

Appendix 1

Formation and Evolution of the DRD and Other Collaborative Stakeholder Efforts to Promote Conservation of the Lower Dolores River

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The Dolores River Dialogue (or what is now known as the DRD) started in 2002. Chuck Wanner, then on staff at the regional conservation organization, the San Juan Citizens Alliance (the Alliance), was new to his position. The Alliance had increasingly been discussing the conservation-related issues surrounding the Lower Dolores River. Towards this end, the Alliance had recently worked with a number of other groups to start a coalition called the Dolores River Coalition – a meta group of environmental and conservation-minded organizations. Mr. Wanner researched previous efforts to bring irrigators, rafters, conservation groups, fish advocates and other stakeholders together to improve the downstream condition. He was aware that these previous efforts had not met with substantial agreement(s) or success for many reasons. Believing that continued dialogue was necessary, Mr. Wanner asked the Dolores Water Conservancy District (DWCD) in 2002 if such a “dialogue” would be supported and if they would co-sponsor it. The DWCD agreed and planning for the DRD began. Before any formal meetings were organized, careful discussions were held about the format, participation, purpose and intent. Steps for moving forward were agreed to by the DWCD Board and by the San Juan Citizens Alliance.

In January of 2004, the first formal DRD meeting was held after invitations were sent to a number of entities including:

- ✓ Bureau of Reclamation
- ✓ Colorado Division of Water Resources
- ✓ Colorado Parks and Wildlife (then, the Division of Wildlife)
- ✓ Colorado Water Conservation Board
- ✓ Dolores County
- ✓ Dolores Public Lands Office (USFS/BLM) (2013: now, the two entities are separated)
- ✓ Dolores River Action Group (local private boaters)
- ✓ Dolores River Coalition
- ✓ Dolores Water Conservancy District
- ✓ Montezuma County
- ✓ Montezuma Valley Irrigation Company
- ✓ The Nature Conservancy
- ✓ Recreational Fishing
- ✓ San Juan Citizens Alliance
- ✓ San Juan Public Lands Center (USFS/BLM)
- ✓ Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribe

In addition to these entities receiving invites, an announcement was placed in the local newspaper inviting the general public. At the first DRD meeting, other suggestions for participation included: the US Fish and Wildlife Service and US Army Corps of Engineers, upstream users, and senior and junior water rights holders. Also, at this meeting, a decision was made that the DRD should be open to more seats at the table if there were affected parties willing to engage in a consensus process. It was left up to DRD members to communicate with other potential participants and bring suggestions to the table at future meetings.

Over the years, the DRD has involved and included formal participants, collaborating and linked entities, and also, a value has always been to include “interested citizens” and “the public.” Please see the current organizational chart on the last page. The current list of formal members of the DRD includes:

- American Whitewater
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Tres Rios Field Office (BLM)
- Colorado Department of Natural Resources and
 - Colorado Division of Water Resources
 - Colorado Parks and Wildlife
 - Colorado Water Conservation Board
- Dolores County
- Dolores Public Lands (USFS)
- Dolores River Coalition
- Dolores Water Conservancy District
- Federal Army Corps of Engineers
- Lower Dolores Boating Advocates
- Montezuma County
- Montezuma Valley Irrigation Company
- San Juan Basin Farm Bureau
- San Juan Citizens Alliance
- San Miguel County
- Southwestern Colorado Livestock Association
- The Nature Conservancy
- Trout Unlimited
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Ute Mountain Ute Tribe
- Public At Large

Intent and Purpose

As the DRD formed, a purpose statement was agreed to as follows:

It is the intent of the Dolores Water Conservancy District and the Dolores River Coalition, in collaboration with other interests, to discuss the management of the flows of the Dolores River to determine how the river might best be managed to serve the needs of the various human and natural communities of the basin and the region. The parties will act by a general consensus.

This collaborative effort is not intended to involuntarily diminish the quantity of water available for the current Dolores Project beneficiaries or the operational flexibility needed to meet the demands of project beneficiaries.

Foundational Work

In the early years, the DRD participants worked to build trust and a sense of willingness to attempt to find solutions to specific downstream issues – specifically including improvement of the fisheries and riparian health of the river – even though it was evident from the beginning that these topics remained very complex and contentious. The group, after assessing everyone’s interests, eventually developed a “Plan to Proceed” that:

- established a Technical Committee, Hydrology Committee and Science Committee;
- determined a course(s) of action for the DRD; and

- put forth a plan to use an Opportunities Matrix and run flow scenarios through it.

The work commenced and reports were developed including a Core Science Report, a Hydrology Report and then an integration document called the Correlation Report, a matrix that looked at various flow options including constraints, opportunities, benefits and trade-offs. The DRD's "Foundation Documents" can be accessed at: <http://ocs.fortlewis.edu/drd/resources.asp>.

The goal of these early projects was ensuring that everyone had a common set of agreed facts and data to work from. And, it was very important that any solutions, especially around flows, were understood in the context of Dolores Project allocations and contracts, and, Colorado Water law. Some of these documents remain in draft form. They then provided, and still do, an important foundation to understand the myriad complexities of the Lower Dolores River and how the water is used by irrigators, rafters, households, other economic and institutional users, and the natural river system and species in the area of focus.

Early on, a decision was made that agreed upon and trusted science would be used as a guiding center point of the DRD's work. It was agreed that there was not enough information related to flows, and the effects of various flows to the downstream environments, the fisheries and the river channel itself. Therefore, the DRD Science Committee went into full gear and began using science in the corridor and also linked, coordinated, and/or organized with others (e.g., Colorado Parks and Wildlife and academic institutions). The Science Committee, through the DRD, published several documents (also available on the Web site at <http://ocs.fortlewis.edu/drd/resources.asp>). The topics were identified based on information needs generated by the DRD.

DRD Evolution, Milestones and Accomplishments

After six years of formally meeting, producing reports and having in-depth discussions, the DRD was at somewhat of a crossroads. The feeling was that not enough was being accomplished and that the composition of the Technical Committee was not adequate. A retreat was held in November of 2010 with the Technical Committee to re-assess the DRD's role, purpose and governance structure. The purpose statement was reaffirmed and slightly reworded as follows (note: this is the present-day purpose statement):

The DRD is a coalition of diverse interests, whose purpose is to explore management opportunities, build support for and take action to improve the ecological conditions downstream of McPhee Reservoir while honoring water rights, protecting agricultural and municipal water supplies, and the continued enjoyment of rafting and fishing.

Next, the Technical Committee was dissolved after the group realized and agreed that it had become too big – it often included paid contractors and perhaps lacked the formality or focus desired. A Steering Committee was the model that was agreed to and put into place with these standing members: Bureau of Reclamation; Colorado Parks and Wildlife; Dolores Water Conservancy District; Montezuma Valley Irrigation Company; The Nature Conservancy and the San Juan Citizens Alliance. Later in 2011 and early 2012, four additional entities were added to the DRD –Steering Committee: American Whitewater; San Juan Basin Farm Bureau ; Southwestern Colorado Livestock Association; and Trout Unlimited.

The DRD-Steering Committee's roles are defined as:

- Report to the DRD and serve as a clearing house for all DRD activities
- Guide the *Framework Proposal* process (<http://ocs.fortlewis.edu/drd/framework.htm>) (*)
- Oversee the Hydrology and Science Committees (these committees now convene on an as-needed basis as of 2013)
- Keep the DRD from getting out ahead of the member groups

- Is not a final decision maker
- Ensure funding oversight
- Select contractors and/or other staff
- Organize work
- Ensure credibility and outside review of science efforts
- Communicate with the DRD and committees; listen at all levels; work together to keep the diverse coalition of interests working in a positive direction; use a “can do” attitude; stay flexible

(*) As part of the restructuring effort, the group decided that a more organized, concerted and transparent method of assessing proposals that would better meet the purpose statement needed to be in place. The Framework Proposal project was agreed to and is in place.

While the Framework Proposal project was established to study, discuss and potentially recommend ideas for action, the DRD and the DRD-SC makes decisions in other ways. For example, projects are started; grants are written; in some cases letters of support are written; comments are given to federal agencies; and/or more informal discussions are held that lead to a decision. So, it should be clarified that the Framework Proposal project is in place (and is meant for more complex or controversial initiatives going through the DRD “process”) but other methods of reaching agreement or decision points are used. The Framework Proposal project is a tool.

The functions and roles of the DRD have not changed substantially since the beginning and they currently are:

- ✓ Serving as an ongoing forum to bring together various community members, conservation groups, water managers, recreationists, other interest groups, and federal, state and local governments and agencies to explore issues, develop common understandings and complete projects – towards the goal of defining and acting upon “do-able” actions which address the purpose statement.
- ✓ Linking with other groups working in the Lower Dolores area to communicate, coordinate, and share resources and information.
- ✓ Producing and disseminating relevant documents and other educational publications for use by DRD members, the DRD-Steering Committee and other DRD committees, partners, and the community-at-large.

These functions are assessed periodically as interest in the DRD work and mission changes or evolves.

Staffing and Resources

Over the years, the DRD has raised funds from various entities to carry out specific projects. Funds have also been secured for ongoing facilitation, and when needed, for coordination of the Science Committee. A professional meeting recorder is under contract to ensure that detailed meeting records are kept. Fort Lewis College sponsors the Web site and many in-kind donations are given – most notably, from the DWCD who offers meeting space, fiscal agent services, and administrative help. Currently, a core DRD budget of \$30,000 is being raised from partner organizations.

Since its formal beginning in 2004, the DRD has accomplished the following...

Bringing Stakeholders Together

1. Held regular full DRD meetings involving 35+ Lower Dolores stakeholders as well as interested citizens to develop plans of action for moving forward; to learn about science and hydrology efforts carried out by the DRD and other partners; to be kept informed about other groups’ efforts in the Lower Dolores River area; and to set broad direction for the work of the DRD.

2. Organized regular-meetings of the DRD - Steering Committee that carries out the work of the DRD, handles administrative and process issues, and oversees contract staff. (On average, the DRD-SC has been meeting about nine times a year.)
3. Developed a Web site that is updated regularly with information, minutes, reports, media, etc.: <http://ocs.fortlewis.edu/drd/default.asp> (Fort Lewis College's Office of Community Services hosts the site.)

Addressing the Purpose Statement

4. Developed a Framework Proposal Project via the Dolores River Dialogue - Steering Committee which is able to accept, discuss and analyze "do-able" alternatives that relate to the purpose statement. This is referred to earlier in this document. The DRD - Steering Committee then makes recommendations to the full DRD.
5. Formed a DRD Science Committee which now meets as needed. This group issued a Core Science Report in May of 2005 and has, over the years, organized other science related investigations, projects and efforts.
6. Formed a DRD Hydrology Committee which now meets as needed, educates stakeholders about key issues related to the river's hydrology, and contracts and Dolores Project contracts.
7. Produced a "Correlation Report" (integrating hydrology and core science) and a "Matrix of Opportunities" (assessing benefits, constraints, and costs of current and alternative management scenarios). Find these at the Web site: <http://ocs.fortlewis.edu/drd/resources.asp>
8. Organized, funded and led field science investigations in order to better understand the Lower Dolores River system from a scientific viewpoint(s) including these topics: Big Gyp habitat analysis, Macroinvertebrates, cold water and warm water fish surveys, historic cottonwood analysis, experimental tamarisk removal, baseline floodplain analysis, and water nutrient and thermocline analyses. These field studies were carried out by science students, supervised volunteers and/or paid science contactors.
9. Reviewed and formulated comments on all Dolores Public Lands Office (USFS and BLM) streams that were eligible or suitable for the Wild and Scenic River status under consideration as part of the *San Juan Forest/BLM Land Management Plan Revision and EIS*.
10. Secured funding from the EPA for a "319 Watershed Plan" which is now completed.
11. Worked collaboratively to secure funding for a river monitoring gauge at Slickrock in order to better understand flows.
12. Worked collaboratively to secure funding for another SNOTEL site (2012) in order to improve forecasting.
13. In 2008, and at the request of the Dolores Public Lands Office (then USFS/BLM), the DRD planned, formed, funded and convened the Lower Dolores Plan Working Group (LDPWG) which held its first meeting in December of that year. This group met regularly for 16 months and submitted their report to the Dolores Public Lands Office in July of 2010 (the report is available on the Web site). The charge to the group was to give input about updating a then 19-year-old corridor management plan for the Lower Dolores River Area and to determine if an alternative

management tool(s) could be found in lieu of the river being “suitable” for Wild and Scenic, which it has been since the mid 70’s. More on this project is below.

14. 2009: Secured a CWCW Severance Tax Trust Fund Grant to support field studies and synthesis of existing science and identification of opportunities for improvement of the downstream environment.
15. 2010: Completed and submitted “Science-Based Opportunities, Field Investigations, and Potential Tools for Improvement of the Downstream Environment on the Lower Dolores River,” known as the “Opportunities Report.”
16. 2011: Completed Edition II of the “Opportunities Report” which incorporates review and comment from the DRD Steering Committee and Science and Hydrology Committees, and to update temperature and cottonwood field study results.
17. 2011: The DRD-Steering Committee developed a “DRD Proposal Worksheet” which outlines potential DRD programmatic goals and proposed science “desired outcomes.”

Networking and Communications

18. Gave a presentation to participants of the annual Statewide Water Tour, June 2010 (a CFWE event).
19. Presented a paper at a Flagstaff, AZ conference entitled: *The Dolores River Dialogue as an Example of Long-term Collaborative Decision-making.*
20. Submitted the DRD as a project in the SW Basin Roundtable Non Consumptive Needs Assessment and Inventory.
21. Presented at the annual Southwestern Water Conservation District Seminar, Durango, CO, April, 2010.
22. Teamed up with Montezuma Valley Irrigation Company, the AmeriCorps program and the Western Hardrock Watershed Team to host a VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) Volunteer in 2008-2009.
23. Organized guests for appearances on two public radio programs (KSJD’s “Zine”).

Efforts to Establish a National Conservation Area and Better Manage Native Fish in the Context of Available Water Supplies

As stated, the Lower Dolores Plan Working Group (LDPWG) was launched by the Dolores River Dialogue but it was understood at that time that the group would move forward and be empowered to make its own recommendations as a group. Discussions at that time, however, emphasized the importance of continuing to use the principles of the Dolores River Dialogue, ensuring balance in the LDPWG membership roster, and designing actions that include the balance between recreation, fishing, conservation, irrigation and other water uses, and Colorado Water Law and Dolores Project commitments and contracts.

After meeting 15 times including three field trips, in March of 2010, the LDPWG identified a “special area” (later to become a National Conservation Area) as an alternative to the current status of the river

being suitable for Wild and Scenic River designation. The LDPWG appointed a Legislative Subcommittee to work out the parameters of the NCA, which requires federal legislation, and this group has been actively meeting since March of 2010. The membership of the Legislative Subcommittee includes these sectors: SJCA, MVIC, DWCD, The Wilderness Society, The Nature Conservancy, private lands, oil/gas/minerals, the Dolores and Montezuma County Commissioners, ex-officio members from the Dolores Office of the USFS and the Tres Rios BLM Field Office, and Senator Bennet's office.

As the Legislative Committee started its work, a legislative parameters document was developed that serves as an outline for actually crafting NCA legislation. Initially, much agreement was reached on issues including certain ORVs, protection of existing water and private property rights, motorized vehicle use, grazing, mineral extraction, and lands with wilderness qualities. These agreements were taken back to the larger LDPWG and affirmed in July of 2010. However, agreements about how (and if) the legislation would address native fish and water flows and how it would be handled were not happening...the talks on these complex issues were stalled. Thus, after several meetings, the Legislative Subcommittee decided that there was not agreement on fish/flows for one key reason: there was not enough information about the status of native fish either known or available. The group determined that before designing any potential legislative principles around these topics, there should be a transparent study conducted by experts. They further felt that data on the hydrology of the river and on the status of native fish should be considered, and, the findings needed to be transparent, available and open for discussion and dialogue. Over the course of 12 months, funds were raised, fish scientists were hired, and a "Scientific and Water User Panel" was seated to play the role of listening to the scientists' report(s) and then determining the next step. The "A Way Forward" scientists' report and panel notes can be found at: <http://ocs.fortlewis.edu/drd/way-forward.htm>.

The "A Way Forward" study led to the formation of an Implementation Team (IT) in July 2011. After the end of the second panel, the group determined that there was energy and momentum for moving forward with the nine opportunities, fully realizing their complexity and that many institutions and entities would need to gain agreement on any action(s) eventually taken. In the fall of 2012, the IT published a ***Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Plan*** with grant funds from the Colorado Water Conservation Board (find the report, executive summary and brochure here: <http://ocs.fortlewis.edu/drd/implementationTeamReports.htm>.) The local water users found the framing of the issues around fish needs and base flow pool enhancement very controversial. Therefore, the IT is currently discussing the document with many stakeholders and gathering feedback, and is making plans to redraft the document in mid-2013 again, based on concerns, issues, opportunities and ideas – gleaned from many stakeholders, water users, etc. Participating entities involved in the formulation and implementation of the plan retain their institutional authorities and responsibilities while working to develop strategies that align the various interests of the agencies, boards and constituencies that have a stake.

The Implementation Team is providing direct updates to the DRD-SC monthly (or as often as the DRD-SC meets) and is also working directly with the LDPWG's Legislative Subcommittee around the update to and publication of the next plan. The goal of this deliberative process is, as it always has been, to ensure that recommendations made and actions taken have wide-spread buy-in and support, do not interfere with institutional commitments, and work to protect or improve ecological goals in the context of available water supplies, Dolores Project allocations and Colorado Water law.

Work still has to be done to link the work of management around the ORV of native fish back to NCA legislative parameter documents; in ensuring input and participation from all the relevant stakeholders; and in addressing concerns raised in the process. Getting the legislation passed in Congress is another complex part of the journey. Towards this latter point, the Legislative Subcommittee recognizes that successful legislation will require support from many levels.

The DRD Today

Any successful coalition working on natural resources, including water, changes and evolves as community buy-in, support and needs change. The DRD crossed a 10-year milestone in 2012 and the promise and on-the-ground results of the DRD's collaboration remain. Over the years, through continued convening, establishing information and working across institutions in the best interest of everyone, the DRD has accomplished a lot. It is releasing this Watershed Plan" after extensive stakeholder input and involvement, and after all parties are comfortable with the document. These activities, while sometimes cumbersome and lengthy, lead to important actions that can be taken for the good of the community **and** the good of the river. The DRD has put in place processes, either through direct dialogue and discussions, through supporting grants either directly or via letters of support, or through the more extensive Framework Proposal Project. It is the hope of the DRD that the intent of these collaborative processes remain a thread – and a practice – throughout all work involving management of the Lower Dolores River area.

Please find a DRD Organizational Chart on the next page.

Dolores River Dialogue Stakeholders & Community (2/13)

Lower Dolores Plan Working Group (LDPWG)

- 51 Members
- Submitted report to Dolores USFS and BLM, July '10
- Appointed an 11 member Legislative Sub-Comm. to work out details of legislation for an NCA (Alt. to WSR)

Legislative Subcommittee:

- Vets things with larger LDPWG
- Oversees the revision(s) of the Implementation Plan
- Entities and interests represented on the Leg. Subcommittee: Dolores and Montezuma Counties; private land owners; grazing; mining/minerals; recreation; DWCD; MVIC; San Juan Citizens Alliance; The Wilderness Society; & The Nature Conservancy. Ex Officio: Senator Bennet's local staff, and the BLM and USFS

Implementation Team (**)

- American Whitewater
- Bureau of Rec.
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife
- Dolores Public Lands
- USFS and BLM
- DWCD
- MVIC
- SJCA
- TNC
- Trout Unlimited

With direct linkage to and communication with counties

Dolores River Dialogue Steering Committee

Standing Members: American Whitewater; Bureau of Reclamation; Colorado Parks and Wildlife; Dolores Water Conservancy District; Montezuma Valley Irrigation Company; San Juan Basin Farm Bureau; San Juan Citizens Alliance; Southwestern Colorado Livestock Association; The Nature Conservancy; and Trout Unlimited.

319 Watershed Committee

Hydrology Committee

Science Committee

These committees have open memberships including technical experts, staff, stakeholders and contractors as the topics and projects require. They meet only as needed.

Communication

DRD Stakeholder Members

- American Whitewater
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Tres Rios Field Office (BLM)
- Colorado Division of Water Resources
- Colorado Division of Natural Resources
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife
- Colorado Water Conservation Board
- Dolores County
- Dolores Public Lands (USFS)
- Dolores River Coalition (*)
- Dolores Water Conservancy District
- Federal Army Corps of Engineers
- Lower Dolores Boating Advocates
- Montezuma County
- Montezuma Valley Irrigation Company
- San Juan Basin Farm Bureau
- San Juan Citizens Alliance
- San Miguel County
- Southwestern Colorado Livestock Association
- The Nature Conservancy
- Trout Unlimited
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Ute Mt. Ute Tribe AND
- Public At Large

() The Implementation Team (IT)** was formed in July 2011 to pursue nine opportunities to improve the status of native fish identified in the report issued by the A Way Forward science contractors in July and finalized in August of 2011. The IT published an Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation plan, which was released fall of 2012 (find it on the DRD Web site). They are currently discussing the document with many stakeholders and gathering feedback to produce an updated version in 2013. Participating entities involved in the formulation and implementation of the plan retain their institutional authorities and responsibilities while working to develop strategies that align the various interests of the agencies, boards and constituencies that have a stake in the Implementation Plan. The IT operates within the guiding principles of the DRD.

(*) Members of the Dolores River Coalition include:

San Juan Citizens Alliance, The Wilderness Society and The Wilderness Support Center, Colorado Environmental Coalition, Colorado Mountain Club, Center for Native Ecosystems, Colorado Trout Unlimited, American Whitewater, Western Colorado Congress, Sheep Mountain Alliance, Dolores River Action Group, Citizens For Accountability and Responsibility, Environmental Defense, Uncompahgre Valley Association, San Miguel Watershed, Colorado River Outfitters Association, Grand Canyon Trust, Friends of Living Rivers/River Keeper, Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, and Utah Rivers Council