



QQ Retreat: The Future is Now

Executive Retreat Summary

April 26-27, 2018 at Eagle Town Hall

Summary sent out May 15, 2018

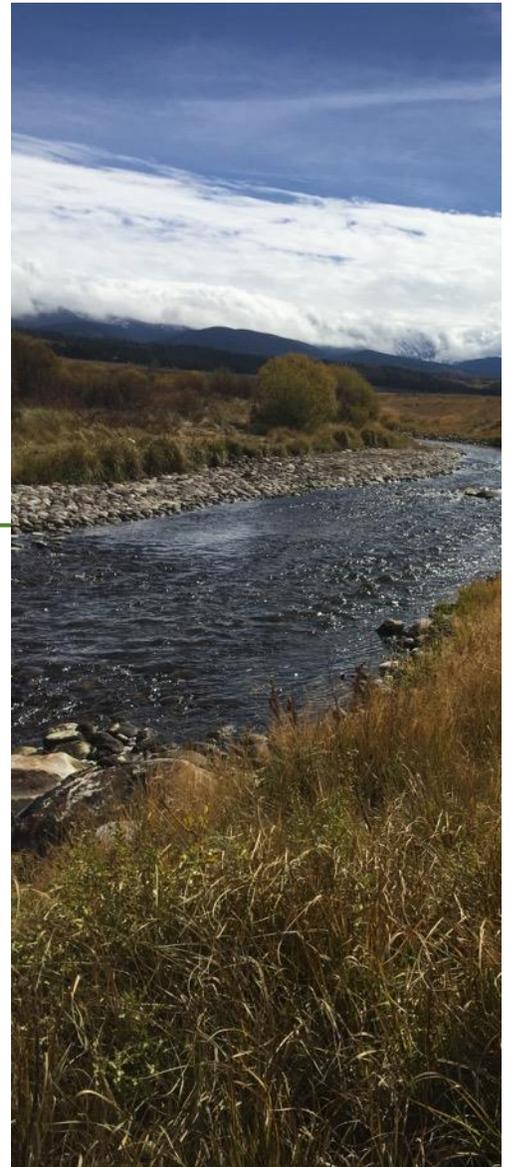
CELEBRATING OUR SUCCESSES

QQ is celebrating its 40th year! QQ was founded in 1978 as the Water Quality/ Quantity Trust Fund of NWCCOG. To celebrate, Barbara Green and Lane Wyatt, who have collectively worked for QQ for more than 60 years, kicked off the retreat recounting QQ's history and many accomplishments. Contract staff also put together a list of noteworthy accomplishments over the years. This document, [available here](#), will serve as a resource that can be added to over the years and provide an introduction to the depth of good work that has occurred in the headwaters. The presentation was followed by small group discussions where members shared their own perspectives about QQ's accomplishments.

STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

QQ members had great brainstorming sessions about QQ's future and where we can "lean in" to serve members better. One noteworthy trend in member feedback: As our region grows, water quality and quantity is increasingly affected by community growth and pressures, like stormwater, land use development, and pollution from transportation corridors. Members requested additional assistance with managing internal growth (along with monitoring outside development such as transmountain diversions). This assistance includes help with updating land use and comprehensive plans to integrate water quality and quantity protections and assistance with public engagement on these issues.

There was a clear desire for QQ to provide water-related resources for members, especially for elected officials who aren't always focused on water. Members believed QQ could serve as a clearinghouse for resources that are already



available (via its website) and hone in on gaps in existing resources where QQ might step in. Members voiced an interest in additional resources or the gathering of existing resources to help message to the public about the importance of water quality, nonconsumptive needs, and water conservation.

Below are a few other noteworthy ideas members would like to see from QQ. For a more detailed summary of all the discussion at the meeting, please see the facilitator's summary, [available here](#).

- Increased messaging around water issues in the headwaters and QQ's accomplishments.
- Continued emphasis on instream flows, water quality protection, and the importance of nonconsumptive and recreational flows.
- Additional training for newly elected officials in the QQ region. This may include an online training or other available resources and an introductory meeting held once a year before one of the regularly-scheduled QQ meetings.



- More focused QQ meetings with some background “homework” ahead of time to create a more productive meeting. Member updates could be collected and distributed ahead of time and in-meeting updates could be focused on the meeting's theme or educational presentation.
- Background information and regular updates on implementation of Colorado's Water Plan.
- Additional collaboration with state agencies, especially the State Engineers Office, on issues such as the regulation of wells, potential shepherding of water for compact compliance, and conditional water rights in the QQ region.

TRANSITIONS IN QQ LEADERSHIP

QQ has some significant transitions in its leadership, both recently and upcoming. Tom Clark, who served as Kremmling's mayor for the past 16 years, recently retired from public service. Tom has served as QQ Vice-chair for the past several years, and the Vice-Chair position is now vacant. Rachel Richards, QQ's Chair and Pitkin County Commissioner, is term limited at the end of the 2018.

Members spent some time brainstorming ways to ensure a smooth selection process for new leadership. Members would like to see some guidelines that outline the selection process for future years, which would include descriptions of leadership duties and general desired qualities for leaders. Members also threw around the idea of creating a third leadership position to share the duties and perhaps create a better structure for moving an elected official into the Chair role. A draft guidance document will be sent out before the late-summer QQ meeting (to be scheduled) and reviewed at that summer meeting.

Members also were interested in understanding more about transitions in QQ contract staffing as well. Torie and Sullivan, Green, Seavy, LLC. aren't going anywhere! Lane will be working less in upcoming years, and we are building up an arsenal of great consultants who can pick up some of Lane's work. Ashley Bembenek of Alpine Environmental was able to attend the retreat and meet with members, and is picking up much of Lane's work with the Water Quality Control Commission. Lotic Hydrological continues to be an important resource in Learning By Doing and looking at temperature issues in the Upper Colorado, to name a few topics.

EBBS AND FLOWS IN THE COLO RIVER WITH ANNE CASTLE

We were lucky enough to be joined by Anne Castle, former Undersecretary of Water at the Department of the Interior and current fellow at the CU Law School, to talk with us about the challenges and opportunities in managing water in the Colorado River Basin.

Anne's presentation highlighted some of the good work that has occurred recently in basin-wide Colorado River management, including

- the 2014 pulse flow delivery of water to the Delta in Mexico (see below photos of the community outpouring in celebration),
- the System Conservation Pilot Program, a recent agreement among the major water users of Colorado River water and the Bureau of Reclamation to jointly fund voluntary water conservation projects in both the upper and lower Colorado River Basins to benefit the Colorado River System, and
- the ongoing 7-state drought contingency planning as a follow up to the 2007 interim guidelines, which has already seen commitments to sharing in potential shortages in Lakes Mead and Powell.



Related to future potential water shortages in the Colorado basin, Anne has also been examining legal tools to allow for shepherding water to Lake Powell to meet Colorado Compact delivery obligations. Her paper is [available here](#), and during questions and answers, Anne shared her enthusiasm for the West Slope's ongoing risk assessment study and the need for tools like water banking and shepherding at the State level to help address potential future delivery obligations.

Anne's presentation is [available here](#).



Photos of the 2014 pulse flow in San Luis Rio Colorado, above, courtesy of Anne Castle from her April 26 presentation to QQ.

OTHER QQ ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **The 2018 Legislative Session ended May 9th.** QQ continued its monitoring of legislation in the 2018 session. In general, this was a slower session for water issues. One of QQ's priorities issues did pass the year: a bill that instituted an aquatic nuisance species sticker for motorized watercraft to partially fund the State's boat inspection and decontamination program. The session also saw the passage of a series of bills to expand available uses of reclaimed water, which QQ supported, as well as legislation that will pave the way for state regulations of NORM (naturally occurring radioactive material) and TENORM (technologically-enhanced NORM) after a robust stakeholder process to ensure appropriate level of regulation.

- **Assessing land use and water planning in the QQ region.** In late January, QQ was awarded a Water Plan implementation grant to assess our local governments' integration of land use and water in land use codes. The project includes an assessment of water savings and water quality measures in member land use codes, the development of a model code for water savings measures specific to the headwaters region, and technical assistance to update selected member land use codes. We are in the process of contracting with Del Corazon Consulting, led by long-time planner and facilitator Marjo Curgus. We are excited to get this project underway!
- **Model Water Quality Protection Standards to be completed SOON!** QQ will complete the ongoing update of its Model Water Quality Protection Standards in the next month or so. QQ plans to put together an e-briefing on this document, recent member updates to land use codes, and our coming project to assess QQ land use codes for water linkages with development approvals.
- QQ is participating in the newly-formed **Water and Land Use Planning Alliance**, formed by the Colorado Water Conservation Board and Department of Local Affairs to convene leaders around the state on efforts to better link land use and water planning. **Sonoran Institute will host trainings** on land use and water, scheduled for September 26-28, 2018 in Keystone. QQ will continue serving in an advisory planning capacity.
- QQ continues ongoing member support, including:
 - **Upper Colorado Wild & Scenic Stakeholder Group (SG).** Torie represents QQ on the SG and supports SG local governments by serving on the Executive Committee, which provides day-to-day administration of the SG. NWCCOG recently began providing fiscal support to the SG, serving as a fiscal agent and managing the contract for the SG Administrator, Anna Drexler-Dreis.
 - **Learning By Doing (LBD).** Torie Jarvis and Seth Mason (Lotic Hydrological) continue to provide support to QQ members involved in LBD. LBD completed its [first river restoration project](#) on the Fraser River near Tabernash, with initial reports of a 400% increase over fish present before the restoration.
 - **Grand Lake Clarity Adaptive Management Committee.** Each summer this AMC meets weekly to evaluate real time water quality monitoring in Grand Lake and Shadow Mountain Reservoir and to discuss ongoing operations of the C-BT project and changes that could be employed to help maintain or improve Grand Lake clarity. Lessons learned from this process inform the evaluation of alternatives for the NEPA analysis (explained below). NWCCOG is party to the MOU establishing the AMC and participates in the AMC.
 - **Grand Lake Clarity NEPA process.** The Bureau of Reclamation is undertaking a NEPA analysis of operational approaches and structural changes to the Three Lakes portion of the Colorado Big Thompson Project to address clarity problems in Grand Lake. NWCCOG is participating in the process as the 208 Regional Water Quality Planning Agency, as well as supporting involved QQ members.
 - **QQ continues website development.** While it is certainly a work in progress, check out www.nwccog-qq.org for lots of new information on QQ history and current progress. We'd love to hear feedback.



Thank you and, as always, please do not hesitate to reach out with questions, concerns, or issues QQ should know about (qqwater@nwccog.org) !