



**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**  
**CACHE LA POUUDRE SOURCE WATER QUALITY:**  
**IDENTIFICATION OF STAKEHOLDERS,**  
**ASSESSMENT OF STAKEHOLDER POTENTIAL TO MOBILIZE**  
**TO PROTECT SOURCE WATER QUALITY,**  
**STRATEGIC MOBILIZATION PLAN**

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to present results of a study that:

- Identifies the stakeholders that others perceive as ‘indispensable’ to potential future cooperative action to protect Cache la Poudre (CLP) source water quality;
- Identifies and assesses the stakeholders’ perceptions regarding CLP source water quality issues and a variety of factors that may affect their potential to act collaboratively; and
- Develops and recommends a strategy for mobilizing the stakeholders to protect CLP source water quality – if THEY DECIDE that this is desirable.

The study and recommendations are policy advocacy in support of source water quality protection.

**RESEARCH DESIGN**

The study uses a qualitative research design to conduct this case study. A conceptual framework addressing why and how stakeholders mobilize to address contemporary public policy problems collaboratively provides the basis for the questions that the survey and interview asked, and the analysis and mobilization strategy recommendations.

The Fort Collins and Greeley water system staff that are responsible for source water protection identified the stakeholder types and organizations they perceive as ‘indispensable’ to potential future action to protect source water, and knowledgeable individuals to represent the views of these groups and organizations. The study obtained the perspectives of these stakeholders using a questionnaire survey and an in-depth follow-up interview.

The questionnaire survey asked thirty-two individual stakeholders:

- If they see source water quality problems and/or opportunities confronting the CLP source water area;
- What these problems and/or opportunities are;
- What actions are needed to address these;
- If they think they need the help of others and will benefit from cooperation;
- If they are committed to cooperating; and
- Which stakeholders are indispensable to taking these actions successfully?

The follow-up interview obtained clarifications and elaborations on responses to the survey, and further developed the analyst’s understanding of each respondent’s concerns and views

**FINDINGS**

The findings in this report are based on the responses of eighteen stakeholders. Four respondents did not see any source water quality issues. In general, respondents perceive Upper CLP water quality as high at present. However, nearly all respondents share a concern that the potential for water quality problems to occur is strong, primarily due to the increasing intensity of human activity in the watershed. Respondents did not know of data suggesting that source water quality has been or is in the process of degrading. However, as a generalization, they seem to think that anecdotal evidence, experience and research in other

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settings, and logical consideration of cause and effect all suggest a strong potential for source water quality problems to occur. One exception is temporary contamination of CLP water resources caused by accidental spills, primarily in the State Highway 14 corridor, which is a certain problem. Some respondents seem to question if current management capacities and practices are sufficient for preserving the currently high quality of CLP source water in the face of the intensifying potential threats.

Stakeholders' responses identifying actions they want taken, range from general to specific and detailed action items. Regardless, the responses seem to fall into three overarching strategic actions:

- Execute public agency missions and activities having implications for source water quality rigorously and effectively to protect source water quality;
- Conduct a forum for stakeholders to become informed about what others are doing, and discuss how to protect source water quality effectively; and
- Conduct outreach and education regarding the range of practices and behaviors necessary for protecting source water quality for 'permanent' and 'temporary' residents, owners, and users of the source water area and its resources.

Appendix A lists fifty-nine organizations and forty-nine individuals that respondents identified as indispensable stakeholders. In addition, respondents identified indispensable stakeholder groups for which they did not identify specific organizations or individuals, primarily the private, non-governmental residents, owners, and temporary users and visitors of the source water area.

## **ANALYSIS**

The analyst sees a mix of factors, with some appearing potentially to motivate stakeholders to come together to address source water protection collaboratively, and others appearing potentially to constrain this from occurring. Some factors seem to 'cut both ways', motivating stakeholders to mobilize while at the same time constraining the process. In some instances, this tension seems to serve as a factor potentially motivating stakeholders to at least get together to begin interacting about source water quality protection, a first step in the mobilization process.

In the view of this analyst, overall, there appears to be sufficient factors present to motivate a number of stakeholders to take at least an initial set of mobilization activities, namely continuing some effort to reach out to additional stakeholders and to begin discussing the source water quality issues that those participating in this study have identified.

Stakeholders advocating protection of Upper CLP source water quality should consider planning and conducting meetings for a comprehensive range of stakeholders. The stakeholder identification and assessment process to this point suggests that sufficient factors are present among upper CLP source water quality protection stakeholders that they will take and benefit from this first step toward mobilization. The respondents, generally speaking, seem bound by a set of shared perceptions, uncertainties, and unknowns, and at least a willingness to discuss these with one another. In summary, these include:

- A core set of perceptions concerning source water quality issues;
- Uncertainty and anxiety about the issues, and particularly about if, what, and how other stakeholders are addressing them;
- Perception of which public agencies at the highest levels are indispensable stakeholders, but not always about the identity of key staff and programmatic units;
- Perception that 'resident-owners-users' are indispensable, but lack of specific knowledge of the organizations associated with or representing the interests of these groups and key contact individuals; and

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- Lack of perception of individuals and/or organizations 'standing out' clearly as the leads, change agents, or network managers orchestrating stakeholders to mobilize to protect CLP source water.

## **MOBILIZATION STRATEGY**

Four general strategic mobilization activities are recommended for CLP source water quality protection stakeholders to consider implementing:

- Strategic Activity 1: Continue and strengthen leadership in advocating for and facilitating stakeholder mobilization to protect source water quality;
- Strategic Activity 2: Continue and expand the upper CLP source water quality protection stakeholder identification and assessment process;
- Strategic Activity 3: Plan and conduct meetings for stakeholders; and
- Strategic Activity 4: Develop and conduct outreach and education in source water quality protection for upper CLP residents, owners, and users.

An additional alternative is possible, i.e., continuing the status quo. This report does not address this option.

Admittedly commonsensical, it appears that the primary advocates for protecting source water quality, namely the Fort Collins and Greeley water systems, will need to continue developing their advocacy and leadership for these initial activities to occur. At present, absent these next steps, there does not seem to be the 'critical mass' of positive factors present to suggest with certainty that a comprehensive range of stakeholders will mobilize fully to protect source water quality, for example by forming a 'watershed association' and agreeing on a comprehensive set of specific action items to protect source water quality and a plan and commitments for carrying these out successfully.

Under Strategic Activity 3: Plan and Conduct Meetings for Stakeholders, the report recommends four different general alternatives for CLP source water quality protection advocates to consider. These alternatives, which are not mutually exclusive, are:

- Meetings 1: Conduct set of meetings that are comprehensive in terms of the issues they address and the stakeholders (i.e., organizations, programs, individuals) participating.
- Meetings 2: Conduct meetings that are limited to a few issues and primarily the major public agency stakeholders;
- Meetings 3: Begin mobilization addressing one identified issue and only the stakeholders most directly involved in the issue; and
- Meetings 4: Conduct outreach, education, and advocacy for CLP source water quality protection to other stakeholder organizations and members.

The report describes 'Meetings 1', the 'full prescription' for mobilization, in most detail. The report describes the other alternatives more briefly, as they derive from significant cuts in the first. Source water quality protection advocates may consider carrying out the less intensive alternatives in combination. The 'Meetings 1' alternative requires additional progress under Strategic Activity 2: Conduct Additional Stakeholder Identification and Assessment, and particularly for 'residents-owners-users'. Source water protection advocates could initiate the other alternatives using results from the stakeholder identification and assessment process to date, although these alternatives too would benefit from additional identification and assessment of 'residents-owners-users'.