

Upper Yampa River Watershed Plan



Protecting and Managing Long Term Health

**A Collaboration of the Upper Yampa Technical Committee, Watershed Group
and Constituents**

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Upper Yampa River Watershed

Plan -

Protecting and Managing Long Term Health

Table of Contents

Mission Statement of the Upper Yampa River Watershed Group

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chapter 1. Overview

Chapter 2. Understanding Existing and Potential Water Quality Issues in the UYRW

Chapter 3. Overarching Goals and Objectives

Chapter 4. Watershed-wide Known and Potential Stressors and Solutions to Water Quality Threats

Chapter 5. Assessing Watershed-wide Data Gaps

Chapter 6. Sub-basin Water Quality Classifications and Identified Water Quality Concerns

Chapter 7. Action Plan and Matrix by Objective

Chapter 8. Outreach and Education

Chapter 9. Ongoing Water Quality Monitoring

Commonly Used Abbreviations

Appendices

A. Upper Yampa State of the Watershed Report 2014

B. 303(d) and M&E lists

C. In-stream Flow Map

D. Tier 1 BMPs:

a. Fishery

b. Riparian

c. Agriculture

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TO:**

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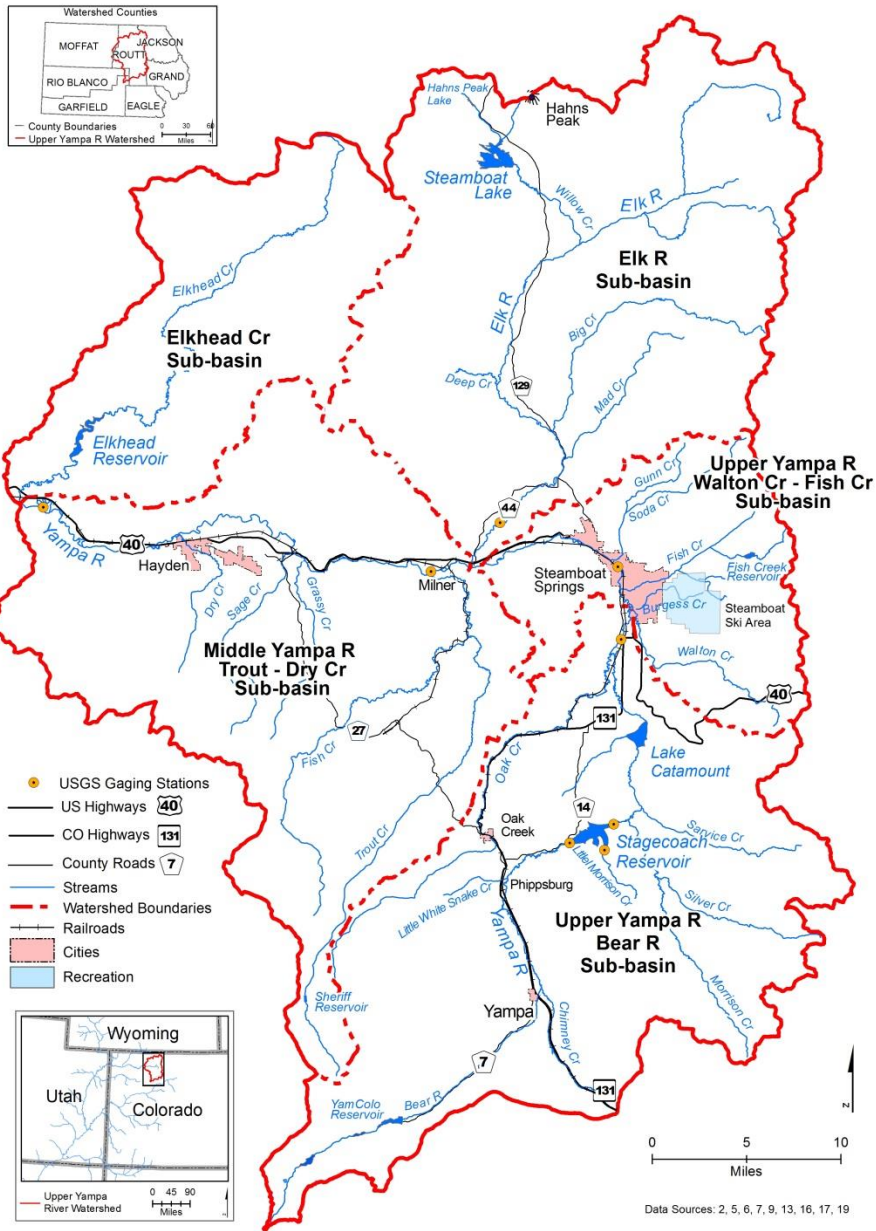
Mission Statement of the Upper Yampa River Watershed Group

The Upper Yampa River Watershed Group is committed to maintaining and improving the chemical, physical and biological health of the upper Yampa River and its tributaries through the creation of a non-regulatory Plan that informs decision-making and increases local capacity to protect and enhance water quality, promote water conservation, and sustain the present health of the watershed.

Chapter 1. Overview

The Upper Yampa Watershed Group (UYRWG) operating under the lead agency Routt County Conservation District (RCCD) was re-established in 2011 and represents a collaboration to protect and enhance the long term health of the Upper Yampa River Watershed (UYRW) extending from the headwaters of the Yampa River to the confluence with and including Elkhead Creek (Figure 1.)

Figure 1. Upper Yampa River Watershed Planning Area



In 2014 the UYRWG published the *State of the Watershed Report* (SOTWR) with funding from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Colorado Water Conservation Board, Environmental Protection Agency, Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District, City of Steamboat Springs, The Nature Conservancy, Trout Unlimited, Routt County, The Town of Oak Creek, and the RCCD. The SOTWR built upon the work of many stakeholder efforts, studies and reports within the past two decades and provided updated information on the upper Yampa River system as a foundation for the development of implementation plans going forward.

This Watershed Plan (WP) is the next step in the process of achieving stated goals by developing implementation strategies using science and technology and spelling out methods for undertaking future implementation practices and projects.

An overarching goal of watershed planning is to be an inclusive, holistic, and collaborative approach that embodies the health and well-being of the environment and its inhabitants as well as supports a healthy economic climate.

What the Watershed Plan Will Address

- Build on findings and recommendations of *2014 Upper Yampa River State of the Watershed Report* (SOTWR) (see Appendix A);
- Focus on a collaborative and holistic non-regulatory management of non-point sources of potential pollution;
- Refine Upper Yampa River Watershed (UYRW) objectives as they relate to the WP;
- Develop specific strategies and action plans;
- Create components of ongoing outreach and education plan;
- Facilitate collaboration plan with related agencies, partners, programs, stakeholders;
- Develop milestones and measurements for progress and success;
- Plan for ongoing water quality monitoring and reporting;
- Prioritize, update and manage current and future project list;
- Meet USEPA Nine Elements for Approvable Watershed Plans;
- Explore and identify future funding sources.

It is also important to document progress toward attaining water quality goals which will be another key focus of the WP and subsequent updates. The planning horizon of this Plan is 5 – 10 years.

Chapter 2. Understanding Existing and Potential Water Quality Issues in the UYRW

The 2014 SOTWR addressed water quality issues both on a watershed-wide scale and at the sub-basin level and generated GIS mapping to better understand and illustrate existing conditions.

The SOTWR is the precursor for and therefore included by reference as a part of this Watershed Plan. It can be found at <http://routtcountycd.com/> (click on tab in upper right hand corner).

Watershed-wide Issues

Newly created GIS mapping presented in the SOTWR aids in understanding water quality issues and includes watershed-wide drainage patterns; land cover; general geology; and water quality classifications (please see Appendix).

Although water quality in the UYRW is generally considered good, the following natural and human-induced water quality issues were identified on a watershed scale:

- Elevated nutrient contributions potentially leading to accelerated eutrophic characteristics and toxic algal blooms in certain lakes and ponds
- Higher than normal sediment loading in identified areas
- Normal seasonal bedload reduction (exhibited in both major river channels) which is characterized by dramatic increases in the size of point bars and erosion on the banks of outside channel meanders
- Elevated temperature and low dissolved oxygen that potentially stresses the aquatic ecosystem
- Riparian area and wetland degradation/loss
- Degraded stream banks and eroded channels
- Elevated metals and trace elements from historic mining, atmospheric contributions, and potentially other non-point runoff sources
- Impacts on native ecosystems from the proliferation of a variety of invasive species (both flora and fauna)
- Potential impacts from forest alterations.

Non-point Source Pollutant Loading and Load Reduction

Regulatory Overview

Under Section 303 (d) of the 1972 Clean Water Act, States are required to list streams and water bodies that are impaired, i.e. do not meet water quality standards for designated uses. As part of this process, States are also required to develop Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for impaired waters. A TMDL is the maximum amount of a given pollutant that a water body can receive and still meet water quality standards. TMDLs are expressed as pollutant loads. There are currently no TMDLs established for stream segments in the UYRW. Colorado's current 303(d) list for the UYRW is included in the Appendix. Each stream segment that is currently listed is also discussed in Chapter 11 of this WP.

Colorado also identifies water bodies with suspected water quality problems and lists them on their Monitoring and Evaluation List (M&E). The segments in the UYRW on the M&E list are also included in Appendix B. Each stream segment that is currently listed is also discussed in Chapter 11 of this WP.

Nutrient standards have not yet been adopted by the State of Colorado, however in May of 2012 the Water Quality Control Commission adopted nutrient control management regulations (Regulations 85 and 31) which included interim total nitrogen, total phosphorus values and chlorophyll a. The Commission has adopted the interim value for total phosphorus as a numeric standard in waters upstream of domestic wastewater treatment facilities in the upstream waters of the Upper Colorado River Basin. Nutrients are common in stormwater runoff nationwide from both natural and human-related sources, and can be challenging to remove. Secondary impacts from excessive nutrient loading such as accelerated eutrophication, can lead to other costly problems. Dissolved oxygen standards were revised in Colorado in 2011.

General Load-reducing Methods

Non-point source management in the UYRW at the watershed scale will focus on the following overarching themes:

- Identifying and reducing non-point pollution sources
- Erosion prevention
- Reducing sediment loading
- Reducing nutrient loading
- Maintaining optimum temperatures
- Improving riparian conditions
- Addressing mining impacts
- Addressing oil & gas impacts.

Management measures will include:

- Floodplain protection
- Wetland protection – identify critical areas for focus (e.g. recharge areas and important habitats)
- Stormwater management (recharge/infiltration; pollutant removal; LID; rain gardens, reduce impervious surfaces, etc.)
- Roadway Management – de-icers, etc.
- Riparian habitat protection/restoration
- Native species protection/enhancements
- Lake eutrophication analysis to develop lake specific plans
- Silviculture management

- Agriculture management (grazing and waterways; crop rotation; minimize tilling, etc.)
- Land use planning and management strategies (setbacks, zoning, etc.)
- Septic system education
- Groundwater education
- Water conservation/efficiency
- Grey water reuse
- Climate change impact management.

Water Quality Protection and Restoration Issues by Sub-basin (as identified in the SOTWR and USGS Study)

GIS mapping was created as part of the SOTWR at the sub-basin level for land use; land ownership; point discharges and permitted oil and gas wells; instream flow segments; and known or suspected impaired segment information.

Using both vetted water quality monitoring data and watershed health indicators, each of the five sub-basins was assessed to identify existing and potential water quality issues as well as the factors that influence them. Some of these issues were based on observations by long term locals who reside in the area. Additionally, the SOTWR attempted to begin to compile existing projects and efforts underway to address some of these issues.

Below are summaries of water quality issues in the five sub-basins:

1. Bear River Sub-basin - some Outstanding Waters / Anti-degradation designated streams
 - a. Sediment loading (USFS decommissioned roads, Bushy Creek on 303 (d) list)
 - b. Normal seasonal bedload alterations in main stem of Yampa below the Catamount dam causing sediment issues between Lake Catamount and Chuck Lewis State Wildlife Area
 - c. Riparian area degradation
 - d. Erosion from livestock grazing practices
 - e. Forest fires having the potential to threaten water supplies and water quality
 - f. Contaminated runoff from historic mining-related runoff
 - g. Elevated zinc & dissolved iron in Little Morrison Creek (some natural some human-induced)
 - h. Yampa River below Stagecoach Reservoir – elevated selenium & manganese (some natural some human-induced)
 - i. Elevated temperature (M&E list - drought years)
 - j. Mercury in fish tissue at Stagecoach and Catamount Reservoirs
 - k. Elevated nutrient concentrations in Stagecoach Reservoir and Lake Catamount resulting in accelerated eutrophication
 - l. Blue green algae blooms

- m. Non-native fish encroachment on native cutthroat trout populations.
2. Walton Creek/Fish Creek Sub-basin – smallest area with largest population center
 - a. Elevated temperatures and low dissolved oxygen levels (drought years) (M&E List)
 - b. Elevated Manganese
 - c. Sediment loading
 - d. Riparian area degradation
 - e. Loss of wetlands which are necessary to filter stormwater as well as provide infiltration to groundwater
 - f. Urban stormwater runoff carrying contaminants and potentially increasing temperature from impervious surface runoff
 - g. Non-native species encroachment
 3. Elk River Sub-basin – largest tributary / some Outstanding Waters /Anti-degradation designated streams
 - a. High readings of *E. Coli*
 - b. Elevated Mercury - 303 (d) List
 - c. Sediment loading
 - d. Riparian area degradation
 - e. Added bedload resulting from both several years of record spring runoff as well as poorly designed river channel restoration projects
 - f. Willow Creek/Steamboat Lake outlet
 - g. Damage from construction of ditch diversions and push up dams
 - h. Non-native species encroachment
 4. Middle Yampa River - Trout Creek/Dry Creek Sub-basins
 - a. Elevated Phosphorus
 - b. Elevated suspended sediment potentially a result of degradation of riparian areas from unmanaged cattle grazing on leased lands
 - c. One Dry Creek segment on 303 (d) List for exceedance of agricultural and aquatic life standards, Iron, and Selenium
 - d. Sage Creek 303 (d) List for exceeding aquatic life standard for Iron
 - e. Sediment loading
 - f. Erosion caused by reduced ground cover (noxious weeds, overgrazing)
 - g. Riparian area degradation
 - h. Degraded stream banks and eroded channels (Morgan Bottom area)
 - i. Non-native species encroachment
 5. Elkhead River Sub-basin – USFS Special Interest Area



- a. Fish tissue Mercury in Elkhead reservoir– (303 (d) List)
- b. Sediment loading
- c. Riparian area degradation
- d. Elevated temperatures due to erosion-caused wide shallow exposed channels and deep vertical mass wasting banks
- e. Non-native species encroachment.

Chapter 3: Overarching Goals, Objectives and Strategies of the UYRWG

Overarching Goals Identified by the UY Watershed Group in April 2015

1. Promote a watershed-scale approach to water quality protection and improvement, and
2. Improve and maintain the physical, chemical and biological conditions of the watershed that benefit the environment for present and future generations.

Objectives

1. Protect and enhance water quality
2. Protect and restore riparian areas
3. Increase education, awareness and collaboration
4. Expand upon existing water quality monitoring
5. Serve as a resource for future projects and initiatives.

Strategies Developed by the UYWG in April 2015

1. Advocate for an integrated approach to watershed restoration and monitoring.
 - Work with stakeholders to coordinate watershed-scale funding and implementation of projects that support uses defined in water quality classifications
 - Promote the importance of water quality monitoring
 - Seek to reduce nonpoint source pollution
 - Encourage watershed connectivity and ecological balance of riparian, wetland, upland and aquatic biota
 - Understand and address sediment and nutrient loading
 - Improve habitats negatively affected by invasive species.

2. Advocate for the region to maintain and improve water quality. Degraded areas and waters of the region not currently supporting classified uses will be prioritized for improvement.
 - Promote water quality as an important consideration in making decisions on the location and extent of areas to be served by public facilities and services
 - Work with stakeholders to continue both citizen-based and professional water quality monitoring programs in the basin
 - Compile data from the upper Yampa River Basin
 - Develop a Sampling and Monitoring Plan
 - Provide an accessible and user-friendly database/geographic information system (GIS). Establish a mechanism to develop and update the database as new data are collected
 - Analyze and interpret data and assess information gathered from the Upper Yampa River Monitoring Plan on an ongoing basis. Include narrative discussions of changes in water quality
 - Coordinate monitoring to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure compatibility of data
 - Advocate that water development and transfer activities not have adverse effects on the region's water resources
 - Evaluate nutrient sources in the Upper Yampa and further characterize algae problems in the Yampa River system
 - Work with the State Water Quality Control Commission to ensure that sufficient water quality and stream flow data are provided for sites proposed for listing during the triennial review process
 - Encourage reclassification of water bodies if data indicate that streams have been misclassified based on historical beneficial uses
 - Advocate for water conservation and efficiency by all water users for the benefit of the people and natural resources in the Yampa River Basin
 - Continue local nonpoint source water quality improvement projects as identified through the Watershed Action Plan.

3. Act as a resource for stakeholder outreach and education to increase understanding of, and reduce and prevent, nonpoint source pollution.
 - Increase education and awareness of the importance of a proper functioning Yampa River system
 - Assist local governments with Best Management Practices (BMPs) to minimize impacts to watershed health from development and growth including education for planning commissions,
 - Encourage private and public land management practices that result in minimized and/or controllable impacts to the overall health of the watershed by incorporating environmental stewardship with land-use activities,
 - Promote the importance of rehabilitation, replacement, maintenance, and operations of storm water discharge systems for improved watershed health,

- Promote the proper management of riparian zones,
- Encourage an approach that encompasses and BMPs that implement the appropriate volume, rate, scheduling, storage, transport, handling and disposal, of pesticide, fertilizer, and road deicing and friction applications are determined and applied to protect water quality while protecting public health and safety,
- Integrate Source Water Protection Planning (USDA program) when relevant,
- Continue to improve agricultural BMPs,
- Continue to promote urban and construction water quality BMPs through public education,
- Encourage stream restoration be incorporated in land-use/construction projects,
- Incorporate water quality protection features (BMPs) into new development/review process.

Chapter 4. Watershed-wide Known and Potential Stressors and Solutions to Water Quality Threats

As part of creating a holistic watershed plan for the UYRW, the potential sources and causes of waterbody impairments and threats are identified to include both immediate and long term issues as they relate to the health of the watershed. Identification of these potential “stressors” and their sources, impacts, impairments and possible solutions are outlined in Table 4.1 below. It is acknowledged that many of the activities identified as potential sources of water quality contamination are vital to our economy, improved management techniques will result in less impact on the watershed and water quality.



Table 4.1: Potential Source of Stressors*, Impacts, Solutions in the Upper Yampa River Watershed

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Land Use Activity – Source of Stressor	Potential consequence(s)	Pollutant(s)	Effect(s) / Impacts	Potential outcome(s)	Possible Solutions	Resources
<p style="text-align: center;">“ Urban” Growth Areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Roadways -Residential areas -Commercial areas -Road traction/snow removal -Construction -Unmanaged pesticide applications -Over-irrigation of lawns -Illicit discharges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Increased impervious surfaces -Pollutants from stormwater runoff reaching water bodies such as from pet waste, fertilizers, pushing snow piles into waterbodies -Illicit discharges -Physical damage to floodplains and wetlands -Damage to riparian areas -Habitat fragmentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Above normal TSS/ sediment -Above normal nutrients -Trace elements/metals -Salts -Pesticides -Petroleum & products -Fecal bacteria -Temperature -Litter -Paint & chemicals -Solvents -Sewage -Food grease 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Reduced DO, -Altered pH, -Increased algae blooms -Sedimentation in water bodies -Negative effects on water quality, stream morphology, and habitat/ecosystem -Loss of native species to invasives -Reduced infiltration of surface water to groundwater -Loss of ability of riparian areas and wetlands to filter water -Loss of flood attenuation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Impaired aquatic ecosystems -Sediment adhesion reduces water quality -Sediment loads affect ecosystem function and habitat -Loss of wetlands reduce groundwater infiltration and pollutant filtering -Nutrients and bacteria lead to algal blooms and recreational impairment -Water supply impairment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Education on a watershed level regarding Best Mgmt Practices (BMPs) -Sub-basin demonstration project -Acquire funding for the development of a basin-specific BMP Manual & implementation programs -Rapid Stream Assessments to identify priority areas -Education to protect riparian areas -Develop and fund restoration Projects -LID 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Upper Yampa River Watershed Group (UYRWG) -City SS MS4 -Routt County Road and Bridge -Planning Commissions -Construction regulations/SWMPs

Land Use Activity – Source of Stressor	Potential consequence(s)	Pollutant(s)	Effect(s) / Impacts	Potential outcome(s)	Possible Solutions	Resources
<p style="text-align: center;">-----</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Structural Modifications</p> <p>Structural changes in waterways: -Dams -Reservoirs -Stream fragmentation -Modified stream channels -Improperly designed diversions -Culverts -Inter-basin transfers of water -Poorly designed channel rehabilitation projects</p>	<p>-Alters hydraulic regime -Reduces energy dissipation causing stream channel enlargement or reduction -Flow alterations -Creates fish movement issues -Increased bank erosion</p>	<p>-Sediment, -Aquatic barriers/fish passage restrictions</p>	<p>-Streambank erosion -Avulsions -Channel instability & in-stream flow alterations, -Alters normal baseflows and bedloads -Changes in nutrient loading -Changes in temperature -Variable level outlets reduce DO</p>	<p>-Increased or decreased sediment, -Impaired benthic habitat -Impaired aquatic ecosystem -Increased algal blooms -Accelerated eutrophication</p>	<p>-Encourage and fund planting of native species. -Coordinate private projects along same stream segment -Education and BMP development -Support programs and practices that minimize fragmentation -Acquire funding to address -Design conveyance structures that consider ecological issues</p>	<p>-UYRWG -CO Parks and Wildlife -Trout Unlimited (TU) -USFS -TNC -YWBRT -Literature</p>

Land Use Activity – Source of Stressor	Potential consequence(s)	Pollutant(s)	Effect(s) / Impacts	Potential outcome(s)	Possible Solutions	Resources	
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Stream Management Plans -Reservoir release plan to address ideal bedload & flow/ operational changes 		
Structural Modifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Improperly designed agricultural diversions, headgates, & pushup dams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Alters hydraulic regime -Increases sedimentation 	Sediment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Streambank erosion -Avulsions -Channel instability & in-stream flow alterations -Alters normal baseflows and bedloads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Impaired benthic habitat -Impaired aquatic ecosystem and fish passage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Install fish friendly permanent diversion structures -Acquire funding to develop designs and BMPs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -NRCS -CSU Extension Office -UYWG -RCCD -Community Ag Alliance -UYWCD -District Engineer -CO Parks and Wildlife -TU

Land Use Activity – Source of Stressor	Potential consequence(s)	Pollutant(s)	Effect(s) / Impacts	Potential outcome(s)	Possible Solutions	Resources
<p style="text-align: center;">Agricultural Activities**</p> <p>-Unmanaged or Mismanaged Grazing Activities</p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/> <p>-Unmanaged or Mismanaged Irrigation Practices</p>	<p>-Riparian degradation -Loss of canopy -Streambank erosion -Manure concentration in undesired areas</p>	<p>-TSS/ -Sediment -Nutrients -Bacteria</p>	<p>-Sedimentation -Increased stream temperature -Wide and shallow channel</p>	<p>-Declining fish and macroinvertebrate populations -Declining water quality -Habitat damage resulting in potential invasives takeover</p>	<p>Development of BMPs to: -create off-channel watering -ID critical areas & manage/limit animal access points -Address timing issues & winter issues -Provide proper rotation to support healthy soil structure and plant matter -Cost sharing to fence off riparian areas and wetlands</p>	<p>-NRCS -CSU Extension Office -UYRWG -RCCD -Community Ag Alliance -Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District (UYWCD) -YWBRT</p>
	<p>Over-inundation of soil profiles results in leaching of and</p>	<p>-Manganese, -Selenium, -Arsenic, -Lead</p>	<p>Water quality standard exceedances</p>	<p>Water quality standard exceedances result in stream segments being regulated</p>	<p>-Develop and educate to BMPs that address proper</p>	<p>-NRCS -CSU Extension Office -UYRWG -RCCD</p>

Land Use Activity – Source of Stressor	Potential consequence(s)	Pollutant(s)	Effect(s) / Impacts	Potential outcome(s)	Possible Solutions	Resources
<p>-----</p> <p>Improper Pesticide Use</p> <p>-----</p> <p>- Less than Ideal Crop Management</p>	<p>increased concentrations of major ions, trace elements, and salt being transported by water</p>				<p>timing, rates, methods, -Acquire funding for demonstration projects -Cooperate to preclude Call on river</p>	<p>-Community Ag Alliance -UYWCD</p>
	<p>Overuse, improper timing, use of incorrect product can result in water quality degradation</p>	<p>-Metals, -Chemicals</p>	<p>Negative affect on aquatic biota</p>	<p>-Fish kills, -Recreational impacts</p>	<p>-Integrated Pest Management, -Education on aquatic versions of pesticides -Education on “Label is the Law”</p>	<p>-CSU Extension -Routt County Weed Course</p>
	<p>Soil health can be compromised</p>	<p>-Sediment -Noxious weeds</p>	<p>-Increased erosion -Invasive weed establishment</p>	<p>Unhealthy watershed</p>	<p>BMPs for: -cover crops -no till farming -contour farming -Sediment – avoid, control, trap, Promote soil health</p>	<p>-CSU Extension Soil Health Tours -NRCS -RCCD</p>

Land Use Activity – Source of Stressor		Potential consequence(s)	Pollutant(s)	Effect(s) / Impacts	Potential outcome(s)	Possible Solutions	Resources
	----- - Improper Manure and Fertilizer Activities	Stormwater runoff transports nutrients and other harmful constituents to waterways	-Nutrients -E. Coli	Degraded water quality, algae blooms,	-Impairment to aquatic ecosystem -Recreational impacts -Water supply impacts	-BMPs for proper management -Acquire funding for demonstration projects	-CSU Extension -NRCS -RCCD
Mining	Historic	-Runoff from tailings introduce contaminants to streams, -Un-reclaimed areas can result in non-native vegetation encroachment	-Metals -Non-native vegetation	-Degraded water quality -Loss of native habitat	Unhealthy watershed	Address problem areas – need further identification and analysis	May warrant further study in areas that display concern

Land Use Activity – Source of Stressor		Potential consequence(s)	Pollutant(s)	Effect(s) / Impacts	Potential outcome(s)	Possible Solutions	Resources
Forestry	-Road Construction and Timber Harvesting -Unmanaged off-road vehicle use, ATVs, bikes	-Increased erosion	-Sediment -Total Suspended Solids (TSS)	-Stream bottom inundated with fine sediment -TSS in water column -Lose pools	Declining fish and macroinvertebrate populations	Implement BMPs to improve design, stabilize disturbed areas, capture and remove sediment	US Forest Service
	-Excess Forest Fuel	Wildland fires increase erodibility	-Sediment -Chemicals -Ash	-Sediment loading -Chemical loading	Damage to water supplies and water quality	-Wildfire mitigation treatments that reduce burn severity within the watershed avoiding development of hydrophobic soils and related erosion -Defensible space projects	-USFS -CO Forest Service

Land Use Activity – Source of Stressor		Potential consequence(s)	Pollutant(s)	Effect(s) / Impacts	Potential outcome(s)	Possible Solutions	Resources
Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Water sports -Fishing -Golf courses -Ski operations -Parks 	Introduces contaminants that are transported by stormwater runoff to water bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Chemicals -Nutrients -Invasives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Negative effects on water quality -Eutrophication -Loss of native species to invasives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Impaired aquatic ecosystems -Nutrients lead to algal blooms and recreational impairment -Water supply impairment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Develop BMPs Education/ Outreach Programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -UYRWG -TU -Friends of Yampa
Industrial Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Oil & Gas Operations ----- - Air Pollution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Contaminants from hydraulic fracturing entering groundwater Mercury deposition in water bodies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chemicals Mercury in fish tissue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Groundwater contamination Impairment to food chain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drinking water source concerns Unhealthy watershed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warrants further study Warrants further study 	

Land Use Activity – Source of Stressor		Potential consequence(s)	Pollutant(s)	Effect(s) / Impacts	Potential outcome(s)	Possible Solutions	Resources
Other:	Drought or other causes of reduced stream flows	-Less dilution -Altered hydraulic regime	-Higher water temperatures -Low flows -Concentrated chemicals, salts, etc.	Impairment to aquatic ecosystem	-Damage to aquatic ecosystem -Fish populations stressed	-In-stream flow segments -Planned releases	-CWCB -BIP -Yampa/White Basin Roundtable (YWBRT) -UYWCD
	- Introduction of non-native species	Non desirable species out-compete natives	-N. Pike -Non-native trout -Zebra Mussel -Didymo -Noxious Weeds, -Tamerisk	Impairment to aquatic ecosystem	Unhealthy / unbalanced watershed	-Fishery management projects -Noxious weed management -Education to reduce incidental transport (e.g. boating/fishing related -Native species nursery -Riparian restoration projects	-TU -CPW

**Note: only non-regulated potential stressors are addressed (e.g. activities already governed by existing legislation and permitting are not included)*

*** Of the 1,664,179 acres in the UYRW, 7% is cropland; 48% rangeland and grassland; 38% forest; 2% riparian; 0.5% water; and 4.5% other. Of the 7% cropland identified above, 47% is dryland and 53% irrigated. (source NRCS 2010 Watershed Assessment Report). Since a variety of*



potential pollutants and related loading can come from these land uses, these percentages help to paint a picture of the level of management that may be needed.

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Chapter 5. Assessing Watershed-wide Data Gaps

Overview

Preventing problems is much less expensive and impactful than remediating them. By recognizing science-based indicators and trends, learning from the experience of others, and through proper education and implementation of BMPs, it is anticipated that a proactive approach to watershed health management in the UYRW will serve to mitigate at least some future problems and create a level of preparedness to deal with issues or concerns as they arise. It is advantageous that watershed monitoring, planning and management efforts are taking place in the UYRW *prior* to experiencing major water quality issues that so many other watersheds are already seeing.

Data Gaps

The following data gaps have been identified as priorities:

- Nutrient and Sediment Loading Quantification

USEPA, as part of the nine required elements, requires the watershed plan to quantify pollutant loading from non-point sources such as nutrients and sediment as well as estimate reductions in loading that would occur as a result of watershed implementation projects. Although this method has benefits in measuring performance and successful outcomes, there is insufficient data in the UYRW to undertake this task at this stage. Many of the initiatives and projects outlined in the action plan presented herein, however, will incorporate the collection of loading data and will set targets for load reductions going forward. Further, options to measure success and improvements do exist and are discussed later in the WP. The WP implementation process is a dynamic one. Therefore updates are intended and information and data will need to be modified over time.

- Natural vs. Anthropogenic Data

Determining to a precise degree the sources of water quality contaminants currently being experienced, especially those that occur naturally from geologic sources, can be difficult and expensive. For example, data is not yet available to quantify the percentage of natural versus anthropogenic sources of Selenium in the UYRW. As limited funds exist for water quality monitoring on this magnitude, encouraging education and implementation of cost-effective BMPs may serve as a better approach than spending significant resources on water quality monitoring. Nevertheless, these data gaps pose important questions to decision makers.

- Specific Stream Segment and Wetlands Data

Another data gap relates to identifying specific segments of streams that should be included on the priority list of needing BMPs or other restoration measures. It is proposed that a method such as the NRCS Rapid Stream Assessment be performed as part of the next steps in watershed planning to begin to address this data gap. Identifying and mapping critical wetlands will also be an important part of this effort.

- Small Sample Sets for Impairment Designations

A number of stream segments in the UYRW have been listed on the 303(d) and/or M&E lists with, in some cases, very small sample sets. This represents a data gap that will require additional sampling.

- Flow Data

Adequate flow data also represents a significant data gap in the UYRW. Extreme variations that exist in stream flows from season to season and year-over-year need to be correlated with water quality data for it to be meaningful and comparable.

- Nutrient Loading Data for Lakes

The Action Plan outlined in Chapter 12 of this WP further identifies the need for additional data and information as specific projects become ready for implementation. For example, before a Lake Management and Restoration Plan can be developed for Stagecoach Reservoir, a nutrient loading model will need to be developed to determine whether the lake is nitrogen or phosphorus limited.

- Biological Data

Biological indicators such as macroinvertebrates can be a reliable measurement of stream and ecological health. An Adopt a Stream Program is planned that will result in valuable information on the status and ongoing improvement or deterioration of stream segments in portions of the watershed. Additionally, a partnership with River Watch would augment this initiative.

Chapter 6. Sub-basin Water Quality Classifications and Identified Water Quality Concerns

Categorizing and ranking areas for water quality protection and in some cases restoration has been performed using the following:

- Water quality sampling data
- Indicators and trends that were discovered as part of the SOTW process
- Identification of data gaps
- Anti-degradation waters designation
- State of Colorado 303(d) and M&E Lists.

The purpose of this Chapter is to:

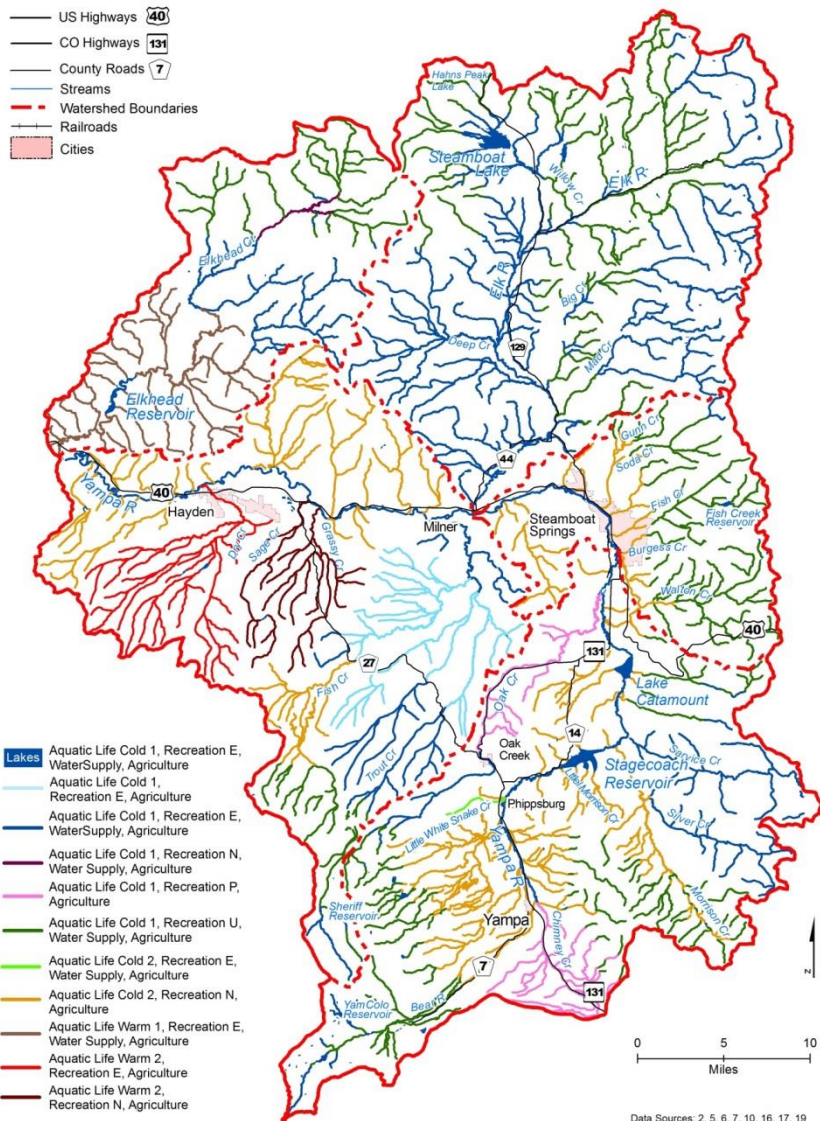
- 1) elaborate in greater detail current water quality classifications for each stream segment in the watershed. This is performed for each of the five sub-basins as defined in the SOTWR
- 2) correlate stream classifications by segment with identified potential water quality concerns
- 3) set priority areas for use in the Action Plan.

GIS mapping developed for the SOTWR illustrates the information provided in the narrative below. The water quality criteria and classifications in Colorado are summarized on page 19 of the SOTWR.

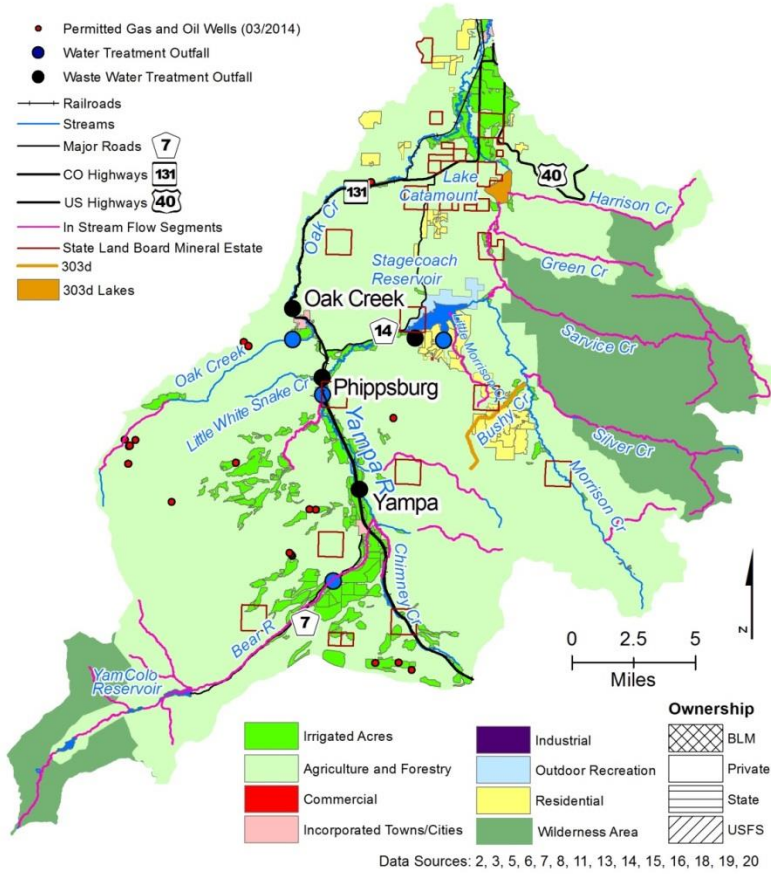
The CWCB holds multiple instream flow segment water rights in the headwater streams and tributaries of most sub-basins for the purpose of ensuring minimum flows (see map in Appendix C). These rights are administered within the State's water right priority system to preserve or improve the natural environment to a reasonable degree.

Municipal wastewater treatment plant discharges in the watershed are currently regulated by the CDPHE Colorado Discharge Permitting System (CDPS) permit program.

Figure 1: Water Quality Classifications



Sub-basin 1: Bear River



SUB BASIN 1: BEAR RIVER	
Stream segments within this sub-basin have the following designations and classifications. To view designations and classifications assigned to specific stream segments within the sub basin, refer to the maps contained in the SOTWR or https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/33_2016%2803%29-Appendix33-1.pdf	
Anti-Degradation Designations	
Outstanding Waters	X
Use-Protected Waters	?
Reviewable Waters	X
Use Classifications	
Recreation ¹	X-E,P,N,U
Aquatic Life	
Class 1 - Cold Water Aquatic Life	X
Class 1 - Warm Water Aquatic Life	
Class 2 - Cold Water Aquatic Life	X
Class 2 - Warm Water Aquatic Life	
Water Supply	X
Wetlands	?
¹ E = existing, P = primary, N = not primary, U = undetermined	

The Bear River sub-basin includes two areas classified as *Outstanding Waters*:

- 1) Service Creek and Silver Creek segments in the Sarvis Creek Wilderness area, and
- 2) Bear River and its' tributaries in the Flat Tops Wilderness area.

These Outstanding Waters stream segments are located in the pristine headwaters of the Yampa River system and support cold water species such as native trout. As Outstanding waters, these stream segments carry the highest *Anti-degradation* classification. As such, their existing high

water quality must be preserved. The underlying geology of these drainages is predominantly igneous and metamorphic (Precambrian granite) along with volcanic sediments. These geologic types are resistant to weathering, create soft water, and cannot buffer acid well. The Wilderness areas are characterized by minimal threats to water quality from human activities. However livestock grazing is permitted in both the Flattops and Sarvis Creek Wilderness. Recent drought conditions further highlighted the importance of assuring minimum flows in small headwater tributaries to negate increased water temperature impacts due to flow conditions.

Silver Creek, Sarvis Creek, Upper Oak Creek, and the tributaries above the Yamcolo Reservoir are classified as *Aquatic Life Cold 1, Recreation E, Water Supply, Agriculture*: tributaries above Yamcolo Reservoir, Silver Creek, Sarvis Creek and Upper Oak Creek. The underlying geology of these stream segments includes sedimentary rocks that have the potential to leach out certain minerals and trace elements such as arsenic (As), zinc (Zn), dissolved iron (Fe), selenium (Se), and manganese (Mn). These formations are also more susceptible to erosion, create harder water, and can buffer acid well. Suspended solids during spring runoff are also often elevated in these stream segments.

Bear River (below Flattops Wilderness), Upper West Morrison Creek; Upper East Chimney Creek; Upper Little White Snake Creek and unnamed tributary above Phippsburg; unnamed tributary east of Lake Catamount; Little Morrison Creek; and Lower Bushy Creek are classified as *Aquatic Life Cold 2, Recreation U, Water Supply, Agriculture*: The underlying geology varies and the predominant land use is agriculture. There are a few historic mines as well as a number of permitted gas and oil wells in the contributing watershed areas to these stream segments. Identified concerns on these stream segments include:

- Bushy Creek is on the water body impaired 303(d) List for excess sediment
- Little White Snake is on the M&E list for Dissolved Oxygen and Mn
- Little Morrison Creek is M&E listed for Mn and the 303(d) list for As and Fe.

Green Creek; Harrison Creek; tributaries NW of the Town of Yampa; Morrison Creek; Tributaries west of Lake Catamount; Little Morrison Creek; and Lower Bushy Creek are classified as *Aquatic Life Cold 2, Recreation N, Agriculture*..

Chimney Creek, and Oak Creek from the Town of Oak Creek to the confluence of the Yampa River are classified *Aquatic Life Cold 1, Recreation P, Agriculture* . Identified concerns include:

- The Yampa River below Stagecoach Reservoir is on the M&E list Mn. (It was previously listed for Se but delisted effective March 2016.)
- Lake Catamount is listed for Mercury in fish tissue (and Fish Consumption Advisory).

Other water quality concerns in the Bear River sub-basin that were identified during the development of the SOTWR include:

- possible impacts from historic mining runoff;
- elevated nutrient loading causing lake eutrophication;
- toxic blue green algae blooms in Stagecoach Reservoir;
- increased sediment loading;
- deprivation of normal seasonal bedload in the Yampa River below the Catamount dam;
- riparian degradation;
- non-native fish (e.g. Northern Pike), crustacean (Rusty crayfish), and other nuisance or invasive species (e.g. zebra mussel, didymo, whirling disease) encroachment, and
- increased forest fuel loads and forestry-related impacts.

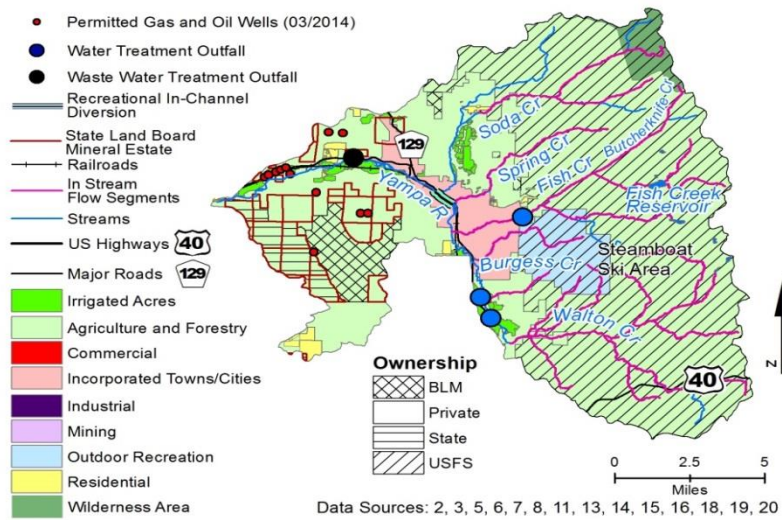
Water Quality Prescriptions

The following water quality needs were identified by regulatory agencies and from public outreach feedback within the Bear River Sub-basin:

- based upon limited data utilized to support the CDPHE M&E and 303(d) impairment listings for Se, Mn, Fe, As, and temperature, it is recommended that additional water quality sampling be initiated to either support or delist these stream segments. Although expensive, it would be ideal to attempt to determine how much of the mineral and trace element loading is naturally occurring. It has been shown that Selenium loading from surrounding geologic conditions can be exacerbated by irrigation practices, which would also be of interest to study in this sub-basin as well as others.
- Mercury in fish tissue in Lake Catamount also warrants further study to determine the source and need for action.
- further assessment of riparian damage and development of priority areas and a mitigation plan;
- a nutrient study of Stagecoach Reservoir to further assess the concern, define sources of the problem and create a science-based management strategy (lake management and restoration plan);
- fine tune BMPs, educate and implement for agricultural uses including grazing and irrigation;

- further development of non-native fish species management strategies and projects;
- fine tune BMPs, educate and implement BMPs to address erosion and sediment control in the sub-basin;
- the growth centers of Yampa, Phippsburg, and Oak Creek do not yet have a population large enough to require an MS4 stormwater permit from CDPHE, however, BMPs developed by the UYRWG using examples of successful efforts of other communities such as the City of SS, may be useful for the Town to consider for implementation;
- evaluation of runoff from historic mining sites (especially Oak Creek Drain where USGS has done some preliminary work);
- determination of bedload needs and how to address; and
- further assessment and prescriptions related to managing forest fuels.

Sub-basin 2: Walton Creek, Fish Creek



SUB BASIN 2: Walton Creek, Fish Creek	
Stream segments within this sub-basin have the following designations and classifications. To view designations and classifications assigned to specific stream segments within the sub basin, refer to the maps contained in the SOTWR or https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/33_2016%2803%29-Appendix33-1.pdf	
Anti-Degradation Designations	
Outstanding Waters	?
Use-Protected Waters	?
Reviewable Waters	?
Aquatic Life Classifications	
Class 1 - Cold Water Aquatic Life	
Class 1 - Warm Water Aquatic Life	
Class 2 - Cold Water Aquatic Life	X
Class 2 - Warm Water Aquatic Life	
Use Classifications	
Recreation ¹	X N,U
Aquatic Life	X
Agriculture	X
Water Supply	X
Wetlands	?
¹ E = existing, P = primary, N = not primary, U = undetermined	

Water quality classifications in the Walton Creek/Fish Creek sub-basin are:

Burgess Creek, Fish Creek Fish Creek Reservoir, Butcherknife Creek, Soda Creek, Gunn Creek, and the upper stretches of Walton Creek, are classified as *Aquatic Life Cold 2, Recreation U, Water Supply, Agriculture*. The underlying geology of these stream segments is predominantly igneous and metamorphic (see discussion above). There are a few small areas of irrigated agriculture within the sub-basin, however, the majority of this sub-basin is in USFS and BLM lands. The sub-basin also includes the Steamboat Ski Area.

The remaining segments of the above-listed streams are classified as *Aquatic Life Cold 2, Recreation N, Agriculture*. These streams are largely underlain by sedimentary rocks. The lower portion of the sub-basin also encompasses a densely populated area (City of Steamboat Springs) located immediately adjacent to the Yampa River. The sub-basin experiences significant summer and winter recreation. There are a number of permitted gas and oil wells in the southwest portion of this sub-basin. Identified concerns in the sub-basin include:

- The main stem of the Yampa River from the confluence of Oak Creek to the confluence of Elkhead Creek is on the 303(d) list for temperature
- The main stem of the Yampa River from Wheeler Creek to Oak Creek confluence (above Stagecoach reservoir) is on the M&E list for Mn and 303(d) list for As
- Gunn Creek is on the 303(d) list for As and Zn.
- Walton Creek is on the M&E list for Mn. (delisted Jan. 2016 due to attainment).


Other water quality concerns identified during the development of the SOTWR include:

- excess sediment loading;
- contributions from road sanding and scoria;
- loss of riparian zones, floodplains, and wetlands resulting from streamside development, and
- groundwater contamination from leaking underground storage tanks.

Water Quality Prescriptions

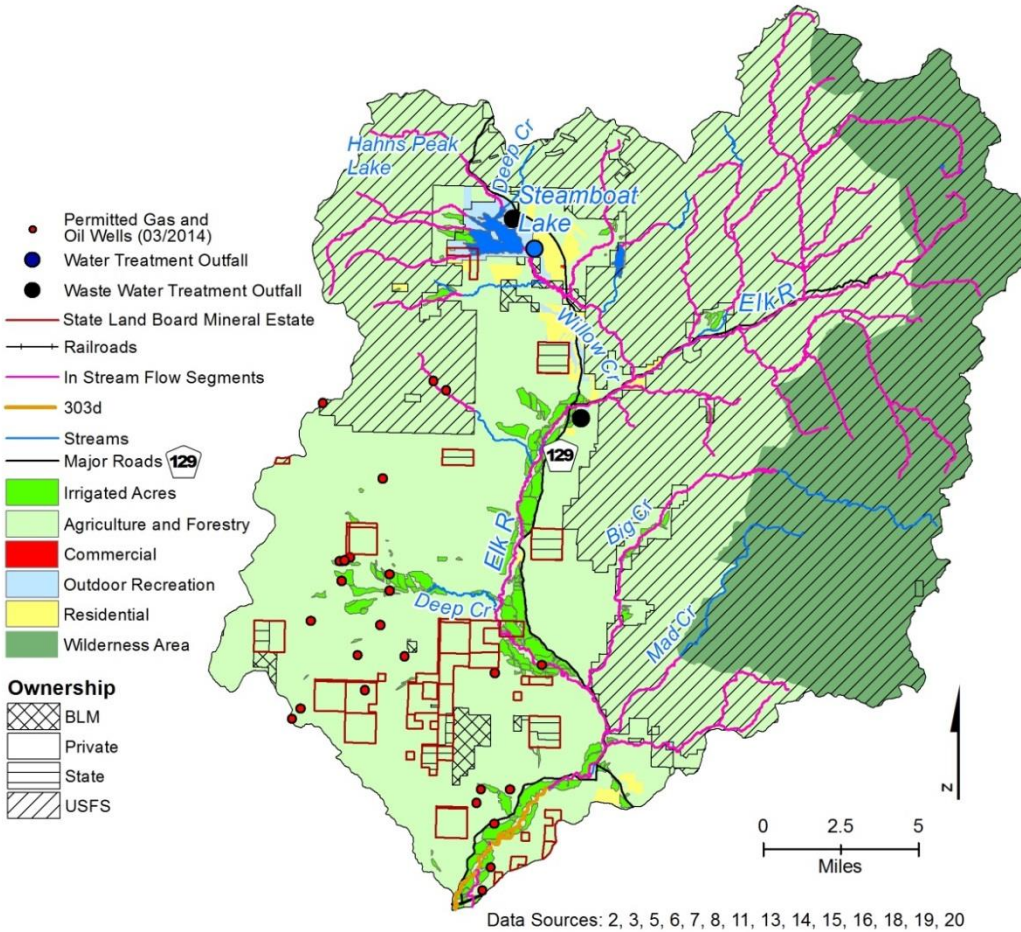
The following water quality needs were identified by regulatory agencies and from public outreach feedback within the Walton Creek/Fish Creek sub-basin:

- Based upon limited data utilized to support the CDPHE M&E and 303(d) impairment listings for temperature and Mn, it is recommended that additional water quality sampling be initiated to either support or delist these stream segments. The City of Steamboat Springs has recently received a grant to review temperature and target flows
- In order to address sediment loading concerns, CDOT and USFS plan to finalize a sediment management plan to address sediment loading from road sanding operations.
- Additionally, the Steamboat Springs 2008 Yampa River Structures Master Plan is planned for implementation
- Fine tune BMPs, educate and implement regarding the interrelationship of riparian areas and watershed health and why protecting natural riparian areas, wetlands and floodplains, as well as mitigating structural changes in waterways that alter the hydraulic regime is important
- Restrictions have been placed by CDPHE on construction de-watering within a mile of identified leaking underground storage tank sites, which encompasses the majority of the City limits

- 
- Fine tune BMPs and implement them. Educate the general public on proper management of lawn fertilizers, pet wastes, and water conservation including xeriscaping
 - Further development of the City of Steamboat Springs' MS4 BMPs.

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Sub-basin 3: Elk River



SUB BASIN 2: Walton Creek, Fish Creek	
Stream segments within this sub-basin have the following designations and classifications. To view designations and classifications assigned to specific stream segments within the sub basin, refer to the maps contained in the SOTWR or https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/33_2016%2803%29-Appendix33-1.pdf	
Anti-Degradation Designations	
Outstanding Waters	?
Use-Protected Waters	?
Reviewable Waters	?
Aquatic Life Classifications	
Class 1 - Cold Water Aquatic Life	X
Class 1 - Warm Water Aquatic Life	
Class 2 - Cold Water Aquatic Life	X
Class 2 - Warm Water Aquatic Life	
Use Classifications	
Recreation ¹	N,U
Aquatic Life	X
Agriculture	X
Water Supply	X
Wetlands	?
¹ E = existing, P = primary, N = not primary, U = undetermined	

Water Quality Classifications

The northeast portion of the Elk River sub-basin encompasses the Mt. Zirkel Wilderness area. Stream segments in this wilderness area, Big Creek, Mad Creek, and the upper reaches of the Elk River, are classified as *Outstanding Waters*. These Outstanding Waters stream segments are located in the pristine headwaters of the Yampa River system and support cold water species such as native trout. As Outstanding waters, these stream segments carry the highest *Anti-degradation* classification. As such, their existing high water quality must be preserved. The underlying geology of these drainages is predominantly igneous and metamorphic (Precambrian granite). These geologic types are resistant to weathering, create soft water, and cannot buffer acid well. The Wilderness areas are characterized by minimal threats to water quality from human activities. However livestock grazing is permitted in these areas.

include The middle segment of the main stem of the Elk River; tributaries above Steamboat Lake from the north and northeast; Willow Creek; and the lower reaches of Big Creek and Mad Creek

are classified *Aquatic Life Cold 1, Recreation U, Water Supply, Agriculture*. This area is largely controlled by the USFS, with large ranches along the river. Geology is mixed.

From Steamboat Lake south including the main stem of the Elk River below Willow Creek confluence and related tributaries down to the Yampa River; and Deep Creek and its tributaries are classified *Aquatic Life Cold 1, Recreation E, Water Supply, Agriculture*. Geology is mostly sedimentary.

- The main stem of the Elk River at its southern reaches is on the 303(d) impaired list for *E.Coli* (bacteria in human and animal excrement).

- Lost Dog Creek is on the M&E list for exceeding the aquatic life standard for Mercury (Hg) and for As and Zn.

Other water quality concerns in the Elk River sub-basin that were identified during the development of the SOTWR include:

- sediment loading from a landslide in Willow Creek canyon;

- foul odor and green color below Steamboat Lake dam during water releases;

- numerous avulsions on the Elk River between Clark and the Yampa River;

- construction of numerous gravel push-up dams to channel irrigation water into headgates;

- lack of coordination between land owners that are making river channel modifications to create fish habitat and to stabilize stream banks is potentially having a negative effect on the channel and resulting in added bedload in the system downstream;

- proliferation of non-native Reed Canary Grass.

There are a number of permitted gas and oil wells in the southern portion of this sub-basin.

Water Quality Prescriptions

The following water quality needs were identified by regulatory agencies and from public outreach feedback within the Elk River sub-basin:

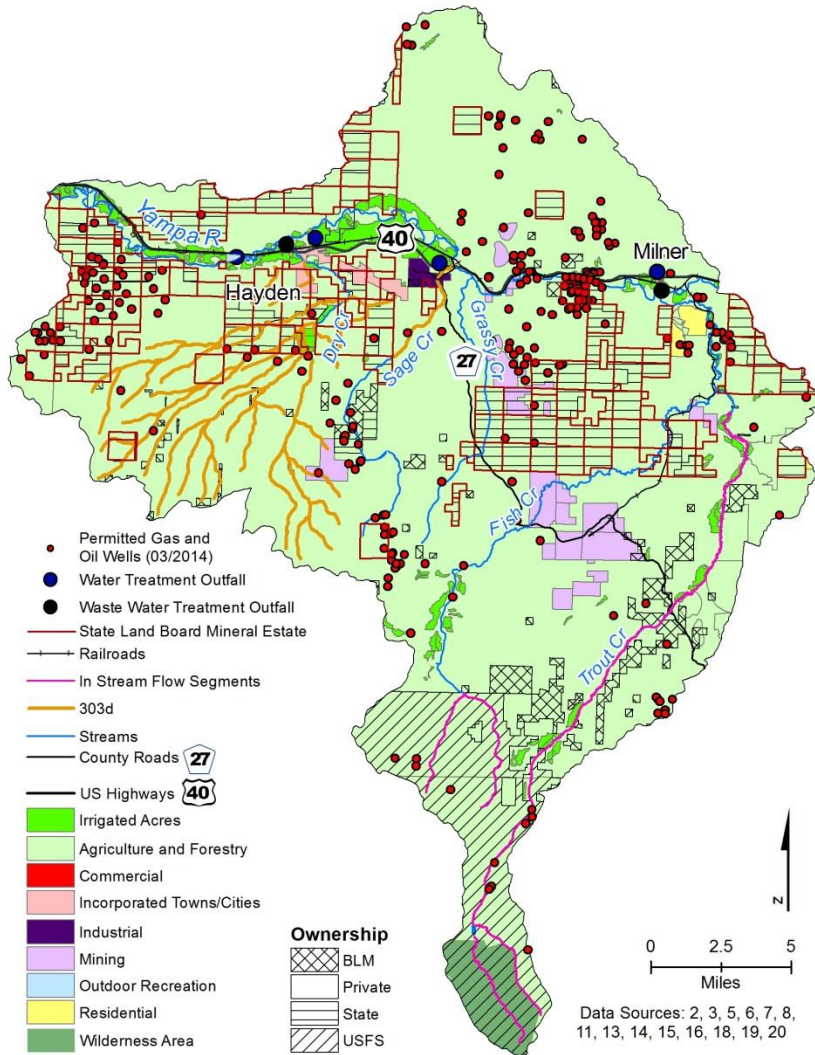
- Based upon changes in land use in recent years, it is recommended that additional water quality sampling be initiated in an effort to delist the *E.Coli* listing in the lower Elk. Regarding Hg in Lost Dog Creek (near Farwell Mountain), the USFS contends this is from past wildfires in the area. Additional water quality sampling may be useful here as well.

-BMPs are needed to educate landowners of improved and effective irrigation diversions and head gate construction (and in some cases alternatives to push-up dams) to assist them in the design and implementation (including funding) of permanent structures;

-Further assessment of riparian damage and development of priority areas and a mitigation plan including the development of and education of BMPs for agricultural uses including grazing, manure management, integrated pest management, and irrigation;

-A collaborative and coordinated holistic approach to managing this sub-basin has been proposed by the UYRWG which would assess the entire area further, identify issues, bring together stakeholders, and develop a basin-wide approach to improvement of the health of the watershed. It is anticipated that this would serve as a model “demonstration” project for other basins.

Sub-basin 4: Middle Yampa River - Trout Creek & Dry Creek



SUB BASIN 4: Middle Yampa River-Trout Creek, Dry Creek

Stream segments within this sub-basin have the following designations and classifications. To view designations and classifications assigned to specific stream segments within the sub basin, refer to the maps contained in the SOTWR or https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/33_2016%2803%29-Appendix33-1.pdf	
Anti-Degradation Designations	
Outstanding Waters	
Use-Protected Waters	?
Reviewable Waters	?
Aquatic Life Classifications	
Class 1 - Cold Water Aquatic Life	X
Class 1 - Warm Water Aquatic Life	
Class 2 - Cold Water Aquatic Life	X
Class 2 - Warm Water Aquatic Life	X
Use Classifications	
Recreation ¹	E,N,U
Aquatic Life	X
Agriculture	X
Water Supply	X
Wetlands	?
¹ E = existing, P = primary, N = not primary, U = undetermined	

Water Quality Classifications

Aquatic Life Cold 1, Recreation E, Water Supply, Agriculture: southern headwaters of Trout Creek; lower reaches of Fish Creek and Trout Creek near Milner. The Trout Creek headwaters are mostly in USFS lands.

Aquatic Life Cold 1, Recreation E, Agriculture: middle reaches of Fish Creek and tributaries; middle reaches of Trout Creek and tributaries

Aquatic Life Cold 1, Recreation U, Water Supply, Agriculture: southern headwaters of Fish Creek

Aquatic Life Cold 2, Recreation N, Agriculture: middle reaches of Fish Creek; northern unnamed tributaries to Yampa River; southwestern unnamed tributaries to Yampa River

Aquatic Life Warm 2, Recreation E, Agriculture: Dry Creek and tributaries

Aquatic Life Warm 2, Recreation N, Agriculture: Grassy Creek and tributaries; Sage Creek and tributaries

This sub-basin is underlain by erosive sedimentary rocks that commonly contain metals, minerals and other trace elements. The State Land Board owns large portions within this sub-basin.

- The main stem of the Yampa River throughout this sub-basin is on the M&E list for temperature exceedances.
- Dry Creek and its tributaries are on the 303(d) list for exceeding aquatic life and agriculture use standards. Also segments of Dry Creek are listed for Se, Iron (Fe), Pb. (Dry Creek below CR 53 delisted for Pb Jan. 2016).
- Sage Creek is on the M&E list for temperature for exceeding aquatic life standards, and on the 303(d) list for Se.
- Foidel, Middle, and Fish Creeks are on the M&E list for *E. Coli*. (Dry Creek below CR 53 delisted for *E. Coli* Jan. 2016).
- Foidel, Fish, and Middle Creeks are on the M&E list for sediment.
- Dry Creek to Temple Gulch is on the 303(d) list for Se.

Other water quality concerns in this sub-basin that were identified during the development of the SOTWR include:

- elevated Phosphorus has been detected by USGS water quality sampling.
- suspended sediment is high during spring run-off (USGS).
- excess sediment loading;
- spread of noxious weeds;
- overgrazing resulting in loss of ground cover and erosion/sedimentation;
- whirling disease;
- riparian damage and loss of aquatic habitat leading to elevated water temperatures;
- river channel impairments and stream bank damage at Morgan Bottom.

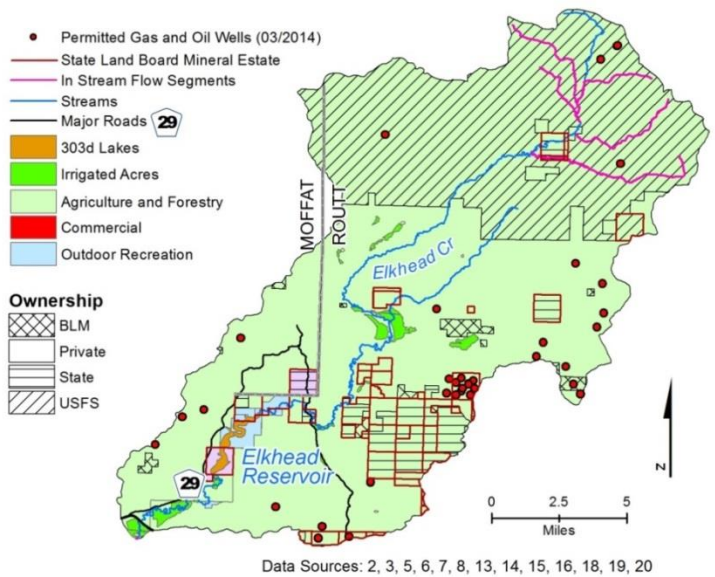
This area houses existing and historic coal mining operations. There are numerous gas and oil wells in this sub-basin.

Water Quality Prescriptions

The following water quality needs were identified by regulatory agencies and from public outreach feedback within this sub-basin:

- Additional water quality sampling has been undertaken by Peabody Energy (owner of the coal mines) to address CDPHE listings downstream of their operations;
- USGS recommends additional water quality sampling for phosphorus;
- The Nature Conservancy has received a grant for a large restoration project at Morgan Bottom;
- Fine tune BMPs, educate and implement to address erosion control measures; grazing and noxious weed management;
- the Town of Hayden does not yet have a population large enough to require an MS4 stormwater permit from CDPHE, however, BMPs developed by the UYRWG using examples of successful efforts of other communities such as the City of SS, may be useful for the Town to consider for implementation;
- Existing mining is governed by permitting programs, however, historic mining and related reclamation may need to be explored further.

Sub-basin 5: Elkhead Creek



SUB BASIN 5: Elkhead Creek	
Stream segments within this sub-basin have the following designations and classifications. To view designations and classifications assigned to specific stream segments within the sub basin, refer to the maps contained in the SOTWR or https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/33_2016%2803%29-Appendix33-1.pdf	
Anti-Degradation Designations	
Outstanding Waters	
Use-Protected Waters	?
Reviewable Waters	?
Aquatic Life Classifications	
Class 1 - Cold Water Aquatic Life	X
	X
Class 1 - Warm Water Aquatic Life	
	X
Class 2 - Cold Water Aquatic Life	
Class 2 - Warm Water Aquatic Life	
Use Classifications	
Recreation ¹	E,N,U
	X
Aquatic Life	
	X
Agriculture	
	X
Water Supply	
	X
Wetlands	?
¹ E = existing, P = primary, N = not primary, U = undetermined	

Water Classifications

Aquatic Life Cold 1, Recreation U, Water Supply, Agriculture: Headwaters of Elkhead Creek

Aquatic Life Cold 1, Recreation E, Water Supply, Agriculture: Middle stretch of Elkhead Creek and tributaries; Headwaters of unnamed tributary southwest of the main stem

Aquatic Life Cold 1, Recreation N, Water Supply, Agriculture: short segment of the main stem of Elkhead Creek between the headwaters and the middle stretch

Aquatic Life Warm 1, Recreation E, Water Supply, Agriculture: Lower stretches of the Elkhead Creek and tributaries.

This sub-basin is underlain by sedimentary rocks. The northern third of the basin is USFS land. There are a number of permitted gas and oil wells. In-stream flow segments exist in the headwaters (northeast).

Water quality concerns identified by regulatory agencies:

-The Elkhead Reservoir is on the 303(d) impaired list for Hg in fish tissue (and Fish Consumption Advisory).

Other water quality concerns from public outreach and feedback include:

- high sediment loads in the upper basin;
- riparian degradation in headwaters;
- extensive noxious weeds and lack of ground cover contribute to erosion;
- wide, shallow exposed channels are result of erosion and sedimentation causing elevated temperatures
- encroachment of invasive fish species (northern pike, smallmouth bass).

Water Quality Prescriptions

-There is a restoration plan in place for the upper Elkhead Creek and tributaries. Project partners include USFS, CPW, TU, RCCD and others.

-BMPs and related education should be implemented including erosion and sediment, riparian protection, grazing, noxious weed management.

Chapter 7. Action Plan and Matrix by Objective

Based upon information provided in previous chapters, this chapter presents a proposed Action Plan and proposed projects for the next 5-10 years to work towards the following five objectives:

1. Protect and enhance water quality
2. Protect and restore riparian areas
3. Increase education, awareness and collaboration
4. Expand upon existing water quality monitoring
5. Serve as a resource for future projects and initiatives.

Included in the Action Plan by action item are:

- The preliminary identification of potential lead organizations;
- Watershed benefits
- Milestones

- Estimated costs
- Possible funding partners
- Preliminary schedule, and
- Products.

The Watershed Plan is a living document and intended to be updated frequently. Additional projects will be added as they evolve.

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Table 6.1: ACTION PLAN MATRIX**Objective 1: Protect and Enhance Water Quality**

Action Item	Potential Lead Organizations	Watershed Benefits	Milestones	Est. Cost	Potential Funding Partners	Est. Schedule	Products
Hire a Watershed Coordinator	UYRWG RCCD	Long term preservation of watershed health	-Resources for implementation -Project coordination	50,000/yr (part time)	-CDPHE -Yampa/White Basin Roundtable -CWCB	2016 & ongoing	-Coordination, collaboration, communication -Implementation of important watershed topics and projects
Analyze water quality issues identified in 303(d) and M&E lists	-UYRWG -CDPHE -WWTPs	Better understanding of the issue and how to address	-List of data gaps -Water quality Sampling	55,000	-CDPHE -WWTP -CWCB -City SS	2016	Either delist or address water quality concern* (see lists in Appendix)
Further evaluate potential concerns and causes & seek appropriate <u>nutrient loads</u> starting with priority areas	-UYRWG -UYWCD -USGS -CPW -City SS -WWTP	Better understanding of current conditions and needs and how to make improvements	-Water quality data gathering -Lake Management Plan Development	50,000-100,000	-CDPHE -CPW -UYWCD -City SS -WWTP	2016 & ongoing	-Stagecoach Reservoir Nutrient Study* resulting in implementation plan to improve water quality -Demonstration project
-Further evaluate & seek appropriate <u>sediment loads</u> starting with identified problem areas	-USGS -CPW -UYRWG -USFS -CDOT	Better understanding of current conditions and needs and how to make improvements	-Water quality data gathering -Implement sediment reduction projects	50,000-100,000	-CDPHE -CWCB -USFS -CPW -NRCS -TU	2017 & ongoing	-Data to support or negate concerns -Demonstration project: Elk River Pilot Study -Implement CDOT/USFS

Action Item	Potential Lead Organizations	Watershed Benefits	Milestones	Est. Cost	Potential Funding Partners	Est. Schedule	Products
-Implement shovel ready projects		-Improve water quality & aquatic habitat					Sediment Reduction Plan
Develop Best Management Plan (BMP) Toolbox (website) for private and public land management practices relative to nonpoint source loading	-UYRWG -USFS -Routt County -City SS	Engagement of all stakeholders	-BMP Manual -Public outreach	20,000	-CWCB -Routt County	2016	Educational tools for widespread dissemination to work towards protecting and improving water quality
Further characterize <u>algae</u> problems in the Yampa River System starting with identified priority area	-CPW -UYWCD -UYRWG	-Improved water quality -Benefits to users & watershed health	Action Plan	50,000	-CDPHE -UYRWC -CPW	2017	-Stagecoach Reservoir Algal Study* -Identify other areas that need attention
Address possible <u>temperature</u> concerns starting with priority areas	-City SS	Aquatic habitat improvement	-Data gathering & analysis -Stakeholder engagement	108,000 (main stem) 1.5M (Walton Crk)	-City SS -CPW -CWCB -YWBRT	2016-18	-Steamboat Springs Stream Management and Target Flow Study* -Walton Creek habitat restoration/Pike removal/water temperature reduction project*
Evaluate & implement watershed connectivity and ecological balance of riparian, wetland,	-UYRWG -TU -USFS -City SS	-Improved water quality & riparian habitat -Benefits to users & watershed health	Stream Assessments, Data Gathering, Conservation Easements	1M +	-USFS -Yampa Valley Land Trust -CWCB	2018-2022	-Identification of priority areas for future implementation strategies -Butcherknife Creek Floodplain

Action Item	Potential Lead Organizations	Watershed Benefits	Milestones	Est. Cost	Potential Funding Partners	Est. Schedule	Products
upland & aquatic biota							Reconnection & Flood Risk Mitigation Project* -Riparian Corridor Conservation Easements
Respond to water quality concerns identified in SOTW not listed above	-UYRWG -Oak Creek -Water suppliers -City SS	-Improved water quality -Benefits to users & watershed health	-Mitigation Plans -Water supply Protection - Preparedness Plans	10,000	-CWCB -CDPHE	2017	-Steamboat Lake/Willow Creek pollutant assessment & mitigation*
				10,000	-Oak Creek	2017	-Town of Oak Creek stormwater management*
				5,000		2017	-Oak Creek Mine Drainage Project*
				1,000	-Water purveyors	2017	-Sheriffs Reservoir Wildfire Preparedness -Fish Creek Reservoir Wildfire Preparedness
				225,000	-City SS -Routt County -CDOT	2017-2020	-Scoria/Sand recovery and recycling facility
Implement 2003 Yampa River Management Plan & 2008 Yampa River Structural Master Plan	City SS	Improved recreational benefits		50,000 – 5M	-CWCB -City SS -Friends of Yampa	2017-2020	-Main stem improvements near SS -Recreational management -Stream health monitoring

Objective 2: Protect and restore riparian areas

A well-conceived riparian rehabilitation and protection program will go a long way to providing resolution for many of the water quality concerns previously identified in this WP including bank stability, shade, increased invertebrate populations, erosion control, reduced algae, lower water temperatures, etc. Focusing on improving riparian zones as integral parts of the Yampa River System will be cost effective, sustainable and can begin immediately. Education on the importance of retaining the integrity of riparian systems will be critical to the success of the WP.

Action Item	Lead Organizations	Watershed Benefits	Milestones	Cost	Funding Partners	Schedule	Product
Further assess riparian areas that need attention & create action plans	-UYRWG -USFS -NRCS -Grazing Leasees -Oak Creek	Improved water quality	-Rapid stream assessment -Create plan to address noxious weeds, erosion, water quality concerns	50,000	-NRCS -Oak Creek -USFS	2016-2017	-List of priority areas of concern -Oak Creek riparian restoration project* -Trout Creek/Fish Creek, Foidel Creek riparian fencing, noxious weed control & restoration*
Promote the proper management of riparian zones	-UYRWG -The Nature Conservancy -Public & Private Land Holders	Holistic improvements to sub-basins	-Meet with partners -Develop plan	2,5000 125,000	-CDPHE -CWCB	2017 2016	-Demonstration project in Elk River sub-basin* -Morgan Bottom Irrigation Delivery & Habitat Improvement Project*
Provide education on improved and effective irrigation diversions and head gate construction	-Community Ag Alliance (CAG) -CSU Extension -NRCS	-Sediment load reduction -Riparian area preservation	-Meet with partners -Develop plan, demo projects	15,000	-NRCS	2017	-Design standards -Demonstration Project
Work with partners to develop habitat	-UYRWG -TU	Watershed protection	-Meet with partners	0	All interested	2016 & ongoing	-List of Priorities -Action Plans

improvement education and projects	-Friends of Yampa		-Develop plan				
Improve habitats negatively affected by invasive species starting with identified priority projects	-USFS -CPW -TU	-Reduce erosion, improve habitat and water quality -Reduce negative ecological impacts that non-native species have on the native aquatic community	Plan to address issues	800,000	-CWCB -USFS	2018	-Elkhead Riparian Improvements* -Noxious Weed Management* -Ongoing non-native fish species control in Stagecoach Reservoir and Lake Catamount*
Wetlands Protection	-UYRWG	Identify critical areas for protection	Mapping	5,000	-CWCB -YWBRT		List and map of areas that need strategies to protect
Native Plant Nursery	-UYRWG -Riverkeeper	-Riparian restoration plant bank -Habitat improvements	-Acquire site -Plantings	20,000			Riparian restoration

Objective 3: Increase education, awareness and collaboration

Action Item	Lead Organizations	Watershed Benefits	Milestones	Cost	Funding Partners	Schedule	Product
Develop website	-UYRWG -RCCD	Education for watershed protection				2016	Website dedicated to watershed data sharing, protection
Expand watershed group to broader set of stakeholders	UYRWG	Coordinate efforts, improve communication	Invite stakeholder	0	n/a	2016	Improved outreach and participation

		of project and outcomes to increase success of efforts watershed wide	s to a forum				
Provide opportunities for public education on the importance of a properly functioning Yampa River System	UYRWG	Increase participation, education	-Host events -Develop educational plan including website -Develop messaging	5,000			Improved outreach and participation
Reach out to key groups and provide tools to assist in understanding and participating in watershed improvements	-Municipalities -County Govt. -Recreational Orgs -Ag Community -Land managers -Planners			5,000			Improved outreach and participation
Advocate for water conservation and efficiency	UYRWG	Pro-active approach to water resources management	-Implement existing water conservation plans				
Advocate that water development & transfer activities not have adverse effects on the region's water resources	-UYRWG -Basin Roundtable	Maintain minimum in-stream flows for desired species & good water quality					
-Small quantity generator hazardous waste disposal	-UYRWG	Protect water quality	Public outreach	500	-CWCB -CDPHE	2017	Outreach & educational materials

					-Routt County		
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Objective 4: Expand upon existing water quality monitoring

Action Item	Lead Organizations	Watershed Benefits	Milestones	Cost	Funding Partners	Schedule	Product
Promote the importance of water quality monitoring	-UYRWG -Yampatika -YVSC -River Watch	Measure progress, track trends	Public outreach materials	5,000		ongoing	Better data for decision making
Provide a user friendly data base	-UYRWG -USGS -CO Data Share Network	Public engagement			Routt County	2016	-Public understanding of trends -Public participation
Provide ongoing interpretations of important data to the public and stakeholders	-UYRWG -USGS -CO Data Share Network	Collaboration using sound science				ongoing	-Public understanding of trends -Public participation
Identify data gaps and seek funding to address them	UYRWG	Better understand state of the watershed				2016	Better data for decision making
Work with CDPHE and CO Water Quality Control Commission to ensure that sufficient water quality and stream flow data are provided for sites proposed for listing during the triennial review process	UYRWG	Accurate information will drive sound decision making				2016 & ongoing	Better data for decision making

Objective 5: Serve as a resource for future projects and initiatives

Action Item	Lead Organizations	Watershed Benefits	Milestones	Cost	Funding Partners	Schedule	Product
Develop tools and strategies to assist other stakeholders in developing consistent and coordinated projects within and throughout the watershed	UYRWG						
Work with the Basin Roundtable on water quality issues	-UYRWG -YWBR						
Advocate for an integrated approach to watershed protection and monitoring	-UYRWG -NRCS						
Provide a forum to maximize communication among stakeholders and the public in general	-UYRWG						

*Priority Projects

The action plan outlined above encompasses both watershed-wide management measures and sub-basin or stream-specific measures to protect or improve water quality as they relate to non-point source loading. They are intentionally non-regulatory, will be developed in collaboration with stakeholders, and include:

-demonstration projects that focus on best management practice (BMP) implementation with measurable outcomes (There exist numerous data bases detailing the intent, design and use of BMPs, many of which are applicable to the UYRW. These can often be used as a starting point, however, tailoring the BMPs to fit the UPYW will be necessary in many instances). BMPs will be more readily implemented if they are easily accessible and user-friendly. The UYRWG has listed this as a priority project and includes the creation of a website to house the UYRW BMP toolkit. Some Tier 1 BMPs have been created as a start and are included in the Appendix)

-natural/native riparian protection and restoration programs

-coordinated efforts along stream segments where multiple private property owners initiate projects

-nutrient and sediment loading reduction from

-agriculture

-roads and highways

-developed “urban” areas

-construction and earth disturbance

-household pollution reduction education and case studies for lawn fertilization and pet waste as well as xeriscape education

-stormwater runoff and storm sewer maintenance practices for populated areas

-low impact development strategies to be incorporated into new development

-wetlands – identify critical wetland systems, are they performing their function, do they need protection

-lakes and reservoirs – eutrophication potential, blue green algae concerns, non-native species/invasives

-collaboration and outreach/education strategies

-water quality monitoring:

-USGS

- River watch
- monitoring of biological indicators
- anti-degradation measures and strategies
 - examine possible alternatives to proposed or existing activities that have the potential to lower water quality.

The Action Plan Matrix begins to identify possible lead agencies and partners as well as potential resources that may be called upon to further develop actions to arrive at desired outcomes.

Similarly, potential funding sources have been identified on a preliminary basis. As future funding sources are discovered, they will also be pursued.

To maximize public participation and outreach, a Communication Plan will be developed by first appointing a Steering Committee to guide the effort. Outside consultants and/or non-profits will be enlisted to create related materials.

In addition to the priority projects listed in the Action Plan Table 12.1, a number of projects were identified during the development of the SOTWR as important. A full list appears below which is intended to be updated and amended on an ongoing basis.

UYRW POTENTIAL PROJECT LIST 2016

Priority

1. Hire Watershed Coordinator
2. Develop a BMP toolbox tailored to the UYRW and create related website
3. Steamboat Lake / Willow Creek pollutant assessment & mitigation
4. Elk River sub-basin comprehensive study/plan
5. Headgate improvements education/mitigation
6. Morgan Bottom Irrigation Delivery & Habitat Improvement
7. Stagecoach nutrient management and algal study
8. Steamboat Springs Stream Management and Target Flows Study
9. CDOT Sediment Plan Implementation
10. Native Plant Nursery
11. Riparian restoration priorities:
 - a. Oak Creek
 - b. Need rapid assessment stream segment strategy in other areas
12. Elkhead Riparian improvements and noxious weed management
13. Trout Creek/Fish Creek, Foidel Creek Riparian Fencing and Noxious Weed Management
14. Oak Creek Stormwater Management
15. Outreach & Education

Secondary

1. Nutrient and sediment loading modeling
2. Riparian health assessments – implementation plans including Adopt a Stream
3. Critical wetlands identification & mapping – protection implementation
4. 303(d) list segment sampling – Triennial review participation
5. Butcherknife Creek Floodplain Reconnection and Mitigation
6. Walton Creek habitat restoration/Pike removal/water temperature reduction
7. Oak Creek Mine Drainage Project
8. Sheriffs Reservoir wildfire preparedness
9. Fish Creek Reservoir wildfire preparedness
10. Scoria/Sand recovery and recycling facility
11. Small Quantity Generator Hazardous Waste Disposal Education

In Progress, may need additional support

1. Northern Pike, Smallmouth Bass removal
2. Mercury in fish tissue
3. Thermographs
4. Agriculture efficiencies/ return flow study
5. Headgate/diversion structures - repairs and replacement
6. Range management training
7. Water conservation implementation
8. Water quality monitoring
9. River Watch

The UYRWG has already been approached by outside entities to support of a variety of water quality projects within the watershed. Below are some of the considerations the UYRWG would like to see addressed in such requests:

-Does the proposed project address a problem identified in the State of the Watershed Plan or Watershed Plan that is not already being addressed?	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> Y N
-Is desired outcome clear?	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> Y N
-Is implementation feasible, i.e. are technical and funding resources addressed?	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> Y N
-Are proposed practices or measures consistent with those recommended in the WP?	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> Y N
-Are short term, long term horizons identified?	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> Y N
-Have metrics to measure progress and success been defined?	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> Y N
-Is long term maintenance required? If so, has this been addressed?	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> Y N
- Has the proposal addressed the availability of partners?	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> Y N
-Is collaboration and coordination addressed?	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> Y N

-Has an outreach and education component been included?	<u> </u> Y <u> </u> N
-Are logistics adequately addressed?	<u> </u> Y <u> </u> N

Chapter 8. Outreach and Education

Stakeholders and Partnerships

There are numerous agencies, non-profits, ad hoc groups, political bodies, businesses, recreational retailers and users, and other public and private interests that are active in the UYRW. A goal of the UYRWG is to help bring all willing stakeholders and potential partners together by establishing a network that will increase communication; maximize resources; emphasize collaboration and coordination; and preclude redundancy and duplication of efforts. A list of known agencies appears below.

Federal Government

- US Geologic Survey
- US Forest Service - Medicine Bow/Routt National Forest
- US Fish and Game
- Bureau of Land Management

State Government

- CDPHE
- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- Colorado Division of Parks & Wildlife
- Colorado State Parks
- State Forest Service
- Office of the State Engineer, Water Commissioners
- Colorado Department of Transportation

Local Government

- Routt County Conservation District
- Routt County BCC
- Office of Emergency Management

Routt County Planning Commission

City of Steamboat Springs Planning Department

City of Steamboat Springs Council

Municipalities – Yampa, Oak Creek, Hayden, Clark, Phippsburg, Milner

Non-government Organizations

Upper Yampa Watershed Group and Technical Committee

CSU Extension Office

Community Agricultural Alliance

Upper Yampa River Water Conservancy District

Colorado River Water Conservation District

Yampa White Basin Roundtable

Upper Yampa Nature Conservancy

Trout Unlimited

Ducks Unlimited

Yampatika

Friends of the Yampa

Yampa Valley Fly Fishers

River Watch

Water Purveyors

Wastewater Treatment Plants

Steamboat Ski & Resort Corp

Yampa Valley Sustainability Council

Routt County Cattlewomen

Yampa River Basin Partnership

Yampa Valley Land Trust

Tubing and Rafting Companies

Sporting Goods Retailers

Guides and Outfitters

Golf Course Operators

Landscape Contractors

Water and Sanitation Districts

Special Districts

Local Engineering Companies

Local Surveyors

Local Development Consultants

Local Excavating Contractors.

Maximizing understanding and buy-in from the general public, public officials, elected officials, and stakeholders on why watershed health is important and how they can participate will be critical to the overall success of any given strategy or set of implementation projects.

The Watershed Plan provides a platform to guide existing and future efforts in the same general direction.

The following are categories for preliminary outreach:

- General Public: Objective is to continue to expand awareness and participation
- Agricultural Community and Ditch Operators: Objective is to assist them in solving problems by providing tools and funding to achieve common goals
- Land Managers: provide tools and workshops as well as demonstration project results to improve stewardship of the watershed
- Non-profits involved in beneficial programs/projects in the watershed: objective is to collaborate and share data and information, maximize the use of resources, and avoid redundancy
- City and County Planners: objective is to create and maintain open channels of communication to enhance consistency with UYRWG goals and those of the planners
- Elected and public officials: objective is to educate, get support and possible funding
- Local businesses can play an active role in outreach efforts
- Recreational vendors, outfitters, users: objective would be to engage them in watershed efforts as well as educate on ways they can participate in effectuating desired outcomes

Depending on the audience, a variety of different methods, messages, and communication tools will be needed. As mentioned previously, the UYRWG has prioritized a project that, if funded,

would create a website that would house BMP tools and other valuable information that could be easily and frequently updated.

Meetings, workshops, development of fliers, press releases, news stories, local radio and TV spots, social media including crowd sourcing, events, will all be opportunities to increase education, collaboration and participation. Hiring a Watershed Coordinator will be essential toward achieving outreach goals.

Identification of Measurable Water Quality Restoration and Protection Goals

Evaluating and getting feedback will help to structure future outreach efforts.

Measurable progress can be evaluated in a variety of ways including the use of numeric criteria, narrative criteria, and bio-criteria. Although quantitative water quality monitoring in the watershed has been initiated, it is relatively sparse with many data gaps that need to be addressed with limited funding to do so.

Monitoring biological indicators may provide a reasonable measurement in certain stream segments and/or for certain desired conditions such as comparing progress against a prescribed healthy community of fish and associated aquatic organisms, or a desired riparian habitat. Certain initiatives are already ongoing, and gathering numeric and other results is a goal of the UYRWG so as to increase collaboration, communication and reporting watershed-wide.

Because the focus of the majority of implementation efforts in the UYRW will be on *protecting* waters whose water quality may be or become threatened by human activities, other metrics of success can be utilized. Some examples are annual quantification of volunteer participants in water quality related projects; setting up and monitoring a best management practice registration program where participants can get credits for load reduction efforts and are incentivized through rewards; soliciting funding for specifically targeted community workshops; soliciting funds for demonstration projects then using what was learned to encourage broader usage of best practices. Performance indicators will be developed for projects and tailored to specific desired outcomes outlined in each project Work Plan. Examples appear in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 Methods for Measuring Success

Objective	Measurement of Success
Education and Outreach	# of attendees at meetings, workshops, events
BMP Implementation	# of BMPs implemented; # demonstration projects
Reduce nutrient loads	# BMPs implemented; water quality improvements
Reduce sediment loads	# BMPs implemented; water quality improvements
Restore damaged riparian areas	# miles restored; # BMPs implemented; water quality improvements
Protect native habitats	# acres identified and BMPs implemented

Wetland protection	# acres protected
Evaluate lake eutrophication issues	Completion of studies leading to restoration projects
Reduce accelerated algae blooms	Completion of studies leading to reduction strategies
Livestock grazing management	# BMPs implemented; water quality improvements
Address historic mining runoff	# BMPs implemented; water quality improvements
Improve stormwater management in developed areas	# municipal program enhancements
Reduce elevated temperature in areas identified	# miles of stream segments addressed for improvements
Restore normal seasonal bedload in identified areas	# of areas where improvements were made, # of collaborative agencies involved
Reduce wildland fire potential	# wildfire mitigation projects in critical areas; # defensible space BMPs implemented
Enhance water quality monitoring to address data gaps identified	-# Monitoring stations added -River Watch accomplishments -# of participants in Adopt a Stream program

Chapter 9. Ongoing Water Quality Monitoring

The US Geologic Survey (USGS) was commissioned under a multi-partner funding arrangement to compile and analyze the vast amount of historic water quality data gathered between 1975 and 2009 and assess water quality conditions in the UYRW. The subsequent report released in 2012 was utilized to develop the SOTWR and the data is currently stored on the USGS website. Continued monitoring of five stations is being undertaken by the USGS. It is anticipated that the data can be transferred to a more user-friendly format on the Colorado Data Share Network. As water quality monitoring is expanded through implementation projects, it is important to ensure quality control and to store all newly acquired data in a central location along with frequent interpretations and communication to the public and stakeholders.

Monitoring of environmental indicators other than chemical parameter-specific is also important to retain in a central location and track over time. Examples of these might include biological (i.e. benthic, fish, algae), physical, (e.g. visual habitat assessments, riparian and geomorphic assessments), and hydrologic measurements. Even photos can be important in tracking trends. Because there are many agencies that collect data, developing a quality assurance and storage plan will be a major undertaking. The UYRWG will spearhead this effort, however, other entities will need to collaborate to make it successful.

PLAN MILESTONES

Short Term

A number of short term milestones can be accomplished within the next 1-2 years without large amounts of funding. Expanding participation and stakeholder groups is one of those.

Additionally, outreach to the general public, to implementing partners, and to local schools can have a positive impact and be done in short term. The UYRWG feels strongly that hiring a full or part time Watershed Coordinator will be instrumental in moving action items forward in a timely manner. Certain projects such as the CDOT Sediment Plan, Elkhead Riparian Project, and Noxious Weed Management, are “shovel ready” and can be implemented upon acquisition of funding. Seeking out volunteers will also provide momentum to the program. Working with existing agencies can go a long way towards meaningful progress on a variety of fronts.

Mid-range

The planning horizon of this watershed plan is 5-10 years. Many of the more comprehensive projects listed under the Action Plan will take a year or two to get off the ground, between grant writing, organization and preliminary planning. The UYRWG has supported in many meetings the benefit of implementing a few demonstration projects early on to show successful strategies that can be employed to meet water quality and watershed health goals. Also, developing a BMP toolbox tailored to the UYRW would fall in this timeline.

Long Term

It is critical that the watershed plan not sit on the shelf. It is designed to be a living document and will need to be re-visited and updated periodically. The priority project list will certainly change and grow over time. Some of these projects span over a number of years and depend upon the acquisition of outside funding.

Commonly Used Abbreviations

UYRWG Upper Yampa River Watershed Group

UYRW Upper Yampa River Watershed

SOTWR State of the Watershed Report

RCCD Routt County Conservation District

NRCS Natural Resource Conservation District

CSU Extension Colorado State University Extension Office

WP Watershed Plan

USFS United States Forest Service

TU Trout Unlimited

UYWCD Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District

THN The Nature Conservancy

CDPHE Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

USEPA United States Environmental Protection Agency

CWCB Colorado Water Conservation Board

USGS United States Geologic Survey

M&E Monitoring and Evaluation List (CDPHE)

CPW Colorado Parks and Wildlife

CAA Community Ag Alliance

YWBRT Yampa / White Basin Roundtable

BIP Basin Implementation Plan

BMPs Best Management Practices

TMDL Total Maximum Daily Load

LID Low Impact Development

WWTP Wastewater Treatment Plants