

## **Purgatoire Watershed Partnership**

### **Background Information**

The Purgatoire Watershed Partnership (PWP) is a new organization based in Trinidad, Colorado formed to develop partnerships and reduce conflicts with natural resource management in the Purgatoire River watershed. The PWP places a very high importance on broad stakeholder involvement, collaboration and open sharing of information. The PWP is seeking to better understand existing conditions within the Purgatoire river watershed in order to guide future decisions and develop effective solutions to existing and potential threats to water quality, water supplies and overall watershed health.

As of September 2012 the PWP was awarded a Cooperative Watershed Management Program (CWMP) grant from the Bureau of Reclamation. The funding awarded is to be used to establish watershed groups in an effort to improve water quality and ecological resilience and to reduce conflicts over water through collaborative conservation efforts in the management of local watersheds. CWMP funding has allowed the group to move forward by taking the steps needed to become an incorporated 501(c)3 Non-Profit, and work towards hiring a watershed coordinator. Ultimately, the group seeks to create a mission statement, develop project concepts, and develop a watershed restoration plan.

### **Group Purpose and Goals**

A diverse group of stakeholders within the Purgatoire River watershed have expressed an interest in forming a watershed-wide cooperative group to improve the functioning condition of the Purgatoire River and its tributaries through water conservation, improved water quality, enhanced ecological resiliency, and the reduction of water conflicts. This new group will be a non-regulatory grassroots organization dedicated to the sustainable use of natural resources and would make decisions on a consensus basis. The objectives of the CWMP grant are:

- the establishment of a new watershed group
- the development of a mission statement
- the development of watershed management project concepts, and
- the development of a watershed restoration plan

This project aims to implement a watershed plan that can inform local decisions and increase the region's collective ability to maintain and improve water quality, improve water efficiencies and ultimately, to sustain and enhance the health and values of the Purgatoire River Watershed. The initial task is to collect and analyze existing information, which will be used to develop a watershed assessment that evaluates current conditions. Building on that information, the Partnership will work with local stakeholders to identify projects or activities to tackle key issues identified in the plan. Additionally, the plan will look at existing practices put in use by local landowners that have beneficial effect on the watershed. The final plan could recommend a variety of activities, from on-the-ground restoration projects to public education efforts to a description of best management practices. Sustained stakeholder engagement is crucial to the development of the plan. Landowners, existing agencies and organizations involved in the management of the river system will be engaged, resulting in new partnerships, information sharing, coordination and public outreach. Plan development will involve local landowners in a way that is considerate and respectful of their time and travel constraints.

## **Overall Accomplishments to Date**

- In September the group was awarded a Bureau of Reclamation Cooperative Watershed Management Grant, which will provide them with the financial stability to move forward and accomplish greater goals.
- The Partnership begins its journey as an official group under the umbrella of the local Purgatoire River/ Spanish Peaks Conservation District in town.
- The group has conducted a total of 8 meetings to date beginning in June 2012 and continue to meet once a month.
- Recent meetings have provided the group with valuable information and have featured guest speakers Jeff Montoya the Water Commissioner for the Purgatoire watershed, Jeris Danielson from the Purgatoire Water Conservancy District, Steve Witte the Division Engineer from Division 2, and Eve McDonald from the Attorney General's Office.
- Presentations given by guest speakers have addressed the administration of water rights, the history, the current state of the watershed, along with the Kansas Compact and its effect on the river. Presentations provide group members with insight on the watershed, which are valuable resources that will guide the group to make informed decisions in the future.
- A number of Purgatoire Watershed Partnership members (i.e. Karen Salapich, Jerry Jacob, Stacey Rivera, Angela Welch) attended the Colorado Watershed Assembly Annual Conference to gain knowledge on the successes and challenges of other watershed groups throughout the state.
- The group has successfully drafted its articles and bylaws which will be adopted at the next meeting on January 9. Incorporation will provide the group with structure, stability and legal guidelines. At this meeting a board of directors will also be nominated, voted on, and elected.
- With these essential elements underway the group can further grow and hopes to hire a watershed coordinator in the near future. In time the group plans to move forward by developing and implementing a watershed plan to keep the Purgatoire watershed as healthy as possible.
- The group has successfully drafted its articles and bylaws which will be adopted at the next meeting on January 9. At this meeting the first official board will be elected. This document will provide the group with structure, stability and legal guidelines all of which will also work to formulate a board of directors. With these essential elements underway the group can further grow and hopes to hire a watershed coordinator in the near future. In time the group plans to move forward by developing and implementing a watershed plan to keep the Purgatoire watershed as healthy as possible.

## **Board of Director Seats**

- Landowners
- Water Right Holders
- Municipal Government
- County Government
- Local Industry
- Water Conservancy District

- Local Government and Conservation entities
- Environmental Community
- Recreational Community
- Army Corps of Engineers
- Pinion Canyon Maneuver Site
- Interested Individuals (community at large)

### **Board of Director Responsibilities**

At the first meeting of the Board of Directors, classification of the directors shall be made dividing them into three classes, each class to be as nearly equal in number as possible. The term of office of the directors of the first class shall expire at the end of the first annual meeting of the voting members held after such classification. The term of office of the directors of the second class shall expire at the end of the second annual meeting of the voting members thereafter and the term of office of the directors of the third class shall expire at the end of the third annual meeting of the voting members thereafter.

Directors will be elected by the voting members at each annual meeting of the members for a term of two years. Each director elected will hold office until their term expires and until their successor has been elected, or until a director's earlier death, resignation or removal.

A director may resign at any time by giving written notice to the chair of the board, to the president or to the secretary of the corporation.

The board of directors will hold a meeting immediately after and at the same place as the annual meeting of the members.

Special meetings of the board of directors maybe called by or at the request of the chair of the board, the president or any directors. The meeting time and place must be given to each director at least two days before the meeting is to take occur.

### **Board Director Titles**

- Chair
- Vice Chair
- Secretary
- Treasurer

### **Group Membership**

An annual membership fee of \$10 will give members the ability to elect and vote on board members. The money will be used to provide refreshments at future meetings, for administrative costs, advertising, and other miscellaneous group expenses. Dues can be paid throughout the year though the right to vote can only be exercised during the annual voting when elections occur.