Grand County Stream Management Plan (GCSMP) Update
Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SHAC)
December 4, 2025, 5:30 PM to 7 PM
Virtual Meeting
Meeting Summary - FINAL

ATTENDANCE

Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SHAC): Maura Bishop, Tom Caldwell, Tony Eason, Randy George, Daniela Gosselova, Evie Guay, Miguel Hamarat, Ingrid Karlstrom, Newton Logan, and John Tilstra

Learning By Doing (LBD): Rachel Badger, Travis Bray, Mark Coleman, Brian Craig, Adam Cwilkin, Anna Drexler-Dreis, Becca Jonswold, Kirk Klancke, Stephen Klobucar, Katherine Morris, and Jen Stephenson

Technical consultants: Johannes Beeby, Kayli Foulk, Brad Johnson, and Erin Stewart

Facilitation team: Samuel Wallace and Lauren Cortez French

ACTION ITEMS

Peak Facilitation Group	Distribute a scheduling survey to the SHAC, LBD, and technical consultants to schedule a Full Stakeholder Group meeting in late January or early February.
LRE Water and Muller Engineering	Incorporate SHAC feedback on the draft GCSMP goals before finalizing.

OVERVIEW OF THE DRAFT GCSMP GOALS

LRE Water presented draft GCSMP goals, developed based on ideas shared by participants at the November 5 SHAC meeting. Their remarks are summarized below.

- During the November SHAC meeting, participants worked in three small groups to develop goals for each of the GCSMP update's five management themes: water management and stream flow, community engagement, water quality, river function, and aquatic habitat.
- Following that meeting, the technical consultants compiled and synthesized the outcomes of the goal-setting exercise to develop three to five goals for each management theme. They also identified "common threads," which were ideas shared by all three small groups.
- The common threads and draft goals for each management theme are listed in Appendix I at the end of this document. The goals will be revised to incorporate SHAC feedback before being finalized.

Comments on the Draft GCSMP Goals

Meeting participants provided feedback on the draft GCSMP goals. Their comments are summarized below.

- The 'water quality' goal that reads, "Reconnect floodplains and restore riparian areas to enhance natural nutrient uptake and provide thermal buffering," could be revised to include establishing or strengthening riparian areas as natural fire breaks as another goal of floodplain reconnection and riparian restoration.
- The goals may be more effective if they are further simplified or refined into fewer goals.
- Many of the goals, such as post-fire restoration, are reactive, rather than proactive. Projects prioritized in the GCSMP update should aim to prepare the watershed for disasters, rather than to restore it after disasters.
- The draft list of goals does not directly address ensuring a clean, secure drinking water supply for Grand County residents. LBD noted that this is because the purpose of the GCSMP update process is to improve and restore aquatic environments but emphasized that water quality is closely linked to the health of river systems. Thus, GCSMP projects are likely to provide water quality benefits for both aquatic systems and Grand County residents.

Question on the Draft GCSMP Goals
A SHAC member asked the technical consultants a question related to the draft GCSMP goals. The question is indicated below in italics, followed by the corresponding response in plain text.

Does the GCSMP's definition of 'aquatic habitat' include riparian areas, or does it end at the river's edge?
The GCSMP update stream health grading framework considers both in-stream aquatic habitat and riparian habitat. Both 'riparian' and 'aquatic ecosystems' are included as variables in the framework, each with its own set of metrics. The 'riparian' variable is associated with the 'riparian condition,' 'floodplain fragmentation,' and 'floodplain confinement' metrics. The 'aquatic ecosystem' variable is associated with metrics for fish and macroinvertebrate habitat, as well as fish and macroinvertebrate population measurements.

OVERVIEW OF STREAM REACH PRIORITIZATION METHODOLOGY
LRE Water provided an overview of the draft methodology for prioritizing stream reaches based on the stream reach grades and the GCSMP update management themes and goals. Their presentation is summarized below.

- The next step in the GCSMP update process is to prioritize the graded stream reaches to inform Phase 3's project planning and prioritization efforts. The reach prioritization methodology combines stream reach grades and GCSMP goals to ensure both elements are accounted for.
- The technical consultants examined the GCSMP goals and identified 10 "prioritization elements," or key concepts representing river functions, stressors, and resource needs that can be measured using the data gathered during the stream reach health assessment.
- The prioritization elements will be evaluated using metric grades and other data collected during the stream reach health assessment. For each prioritization element, the associated metric is listed in the table below.

Prioritization Elements	Metric
Thermal stress	Stream temperature
Fire impact	Wildfire burned area
Sedimentation	Local supply
Nutrient enriched	Nitrogen and phosphorus
Disconnected floodplain	Riparian fragmentation
Riparian needs	Riparian condition
Geomorphic needs	Planform dynamics
Ecological value	Aquatic ecosystem
Reach length variability	Length of segments within the reach
Public access	Percent of reach that is publicly accessible

- Each prioritization element was assigned an "alignment score" reflecting how closely it aligns with the five management themes and associated goals.
- The technical consultants identified four secondary prioritization elements that capture GCSMP goals that will not necessarily be addressed through in-stream restoration projects but could be addressed through alternative management strategies or initiatives. The secondary elements include:
    - **Operations management:** The stream reach assessment indicates that the reach may benefit from new operations management approaches.
    - **Establish flow targets:** The stream reach lacks an established flow target.

    - **Protect:** The reach is considered "pristine," and could benefit from protection of current conditions.
    - **Monitor:** The reach has existing data gaps that could be addressed through future monitoring.
- Each stream reach will be assigned a score based on assessment of the primary and secondary prioritization elements listed above. The score will determine the reach's priority rank relative to the other reaches, as well as the reach's priority level (low, medium, or high).
- Not all the GCSMP goals are directly addressed by the prioritization elements. Other goals, such as funding, are more project-specific and will likely be considered during the Phase 3 project prioritization process.

Comments on the Stream Reach Prioritization Methodology

Meeting participants provided feedback on the stream reach prioritization methodology. Their comments are summarized below.

- The prioritization methodology is based on currently available data. To take a more proactive rather than reactive approach, predictive modeling could be used to inform how stream reach conditions might change under future potential scenarios, such as a wildfire or increased development.
- Another stakeholder-driven project, the Grand County Wildfire Ready Action Plan (GCWRAP), is using predictive models to assess potential post-fire impacts across the watershed and identify strategies to reduce the risk and severity of those impacts. There may be opportunities for the GCSMP update to connect with the GCWRAP to design projects and strategies that are informed by predictive modeling.
- While the stream reach grading and prioritization methodology do not employ predictive modeling, both are designed to easily incorporate new data. This functionality will allow the stream reach grades and prioritized reach list to be readily updated to reflect changes in the system, such as the impacts of wildfire and development.
- Beaver presence and habitat could be one of the data gaps considered in the secondary prioritization element related to monitoring.

INTRODUCTION TO GCSMP UPDATE PHASE THREE

Stillwater Sciences and Johnson Environmental Consulting, the technical consultants for Phase 3 of the GCSMP Update, introduced themselves and provided a brief preview of Phase 3. Their remarks are summarized below.

- Johannes Beeby is a river scientist with Stillwater Sciences. He has 15 years of experience in river restoration and watershed assessments, with a focus on geomorphology.
- Brad Johnson, Johnson Environmental Consulting, is a wetland and riparian ecologist. Brad developed the original River Health Assessment Framework, which served as the basis for the GCSMP update's stream reach grading methodology.
- Johannes and Brad have collaborated on project prioritization, design, and implementation for similar processes in Colorado, including other projects in the Grand County area.
- In Phase 3, Johannes and Brad will use the outcomes of LRE Water and Muller Engineering's stream reach grading and river reach prioritization to develop projects that improve river health and meet stakeholder goals.
- Similar to Phase 2, the SHAC will provide guidance and feedback to Johannes and Brad on how to prioritize projects, project-level goals and details, and, potentially, initial concept designs.

- The overarching goal for Phase 3 is to create a list of prioritized projects and, potentially, concept designs for some of the highest-priority projects that LBD and partners can begin implementing to meet the GCSMP update goals.

Comments on Phase 3 of the GCSMP Update Process

- Overwide channels are a significant concern for stream health in the area. If there is a geomorphology data gap related to overwide channels, it is important that this gap be filled so that projects addressing the issue are considered in the prioritization process. The technical consultant noted that channel width was considered in the stream reach grading assessment.
- When seeking funding for the projects, it will be important to consider the funding sources and the goals of the stakeholders providing the funding. Securing funding for these projects will likely depend on gaining public support, which in turn will require that the projects address public needs, such as a clean drinking water supply.

NEXT STEPS

The next GSCMP Update meeting will be a Full Stakeholder Group meeting in late January or early February 2026. The Phase 2 technical consultants will present the results of the stream-reach prioritization, the final deliverable of Phase 2. Peak Facilitation Group will distribute a scheduling survey to the SHAC and LBD to find a date for that meeting.

APPENDIX I. Draft GCSMP Update goals, developed based on the outcomes of the goal-setting exercise completed during the prior SHAC meeting on November 5, 2025.

Theme	Common Threads	Prioritization Elements	Goals
Water Management & Stream Flow	Maintain and mimic natural flow regimes, coordinate among water users, build resilience to climate change, and use data/decision-support tools to guide environmental releases.	Thermal Stress Riparian Needs Geomorphic Needs Ecological Value	• Maintain and preserve base and peak flows that sustain aquatic habitat, stream temperature, and channel function. • Coordinate among water users to optimize environmental flow releases and ramping rates for ecological benefits. • Develop and implement data-driven decision-support tools to support environmental flow management and enable proactive, flexible operational strategies to mitigate high-temperature periods and other hydrologic variability due to climate change.
Community Engagement	Collaboration, education, visibility, landowner participation, recreation stewardship, and community buy-in.	Public Access Riparian Needs Geomorphic Needs Ecological Value	• Strengthen collaboration among public agencies, landowners, schools, and community groups to implement restoration and monitoring projects. • Expand education and outreach to increase awareness of river health, stewardship, and “messy rivers are healthy rivers” concepts. • Promote community participation through volunteer events, recreation stewardship programs, and partnerships with local events. • Increase transparency and visibility of SMP projects through by strengthening data sharing, showcasing project successes, and using targeted communication and engagement strategies.
Water Quality	Address temperature and nutrient issues, manage hazard impacts, connect floodplains, and integrate green infrastructure and BMPs.	Fire Impact Sedimentation Thermal Stress Nutrient Enriched Riparian Needs Disconnected Floodplain Ecological Value	• Improve and maintain water quality by reducing nutrient and sediment inputs from point and non-point sources. • Reduce stream temperature through flow management, riparian shading, and channel modifications. • Reconnect floodplains and restore riparian areas to reduce erosion, enhance natural nutrient uptake, and provide thermal buffering. • Incorporate post-fire recovery into watershed restoration priorities.

Theme	Common Threads	Prioritization Elements	Goals
River Function	Floodplain connectivity, sediment and geomorphic processes, riparian health, and process-based restoration.	Fire Impact Sedimentation Thermal Stress Riparian Needs Disconnected Floodplain Geomorphic Needs Ecological Value	• Restore and protect floodplain and groundwater connections to support base flows and habitat diversity. • Promote natural geomorphic processes through channel right-sizing, sediment management, and increased habitat complexity. • Enhance riparian vegetation, including establishing native species, to improve bank stability and ecosystem function. • Prioritize implementation of process-based holistic watershed restoration approaches at the reach scale. • Improve diversion structures and culverts to reduce post-fire hazard risks.
Aquatic Habitat	Connectivity, habitat diversity, native species, and monitoring of ecological indicators.	Riparian Needs Geomorphic Needs Ecological Value	• Enhance and restore aquatic habitats to support healthy and self-sustaining native fish and macroinvertebrate communities. • Increase habitat complexity (e.g., deep pools, varied channel morphology) to support multiple life stages and species diversity. • Monitor key biological indicators (e.g., sculpin, pteronarcys) to track ecosystem health and restoration project success. • Protect and maintain high-quality stream reaches through targeted restoration, adaptive management and long-term stewardship.