Frequently Asked Questions

Upper San Juan Watershed Enhancement Partnership (WEP)

* **What is the Upper San Juan Watershed Enhancement Partnership/WEP?**

In the summer of 2018, the Upper San Juan Watershed Enhancement Partnership (WEP) formed as a community-led, voluntary process to understand local water supply needs in the San Juan River Basin and to identify opportunities to engage in collaborative projects that benefit all water uses, including environmental, agricultural, municipal, and recreation.

* **What is the geographic scope of the WEP?**

The WEP focuses on several watersheds within the San Juan River Basin on a subset of river and streams in Archuleta, Mineral and Hinsdale Counties. At this time, the WEP is focusing on the Upper San Juan, Navajo and Blanco watersheds, but is open to exploring other areas, depending upon community stakeholder interest and consensus.

* **What stakeholders are involved in WEP?**

The WEP strives to include stakeholders from diverse water interests, welcoming anyone who would like to join. Steering Committee members were chosen from local agricultural, municipal, recreation and environmental groups and include representatives from: Banded Peak Ranch, Chama Peak Land Alliance, Colorado Division of Water Resources, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Colorado Water Conservation Board, CSU Extension Office, National Resources Conservation Service, Pagosa Area Water and Sanitation District, outdoor recreation business owners, public citizens, the Nature Conservancy, Town of Pagosa Springs Planning Department, Trout Unlimited, and the US Forest Service.

* **What are the WEP’s goals and objectives?**

Organized as a three phased process, Phase I (current phase for WEP) aims to gather a stakeholder group to address and drive community values and concerns throughout the process and review existing data/information to build on existing efforts and inform Phase II processes.

Phase II seeks to analyze data and complete a watershed scale assessment to determine water needs and identify potential project areas. Analysis and assessment will emphasize sites that address water needs for multiple uses (agricultural, recreation, municipal, environmental).

Phase III intends to outline a potential watershed plan to address community water needs and conserve precious water resources. This plan hopes to map water issues for voluntary improvement options. A watershed plan does NOT intend to: change existing water rights, regulations or management.

* **What has the WEP accomplished so far?**

1) Established local partnership of steering committee members and stakeholders from multiple water

Interests, 2) Convened 12 stakeholder meetings to encourage community learning and input throughout process, 3) Provided variety of outreach opportunities through surveys, public meetings, and site field trips, 4) Identified collective values on geographic scope/scale, issues, opportunities, and information needs, 5) Compiled existing reports and strategies from local efforts as first step towards watershed assessment and priorities, 6) Currently exploring several potential sites for improvements, including a multi-purpose project on the San Juan River that would benefit all uses.

* **How can I learn more and get involved with the Watershed Enhancement Partnership?**

Visit the WEP website from more information at: <http://www.mountainstudies.org/sanjuan/smp>

Contact facilitators Aaron Kimple or Mandy Eskelson (Mountain Studies Institute) at akimple@mountainstudies.org or mandy@mountainstudies.org or 970-387-5161.