Involving the public in protecting the natural values of selected streams while allowing water development to continue

River Protection Workgroup
Community Involvement Framework & Process Model

The five Public Workgroups organized through the River Protection Workgroup (RPW) project engage any and all interested community members in a collaborative process that examines ways to protect important values on selected rivers and streams in the region while allowing water development to continue.
The five rivers and streams include: Hermosa Creek; San Juan River – West and East Forks; Vallecito Creek/Pine River; and the Animas and Piedra Rivers. Public Workgroup members are asked to regularly attend approximately 10 to 12 meetings (more meetings might be held if the Workgroup decides it is necessary).

The process generally follows this framework:

- Phase I: Background information is shared about the RPW project and the community is asked if they want a Public Workgroup to form. If so, the group process is fully discussed and agreed upon, and ground rules are defined. Then, basic information about the river or stream is shared including details in an "*Initial Information Sheet.*"
- Phase II: Values on the river are discussed, including natural, social, cultural and/or economic values, addressing any protections already in place. A values statement is developed. Participants then consider a range of options for protecting important values and they address the issue of whether or not the current protections are adequate. No decisions are made in this phase. If the Workgroup requests more information, it is provided.
- Phase III: The Workgroup then looks to the future and at the end, develops a report. In this phase, options and ideas generated by the Workgroup are discussed in-depth with maps, facts, and information brought to the group. Through consensus-building and other decision-making tools, the Workgroup's aim is to reach conclusions and develop recommendations and/or action plans. If consensus is not reached, the group's final report can reflect the range of ideas generated throughout the process.
- Regional Discussion: In this phase, the Workgroup also identifies areas that will be part of a "Regional Discussion" which will specifically focus on developing a regional approach(es) using the outputs and ideas of the five Public Workgroups as a basis. The approaches will be related to Wild and Scenic River issues and/or other potential federal or state tools that may require legislation. The Public Workgroups will have input in the Regional Discussion and their consensus recommendations cannot be reversed by the Regional Discussions which, like the Public Workgroups, will operate by consensus. Mechanisms will be put in place to include the full Workgroups at key points in the process. The RWP Steering Committee is developing the specific process model for how the Regional Discussion will be conducted. The discussion is expected to begin in 2013. (See graphic on pp. 3)

The River Protection Workgroup Steering Committee, formed in 2006, acts as a resource for each Public Workgroup and oversees the overall project but does not direct the Public Workgroup to any particular set of recommendations or outcomes. Note: There is a separate information sheet on The RPW project and Steering Committee.

The River Protection Workgroup project asks that each Workgroup participant use these principles:

River Protection Workgroup Process Principles

- Anyone who has an interest and attends Workgroup meetings has a seat at the table and is considered a stakeholder in the process.

- Through respectful dialogue, the process aims to design future actions that meet the interests and needs of a diversity of stakeholders and water users.

- Participants will be asked to be respectful of all opinions, even if they do not agree with them.

- Using all available resources, accurate facts are brought to the group for discussion and development of common understandings.

- Meetings are highly interactive using collaborative and consensus approaches. During the process, negotiations among stakeholders with various viewpoints may occur in order to move forward.

- The process will be transparent and open, and everyone will be heard.

- The group will be given the tools needed to engage in discussion and creative problem-solving. Information will be available to the participants, including fact sheet(s), meeting minutes, a glossary of terms, available river protection tools, and other information as requested.

Definition of Consensus

- ✓ Includes steps so that all views are heard and considered

- ✓ Recognizes that differences of opinion are natural/expected

- ✓ Group makes a good faith effort to reach a decision that everyone can support

- ✓ Consensus does not mean everyone agrees with the decision but... they can support it

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Each Workgroup's minutes, meeting handouts, maps, etc. are on the Web site:
(click on the left side)   http://ocs.fortlewis.edu/riverprotection

Graphic of River Protection Workgroup PROCESS STEPS

Kicking Off

Getting Started

Ground Rules

Developing common understandings of terms and river information

Field Trips & Education (as requested)

Values

Develop Values Statement: What do YOU care about?

Field trips & Education (as requested)

Work! Discussions! Ideas & Recommendations Consensus Building

Protections: Discuss if current protections are adequate. If not, what additional protections might be recommended? What are the options?

Define Workgroup recommendations THEN.....
Write, edit and finalize Workgroup report, and widely disseminate it

Working Group concludes this phase

Regional discussion starts

Regional discussion happens next.....(starts in 2013)