomes so diverse and becomes individual goals"* (WWPG member 5, personal communication, March 22, 2016).

In meetings, information about current projects, possible funding opportunities, and best practices help others in the group identify a common ground. From there, new conversations spark new potential partnerships. Also, one reason that the niche WWPG fills is so unique is because many of the partners who participate in meetings are often times competing for limited funding. This competition could decrease trust and collaborative opportunities between members. From our observations of WWPG, many members were willing to share funding or help other members find funding. It appears that the intensive competition between members is limited because the participants in WWPG recognize they are all working towards the same goal. Together, they meet challenges, celebrate accomplishments, and share challenges.

"It is good to have a unified force where we are not outcompeting each other for funding. We try to support each other and beneficially share the funding."

WWPG Member 4

Weaknesses of WWPG

Scale Outreach Methodology Meeting Participation Engagement

Several challenges arose in both our research about WWPG and through our interviews. The first, and probably greatest concern, surrounded the need to engage more watershed and wildfire groups on Colorado's Western Slope. Group members acknowledged that the core members of WWPG reside mostly on the Front Range, and that the group itself formed out of the Front Range Round Table. That said, they are working to bring more western-based groups into WWPG. For instance, every year one of the quarterly meetings is held at a location on the Western Slope. The group also makes accommodations during the meetings for groups not located on the Front Range to join via a conference call.

Unfortunately, changing meeting locations and available technology hold the potential to limit participation by call-in members. We observed that while meeting facilitators did the best they could to make sure microphones were strategically moved around the room, and that technological challenges were dealt with as they arose, participation in the conversation by individuals on the conference call was substantially less compared to those physically present.

"In the Front Range is its closer together and there are bigger water agencies with personnel. In the smaller places, they don't usually have people to work on it or don't have the knowledge. Another challenge is our core group is in the Front Range."

WWPG Member 3

Opportunities of WWPG

Prioritization Mitigation Projects Financing Engagement

Some of WWPG's greatest opportunities lay within themselves. The goals that WWPG has set for themselves and their vision as an organization leaves room for continued growth in terms of scope, membership, and opportunities. As they continue to look towards inclusion of the Western Slope, they have the opportunity to grow their project and membership base. This growth allows a better balance in the representation of all stakeholders involved in watershed and forest protection. As more stakeholders become aware of the watershed threats, the group can connect funders to partners and projects based on prioritization and need. WWPG also has an opportunity to inform policy makers and communicate the work they are a part of in a more unified voice. As a forum where groups with similar concerns can come together to work towards common goals, new lines of communication between groups help them address potential legislation that could impact the work they are trying to achieve. Lastly, like other collaborative organizations, WWPG also has an opportunity to learn from other similar groups on the best practices and build alliance with other groups engaged in similar watershed/wildfire projects.

"We have a big state working without partners. We need to work with Colorado Springs, Pueblo and Denver...Denver systems overlap with northern parts and this hodgepodge of systems that overlap are important."

WWPG Member 4

Threats to WWPG

Limited Resources Economic Hardships Competition

One of the largest potential threats to WWPG as a networking organization is the emergence of other groups focusing on projects similar to those that WWPG is working on. This possible appearance can potentially create competition between organizations for resources such as funding and time. Competition can ultimately cause a potential lack of funding for projects---one common aspect that threatens many conservation organizations. For example, one interviewee stated that “if we hit a point in time politically when the funding dries up, the group might decide to get together to continue to do the planning, but cannot fund any of the actual projects” (WWPG member 5, personal communication, March 22, 2016). In addition to minimum available funding for conservation work, a growing presence of conservation projects and practitioners also create external competition for the little funding that does exist. One of the goals of WWPG as an organization is to connect on the ground conservation projects with funding. It is because of this monetarily oriented goal that any alterations in funding sources like economic downturn or reduced government spending could be detrimental.

“My biggest concern along the Front Range is there are a lot of collaborative groups that do the same kind of stuff and it’s a lot of the same people who attend the same meetings and it could get to the point where people are getting burnt out on things”

WWPG Member 1



Moving Forward

Recommendations for WWPG's Growth as an Organization

WWPG continues to make efforts to engage more stakeholders in the conversation about watershed health. During the meeting we attended, part of the discussion revolved around ways WWPG could bring local breweries into the group since they have an interest in water quality. The next quarterly meeting location is (tentatively) to be held at a brewery in Fort Collins.

There was also discussion of incorporating field trips to project sites into future meeting agendas. These proposals address the challenges of keeping members engaged, networking with new stakeholders and potential partners, and information sharing amongst group members.

Member engagement and overlap with similar groups arose several times in the interviews we conducted. For instance, WWPG and the Front Range Round Table have around 52 and 54 partnering organizations respectively. Of these partners, almost half appear on both lists. Because of this, it is important to ensure that there isn't too much overlap in content that is presented to WWPG members. One recommendation that might help prevent redundancy is to take a close look at the two groups and eliminate as much overlap as possible. WWPG should focus on its set of strengths that are unique to their group. Honing in the focus of their meetings to highlight these strengths will help them fulfill the niche that led to their creation.

Moving Forward

Aside from engagement at meetings, reaching and engaging more partners across the state remains a challenge. One possible solution we discussed involves increasing WWPG's online presence. Currently, WWPG has no dedicated webpage. Most of the information we were able to find about them came from group members' websites. For instance, WWPG history and past meeting notes can be found on Colorado State Forest Services' page. The page has links to the websites of several core members and other relevant information.

If WWPG were to develop a web page where members could add content, they could extend their networking impact beyond participation in meetings. Such a website would allow the conversation to continue between meetings and provide a virtual forum where information can be more readily available to group members. By creating a platform that allows group members to add content, WWPG can continue to perform their role as a information sharing and networking group where all interested groups can participate equally. A dedicated web page might also help WWPG engage other watershed/wildfire groups across the state. Increased access to information might also help with member retention.

When we examined previous WWPG meeting notes in order to capture the different groups and their location, we noticed that a large percentage (41%) had only attended one meeting. In contrast, about 4% of members had attended all 13 meetings we had information for. Expanding their statewide reach through greater online presence might increase overall participation in WWPG because their networking and information sharing capabilities would no longer be solely based on attendance at quarterly meetings.



Recommendations

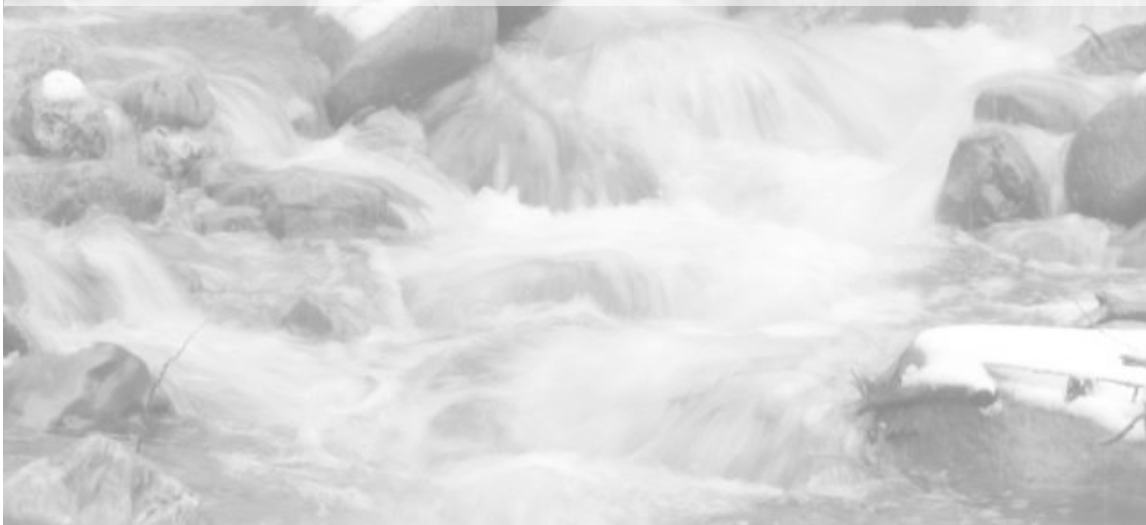


Closing Thoughts



The process of creating this document has provided a great deal of information regarding the history, purpose, and projects that make up WWPG as an organization. Our analysis interviews and meeting attendance has helped us understand the primary role of the group and how they structure themselves. In addition to observations of meetings and conversations with group members, we also explored WWPG through the lens of an academic.

When we began this assessment, it was under the pretense that WWPG was a “collaborative” group. Upon further investigation, we found that WWPG was a group that did collaborative work, but they did not fit the academic description of a collaborative group. WWPG turned out to be a much more involved and complex organization. The unique role that they fill as a networking group puts them in an organizational class all their own. We have enjoyed the process of working with WWPG and its members, and we hope that this document helps WWPG learn more about themselves as an organization as they move forward and grow in the future.



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Appendix

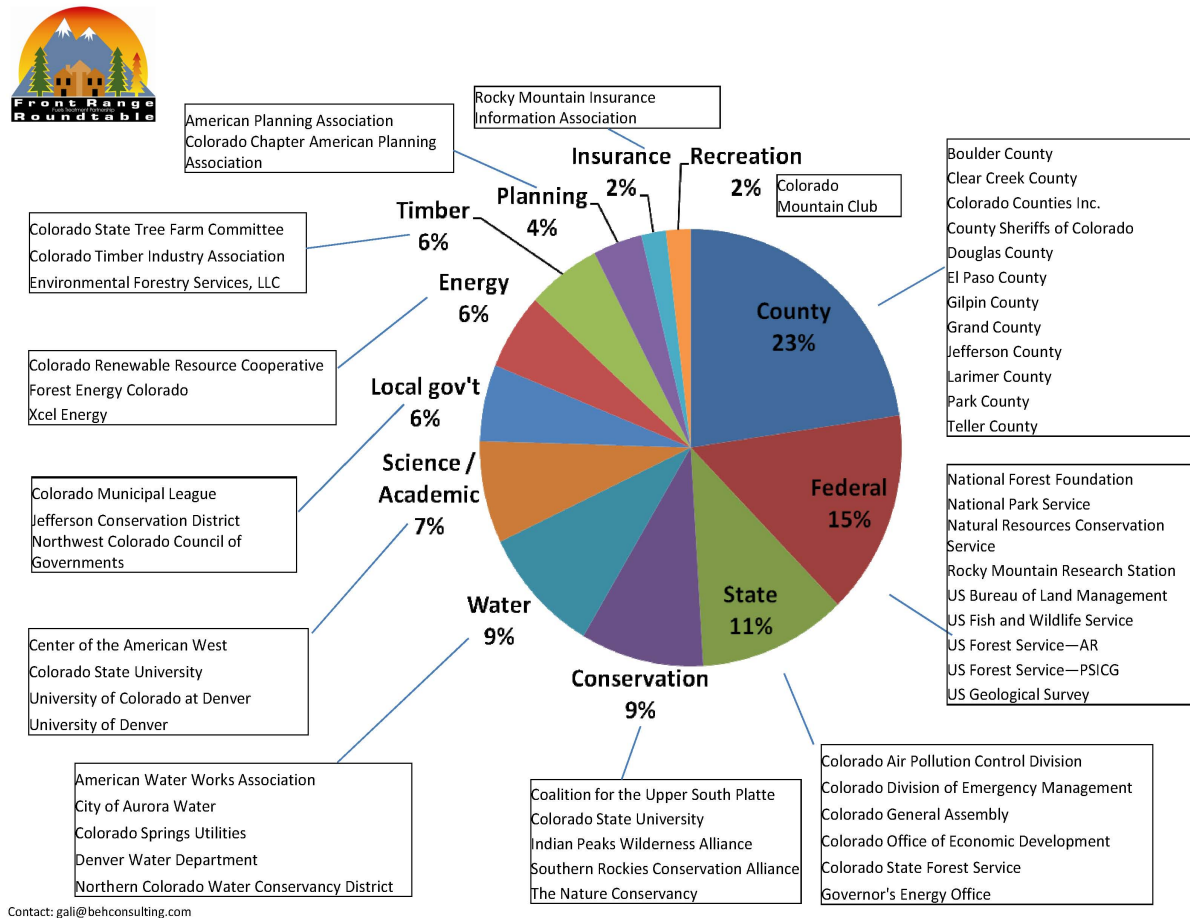


Figure 8: Chart describing Front Range Roundtable's partners. Nearly half of WWPG's partners also partner with the Front Range Roundtable (Front Range Round Table, n.d.).

Appendix

Interview Questions used for the Quantitative Analysis

(Ask these three questions before the interview begins)

-Is it alright if I audio record this interview to insure the most accuracy as we revisit your answers for academic purposes? ____ yes ____ no

-Do you have any questions before we begin?

Background Questions

(We should of course know who we are talking to, who they work for and have a general sense of their role within their organization, but it's good to hear from the interviewee how they explain what they do.)

-How did you get involved with WWPG?

-How would you explain your role in WWPG?

-What are some projects you have been involved with or are currently involved with that relate to the work WWPG is doing?

Understanding WWPG

(These questions should be used to guide our understanding of WWPG. They can also help guide the group's understanding of itself. Are there radically different answers? Does everyone seem to be on the same page? Also this section will help us understand why the various organizations we are reaching out to are involved with the organization.)

-If you were explaining WWPG to someone who had never heard of it before how would you explain the group?

-Why does your organization have a stake in the work WWPG is doing?

-What does your group hope to get out of being a part of WWPG?

-Would you consider your organization to be operating as a funder or an on the ground practitioner? Do you fill a different role? Can you elaborate on the role you play in WWPG?

-What does success look like to you? How do you know WWPG is being successful?

-What would you personally say is your most accomplished result of being apart of the WWPG group?

Project Monitoring and Evaluation

(Understanding the various projects that various organizations may be involved with that stem from their involvement with WWPG and helping us understand the follow up that may or may not occur with various projects)

-Can you speak a little bit about the process through which WWPG engages in projects?

-Is there a follow up process that happens after a project has been decided on?

[Yes] Can you explain what that looks like?

[No] Can you explain why not?.

Appendix

Interview Questions Continued...

How do you know if WWPG has had success in implementing a project?

Capacity and Future Directions

(Again this section will be helpful to helping us understand the goals and direction of WWPG. It will also help us establish consistency within the group. Does everyone have a similar vision for the future? Yes? Great! No? Where are the discrepancies?)

-What is the value in what WWPG brings to the table? Why bother and why now?

-Do you see evolution and change in the future of WWPG?

-What does it look like? .

Western Slope

We understand that WWPG has a focus that looks at all of Colorado. We understand there is currently greater representation from organizations on the Front Range. From some conversations we've had with WWPG members there has been a desire expressed in expanding and getting more weigh in from organizations on the Western Slope. We have a few questions about that if you feel you're able to speak to that.

-Can you speak to any outreach methods that are taking place in order to recruit organizations to WWPG?

-Do you personally think that a stronger presence of the Western Slope organizations would be valuable to WWPG? Why or why not?

-What are some specific organizations being targeted by expansion efforts?

-Do you feel that there are different viewpoints in your group about increasing the number of projects on the Western Slope and, if so, why?

-What kind of information would be helpful for your organization as you look to expand to the Western Slope?

-What do you believe is the most urgent issue facing the Western Slope that your group can help address?

End Question

-Do you have any additional comments or questions you would like to share?

Appendix

Meeting Attendance: Organizations and how many meetings they attended

Organization	# of meetings	Interest	Most Attendances	Number Of
			<u>Organization</u>	<u>Meetings Attended</u>
San Juan Headwaters Forest Health Partnership	4	Water		
US Senator Garnder's Office	1	Government	Colorado State Forest Service	13
JW Associates	13	Government	JW Associates	13
US Congressman Tipton's Office	1	Government	Aurora Water	12
West Range Reclamation	7	Fire		
US Forest Service; Pike & San Isabel NF	7	Fire	Areas of Interest (total)	
Denver Water	8	Water	Forest	14
Colorado Water Conservation Board	7	Water	Water	22
Clear Creek County	8	City	City	11
Coalition for the Poudre River Watershed	7	Water	Government	12
City of Fort Collins	5	City	Other	9
DCPHE-Water Quality Division	1	Water		
Coalition for the Upper South Platte	7	Water		
CSU Warner College of Natural Resources	3	Other		
City of Boulder	3	City		
Colorado State Forest Service	13	Fire		
Colorado Dept. of Natural Resources	5	Government		
US Forest Service; Arapaho & Roosevelt NF	8	Fire		
USFS Rocky Mountain Research Station	8	Fire		
Aurora Water	12	Water		
US Senator Bennet's Office	6	Government		
Buffalo Creek Water District/North Fork FPD	1	Water		
Huerfano County	1	City		
City of Northglenn	7	City		
Colorado Springs Utilities	7	Water		
Southern Rockies Fire Science Network	1	Fire		
Xcel Energy	8	Other		
Rio Grande Watershed Emergency Action Coordination Team	3	Water		
Colorado Forest Restoration Institute	2	Fire		
Northern Water	5	Water		
Colorado Dept. of Public Health & Environment	6	Government		
US Environmental Protection Agency, R8	1	Government		
Colorado Parks & Wildlife	8	Fire		
Bear Creek Watershed Association	3	Water		
City of Fort Collins Utilities	4	Water		
Bureau of Reclamation	3	Government		
Nature Conservancy	2	Other		
Construks	4	Other		
Natural Resources Conservation Service	1	Other		
Flying W Ranch	1	Fire		
National Forest Foundation	4	Fire		

Appendix

Meeting Attendance: Organizations and how many meetings they attended

US Geological Survey	2	Government
Senator Mark Udall's Office	4	Government
Oregon State University/University of Oregon	1	Other
Greeley Water	1	Water
Colorado DPS - Division of Fire Prevention & Control	2	Fire
RNC Consulting / BCWA	1	Other
City of Loveland	3	City
CH2M Hill & South Platte Enhancement Board	3	Water
Evergreen Metro District	2	City
Clear Creek Land Conservancy	1	Fire
City of Greeley	3	City
Western Area Power Administration	1	Other
Pueblo Board of Water Works	1	Water
City of Golden	2	City
Colorado Emergency Management	1	Government
Colorado Dept. of Transportation	2	Government
Soldier Canyon Filter Plant	1	Other
American Water Works Association	1	Water
City of Aurora	1	City
CDPHE - Water Quality	1	Water
Pueblo Water	1	Water
Colorado Watershed Assembly	1	Water
City of Westminster	1	City
Trout Unlimited	1	Water
RGHRP	1	Water
RGNF	1	Fire
Chama Peak Land Alliance	1	Fire