

St Vrain and Left Hand Creek Watersheds Stream Management Planning

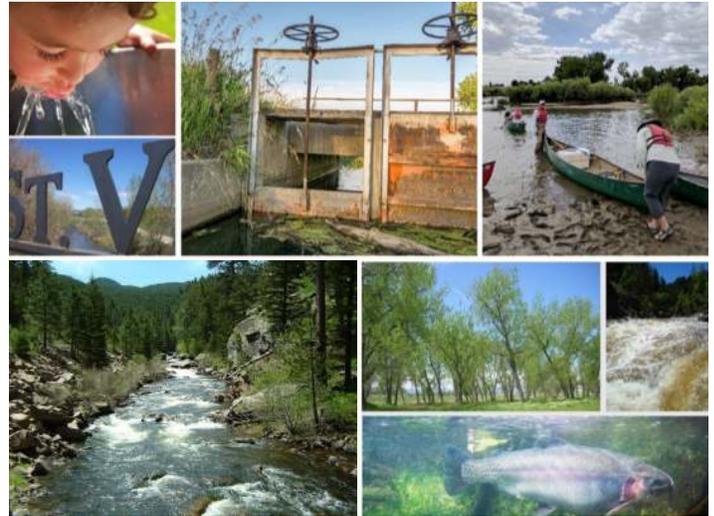
Frequently Asked Questions

BACKGROUND

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, has its headwaters in Rocky Mountain National Park and the Indian Peaks Wilderness, and is a popular place to for cyclists, anglers, white water kayakers, and hikers. The watershed receives Colorado River transmountain water, and water management helps support one of Colorado’s most economically productive agricultural areas in Weld County. Furthermore, the watershed has a diverse array of stakeholders that use and derive value from the waters including producers, domestic water providers, and recreational users.

WHY DO WE NEED STREAM MANAGEMENT?

With such a wide range of uses, the St. Vrain poses an excellent opportunity to balance river health with water users’ needs through stream management planning. With few exceptions, St. Vrain and Left Hand Creeks have historically been managed without a collective vision to maximize the river’s use while also balancing its health. The September 2013 flood reenergized and expanded collaboration among managers and brought hundreds of millions of dollars for stream restoration. The collaborative flood recovery created a greater level of trust and partnership among water users, and many are ready to carry forward with water management activities that make sure post-



flood projects continue to benefit environmental, recreational, agricultural and domestic uses. A stream management plan (SMP) can help.

WHAT IS THE GOAL OF THIS STREAM MANAGEMENT PLAN?

The goal of this SMP is to collaboratively identify projects and management strategies in St. Vrain and Left Hand Creeks to advance the work from flood recovery to stream health projects that improve environmental conditions in the river while meeting water users’ current and future needs. The projects must be aligned with private property rights, public land and resource management plans, and the prior appropriation system.

Colorado Water Plan Implementation

The Colorado’s Water Plan’s (CWP) objective is to cover 80 percent of the locally prioritized lists of rivers with Stream Management Plans (SMPs). CWP used the South Platte Basin Implementation Plan (BIP) to help inform this objective. The South Platte BIP studied a reach of St. Vrain Creek for environmental and recreational opportunities and determined streamflows needed to achieve environmental and recreational

outcomes. However, the BIP further concluded that significant additional flow information is necessary, that stream channel and fish passage modifications should be further analyzed, and voluntary operational flow agreements, such as those previously operated by the St. Vrain Corridor Committee, should be explored.

See more at <https://svlhwcd.org/past-projects/#>



WHO IS THE ST. VRAIN LEFT HAND WATER CONSERVANCY DISTRICT?

The St. Vrain and Left Hand Water Conservancy District (the District) was formed in 1971 to develop, manage and protect water resources in the Longmont area by providing cutting edge water education, acting as stewards for a very precious natural resource, helping people and governmental agencies find creative solutions to meet their water needs, fighting threats to local water supplies and protect existing water rights, and ensuring high quality water is available for future generations. The District is the entity leading the SMP process.

HOW WILL THE DISTRICT ENGAGE PEOPLE AND COLLABORATE?

The consultant team, with input from local experts, have developed a Stakeholder Engagement Plan and Community Engagement Plan. Each plan outlines opportunities for engagement. If you want to be notified of these opportunities, request a personal meeting to discuss your ideas, or provide direct feedback, please email office@svlhxcd.org or visit the website below.

WHAT IS THE GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE?

This project will encompass South St. Vrain Creek, Middle St. Vrain Creek, North St. Vrain Creek, and the main stem 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.



HOW WILL IT BE FUNDED?

The St. Vrain and Left Hand Water Conservancy District will lead the development of a SMP that will take place in two phases over approximately five years. Phase 1 is schedule for just over a year and budgeted for just under \$300,000.



Konrad P. Schmidt

The funds are provided through:

- Colorado Water Conservation Board Grant (\$150,000)
- South Platte Basin Roundtable, Water Supply Reserve Fund Grant (\$50,000)
- St. Vrain and Left Hand Water Conservancy District (\$50,000)
- City of Longmont (\$17,750)
- Boulder County (\$17,750)
- St. Vrain Anglers local chapter of Trout Unlimited (\$5,000)
- JLB Engineering (\$2,500)
- American Whitewater (\$7,000 - In-Kind)

WHO IS THE CONSULTANT TEAM?



The St. Vrain and Left hand Water Conservancy District hired Biohabitats as the prime consultant, with the following sub-consultants:

- Wright Water Engineers, Inc.
- Peak Facilitation Group
- DiNatale Water Consultants
- Open Water Foundation
- Lefthand Watershed Oversight Group

Please stay involved and learn more about the project, including additional FAQs here at: <https://svlhxcd.org/stream-management-plan/>.

