



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
CACHE LA POUVRE WATER QUALITY: IDENTIFICATION OF STAKEHOLDERS,
ASSESSMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS' POTENTIAL TO MOBILIZE TO PROTECT WATER
QUALITY, AND STRATEGIC MOBILIZATION PLAN

PURPOSE

This document is the final report of the 'Cache la Poudre Water Quality: Identification of Stakeholders, Assessment of Stakeholders' Potential to Mobilize to Protect Water Quality, and Strategic Mobilization Plan' (Project). The purpose of the Project is to:

- Identify the stakeholders that other stakeholders perceive as indispensable to potential future action to protect Cache la Poudre (CLP) water quality;
- Assess stakeholders' potential to mobilize to enhance and protect CLP water quality; and
- Develop and recommend a strategic plan for mobilizing the stakeholders to enhance and protect CLP water quality.

'Stakeholder' is any organization, organizational unit, program, or individual concerned with, affected by, or involved in CLP water quality.

The study addresses 'water quality' comprehensively, and the entire CLP watershed and areas contributing water to it located outside the natural watershed boundaries (i.e., transbasin diversions).

BACKGROUND

The Project is a follow-up to a similar study of CLP source water quality stakeholders that the consultant completed in mid-2001. Currently no comprehensive network or association of water quality stakeholders is active in the CLP watershed. Several of the Project Sponsors hope this study will provide a foundation and strategy for facilitating the development of this type of organization.

METHODS

The Project uses the same methods as the previous study of CLP source water quality stakeholders:

- A qualitative case study research design;
- Conceptual framework about why and how stakeholders mobilize into networks to address issues collaboratively;
- Sampling design to select 75 representative stakeholders as 'knowledgeable informants' to participate in the study;
- Questionnaire survey and follow-up interviews as the primary tools for developing data, supplemented by follow-up contacts with some stakeholders and review of select documents;
- Qualitative analysis; and
- Write-up of results and recommendations based on the conceptual framework.

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FINDINGS

Forty (41) of the representative stakeholders participated fully, i.e., completing, or nearly completing the questionnaire survey and interview (if applicable). Of these 41 stakeholder representatives who participated, 8 answered “No”, they did not perceive any issues (problems and/or opportunities) relating to CLP water quality. Thirty-four (34) individuals either did not respond, or participate fully, in the study. Of these, 26 individuals did not acknowledge or respond to the consultant’s multiple attempts to contact them and obtain their participation.

The literature addressing why and how stakeholders form networks to address issues collaboratively suggests that stakeholders’ perceptions about certain things influence their potential to mobilize, and that they need a minimal consensus about several of these sufficient to enable them to make decisions and act collectively. The study attempted to identify and explore the relevant perceptions of study participants. The report describes the types of data the study obtained concerning the respondents’ perceptions and gave a brief explanation about why these factors are important to stakeholders’ potential to mobilize.

Study participants identified approximately 40 CLP water quality problems and 10 opportunities. They identified approximately 140 actions that they would like stakeholders to consider taking addressing these issues. The results are inconclusive regarding if stakeholders have a consensus view regarding CLP water quality issues or the actions they want stakeholders to consider taking to address them. Generally, only a limited number of the 41 study participants identified and described each issue and action.

Study participants identified 319 stakeholder types, organizations, programs, and individual as ‘indispensable’ to potential future actions addressing the CLP water quality issues they identified.

The study explored the perceptions of study participants concerning a number of other perceptions potentially important to future mobilization, including their ‘interdependence’, ‘benefits vs. costs’ of cooperation, commitment, threats posed by potential mobilization, mission, and conflicts and collaborations.

ANALYSIS

Overall, findings of this study seem to suggest that the potential for a comprehensive group of stakeholders to mobilize and act collaboratively to protect CLP water quality NOW is uncertain. In sheer number, the negative factors, or barriers to mobilization, predominate. However, productive mobilization does seem possible, if its advocates act to initiate, support, and facilitate the process, viewing the constraints as barriers to be mitigated and overcome, and building on the significant positive factors characterizing the current situation.

Consensus on issues and actions among stakeholders is not apparent based on results of the study thus far. Consensus regarding issues and, perhaps more so, actions addressing them, are important dimensions linking actors in collaborating networks. However, the data developed by this study is insufficient to conclude firmly that consensus does not exist among stakeholders either.

Certainly conflict pervades the CLP water quality context. Many potential sources of future conflict are present, not the least of which is the widely disparate views and values concerning the character, use, and management of CLP water resources.

However, potential conflict can be a positive inducement to mobilization. And, the individual representatives of the disparate views and values of water resources perceive a need and indicate a willingness to talk and work with other stakeholders. Potential conflict can motivate stakeholders to interact in an attempt to head off and resolve the conflict before it becomes full-blown, more intractable, and potentially more costly to all parties.

Study participants also identified several examples of collaboration among CLP water quality stakeholders. Conflict motivated many of these ultimately collaborative events to develop. Resolved conflict can be an

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important social resource to future collaboration if the process results in development of positive constructive relationships between the parties.

Some perception of individual and organizational leadership in developing partnerships to address CLP water quality issues is present among study participants, as is an expectation that if key organizational stakeholders lead and initiate a mobilization effort other stakeholders will follow and participate, at least at the outset.

To tip the balance in favor of a stakeholder mobilization that is comprehensive and collaborative, and not fragmented and conflictual, advocates for mobilization, and Fort Collins and Greeley in particular, need to take the lead in initiating, supporting, and facilitating a process that is ‘well intentioned’, principled, and credible.

STRATEGIC ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS TO MOBILIZE CLP STAKEHOLDERS

This study is policy advocacy in support of CLP water quality protection. The Project Sponsors funded the effort hoping that it will provide a basis for CLP water quality stakeholders to begin mobilizing to protect CLP water quality. The consultant developed the research to try to judge if conditions within the setting and among stakeholders are such that stakeholders could act collaboratively to protect CLP source water quality and to determine what needs to be done to mobilize them to do this. The consultant strove to design the action recommendations in keeping with this purpose, and accounting for conditions as the research and analysis above suggests. The recommendations are designed with the intent of building on and using the factors that seem to encourage and support stakeholder mobilization, and addressing constraints on mobilization as barriers to be mitigated and overcome.

Seven major strategic alternatives for advocates of CLP water quality stakeholder mobilization to consider are presented and described, including a ‘No Action’ alternative.

Two ‘critical’ action alternatives are presented for Project Sponsors to consider:

1. Take the Lead; and
2. Determine If Stakeholders Generally Have Consensus On Specific Issues and Actions.

The alternatives are ‘critical’ because, frankly, the consultant does not see how a comprehensive group of stakeholders can mobilize unless they are accomplished.

Four subsequent strategic action alternatives for mobilizing CLP water quality stakeholders are presented for Project Sponsors to consider:

3. Just Do It! – a recommendation to develop a comprehensive CLP stakeholder organization;
4. Form Association for CLP Water Quality Education, Information and Relationship Development;
5. Implement Recommendations of the previous ‘CLP Source Water Quality Stakeholder Study’; and
6. Plant Project Specific Seeds Potentially Developing Into Mobilization More Comprehensive In Scope Later.

Action Alternatives 2 through 6 each differs in scope and intensity of involvement and/or resources required to support it. Mobilization advocates are encouraged to think of these as a menu of ‘modules’ that they can combine and/or sequence in different ways. Within each strategic module, mobilization advocates also can select specific actions, substantive meeting topics, and/or projects to address.