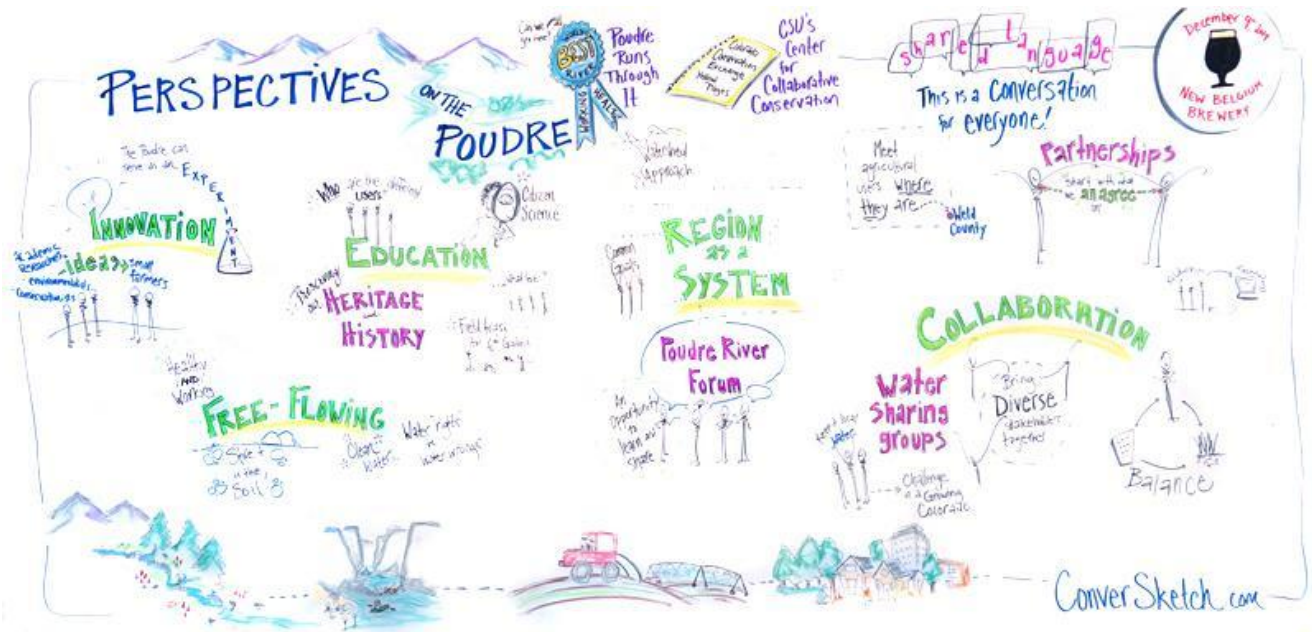


# Perspectives on the Poudre River World Café



## Gathering Collective Wisdom to Explore Stakeholder Visions of the Poudre River

December 9, 2014  
New Belgium Brewery  
Fort Collins, Colorado

This document outlines a collection of participant insights shared during the World Café dialogue at the New Belgium Brewery in Fort Collins, Colorado on December 9, 2014. This event was the culmination of a series of eight seminars on the Poudre River hosted by the Center for Collaborative Conservation (CCC). This event was also co-hosted and sponsored by the Poudre Runs Through It Study/Action Work Group. For more information about this event, please visit our website: <http://www.collaborativeconservation.org/world-cafe-perspectives-poudre> or email us at [info@collaborativeconservation.org](mailto:info@collaborativeconservation.org)

We sincerely thank the participants of this world café for sharing their insights and perspectives on the Poudre River. We also thank Mary Lou Smith with the [Poudre Runs Through It](#) for co-facilitating this event and sponsoring the delicious food from Rainbow Cafe in Fort Collins. Thank you to New Belgium Brewery for providing beer and the wonderful venue for the World Café. We are very grateful for Conservation Learning Through Leadership (CLTL) graduate students for serving as World Café table hosts, compiling notes for this document, and photo and video recording this event. CLTL students include Eric Rubenstein, Anna Kellogg, Leah Zamesnik, Lauren Burton, Sarah McCarthy, Julie Sabattis, Emma Fajardo, Phil Krening, Meghan Jones, Meghan Kite, Kaylin Clements, Angelia Lane, and Alex Basaraba. Many thanks to the world café design and advertising team including Kim Skyelander, Alex Basaraba, Kenzie Schmitt, and Steve Seno. We appreciate Sarah McCarthy's detailed notes of the world café and edits to this document. Finally, we especially acknowledge Karina Mullen Branson's graphic recording of this world café and NR 400 Public Relations and Natural Resources students, particularly Elliot Bennett for photo documenting this event.

## **1. Introduction**

Information in this document originated from world café participants' insights shared in full group discussions and graphic recording notes. This document is organized into four main sections:

1. Introduction
2. Participants
3. Participant Insights and Perspectives on the Poudre River
4. Appendices

The World Café was a culmination of the Center for Collaborative Conservation's (CCC) seminar series exploring Perspectives on the Poudre River. Arren Mendezona Allegretti of the CCC and MaryLou Smith of the Poudre Runs Through It (PRTI) Action Working Group co-facilitated this World Cafe. The World Café is a forum that facilitates creative conversation on a topic of mutual interest for sharing ideas and gaining a deeper understanding of the subject and issues involved. Our **objectives** included the following:

- **To integrate different stakeholder visions and perspectives on sustaining the ecological health of the Poudre River while recognizing its role as a working river for agriculture and cities**
- **To discuss ways for bridging and communicating about diverse stakeholder visions concerning the Poudre River**

To achieve our objectives, we engaged participants in small round-table conversations on their personal visions of the Poudre River. Our intentions and rationale behind these conversations were to focus on individual stakeholder interests rather than positions concerning the Poudre River. Ideas from this World Café discussion were presented in the second Annual Poudre River Forum facilitated by the PRTI and the Colorado Water Institute (Appendix B).



Round table discussion during the World Café at New Belgium Brewery

## **2. Participants**

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Nearly 42 representatives from US federal, state, and local agencies, educators, NGOs and non-profit partners were invited to this World Café workshop.

World Café Perspectives of the Poudre River participants represented the following organizations and agencies:

- Poudre Runs Through It Action Working Group
- United States Geological Survey
- U.S. National Park Service
- Colorado State University
- City of Greeley, Water Resources
- Water Board, City of Fort Collins
- Utilities, City of Fort Collins
- Save the Poudre
- Colorado Water Institute
- Coalition of the Poudre River Watershed
- The Nature Conservancy
- Re-cultured Media
- City of Thornton Farm Management
- Ecosystem Science and Sustainability, Colorado State University
- Institute for Learning and Teaching, Colorado State University
- University of Denver
- Colorado Foundation for Water Education
- Center for Environmental Management of Military Lands

Participants were contacted based on their participation with the Colorado Conservation Exchange Inventory project survey. Results from this survey are compiled in The Cache La Poudre Yellow Pages: An Inventory of the Current Work and Knowledge on Watershed Health in the Cache La Poudre Watershed of Northern Colorado report accessible via <http://www.collaborativeconservation.org/colorado-conservation-exchange>

CSU undergraduate students completing an undergraduate credit on the CCC Perspectives of the Poudre Seminar series attended this World Café. Some of their insights of this World Café are shared on our website at <http://www.collaborativeconservation.org/blog>

### 3. Participant Insights and Perspectives on the Poudre

Throughout the event, several ideas were shared through various formats, from small-table conversations to large group discussions. This section includes the following:

- Participants' visions of the Poudre River outlined in their post-it notes.
- Discussions on bridging and communicating stakeholders' diverse visions
- Graphic recording of this World Café discussions on the Poudre River

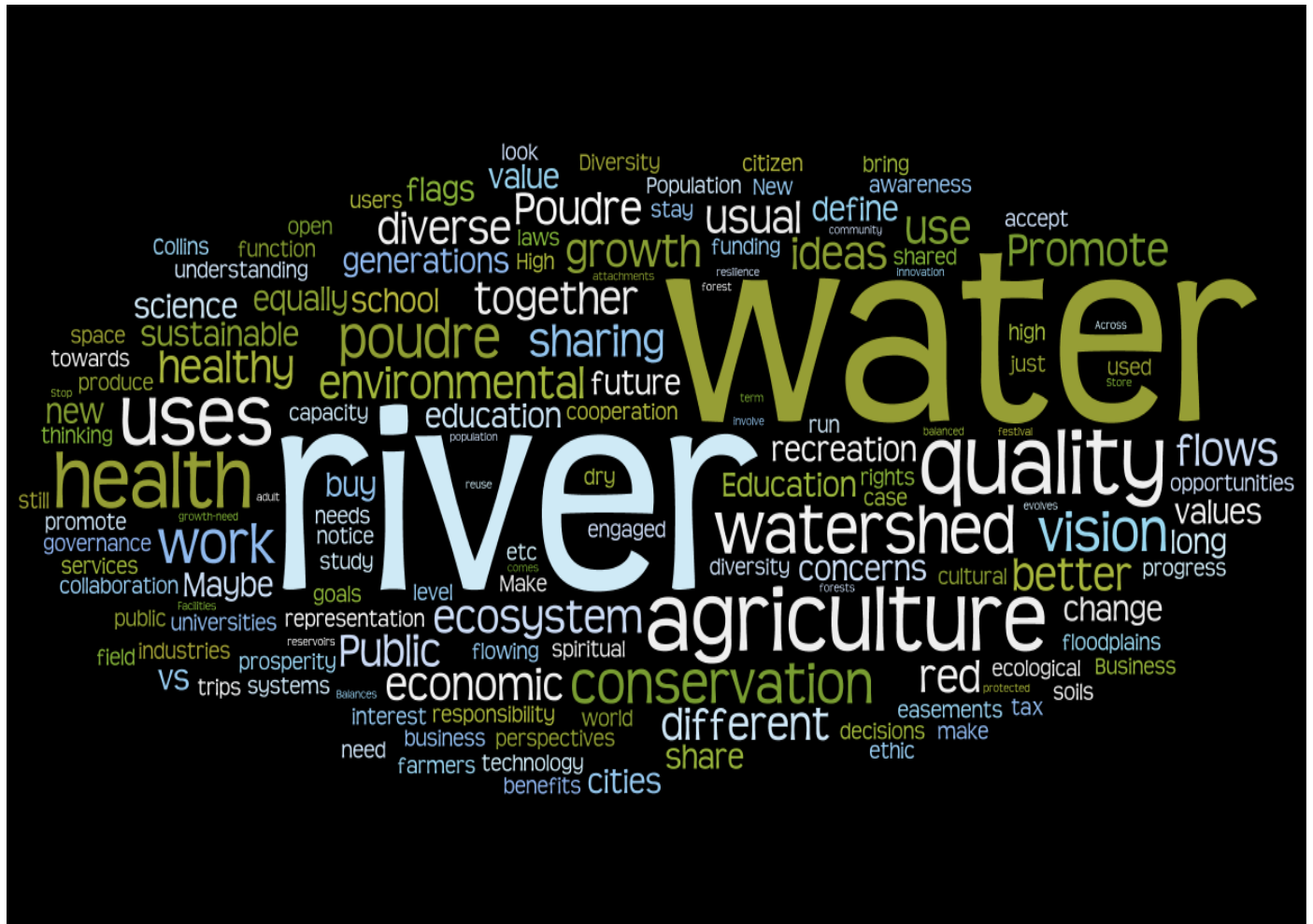


Figure 1. A word map of participants' visions of the Poudre River taken from their post-it notes

*“We will figure out how to share our vision and how to live together peacefully”*

-World Café Participant

## **Participant Visions of the Poudre River**

### **WATERSHED & SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS**

- Preserve the watershed, not just the river
- Better ecosystem function (protected floodplains, healthy forest, etc.) will better protect communities in the long run
- My vision for the Poudre is a shared vision that encompasses the entire watershed and all the uses and values
- Vision: that people should view the Poudre as a vital component of a socially equitable, region-wide human and natural systems
- Public funding sources for watershed resilience; open space tax, severance tax
- River corridor provides many ecological and social benefits
- Watershed approach to thinking about rivers
- Let the ecosystem do the work
- Reconnect river to its watershed when feasible
- Public funding source for watershed
- Socio-ecological system
- Need to think about watershed, not just the river

### **EDUCATION**

- Educational opportunities
- Increase high school and adult citizen science
- High school science classes using Poudre as a lab on water quality
- Poudre river festival involving applications, heritage, recreation, agriculture, education, industry, resource opportunities
- Promote conservation easements; education regarding demands on the river
- Education: community-wide realization of limitation
- Citizen Science
- Sixth grade field trips
- Public awareness-water issues
- Public education of the river and its health and function of a working river

### **COLLABORATION**

- Conservation vs. competition (involve everyone)
- Defining regional common goals to promote cooperation
- A long-term, sustainable diverse user group that can work together to make collaborative decisions about use of Poudre river water
- Case study: Does collaboration produce?
- Regulatory goals towards cooperation
- Not only sub counties [should be involved]
- Partnership with universities (field trips)
- We can't just think of this as a Weld or Larimer county issue or we will have a suboptimal solution
- Collaborative decisions

### **FLOWS & HEALTH**

- High flow, better water quality, water sharing
- Free flowing
- Healthy and resilient river with lots of open space

- Poudre River extends way beyond the riverbanks. Focus on critical and river needs them to be healthy in the long run.
- Healthy flows
- Clean

## **GOVERNANCE & WATER SHARING**

- New governance with shared vision; accept growth but have a plan
- Municipal and agriculture water sharing
- Water-sharing between cities and farmers
- “Can’t do business as usual”—need new innovation systematic changes
- Stuck in outdated institutions-water laws

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & UNDERSTANDING**

- Community needs to stay engaged
- Make understanding our process, progress
- Don’t base off differences but similarities
- Start discussion on what we agree on
- Bring together conservationists, universities, agriculture, recreation, environment, and other industries to share concerns and ideas
- Same representation of government, science, & academics [in community engagement workshops]

## **TECHNOLOGY, SOLUTIONS, & IDEAS**

- Fort Collins growth—need to realize capacity; different idea than buy and dry
- Support new technology
- Biodegradable rx [prescription]; fewer reservoirs; store water in soils
- History of river as it evolves
- Grey water reuse
- A new sport for forests, not lawns (making green cool)
- Population growth—what is our city’s decision and vision? To combat it means to make surrounding cities better
- Promote the river as a primary part of the city
- Store water in soils
- Promote water easements
- Buy water for conservation easement
- Spending cap
- Business as usual will not work, there has to be compromise and rebalancing of how the river is used

## **VIEWS OF CHANGE & MANAGEMENT**

- A river that is managed for ecological and geomorphic change while serving as a catalyst for negotiation across diverse perspectives
- Limited use requires change; Attitudes towards change are a limiting factor, not water
- Maybe it can look different and still be sustainable

## **VALUES & ETHICS**

- Ethic of conservation (sculpt with nature)
- Value environmental quality equally as economic concerns
- Spiritual and cultural

- Live peacefully
- Respect for all types of river attachments
- Measure intrinsic value and public health

### **DIVERSITY, USES, & PERSPECTIVES**

- Celebrate diversity and cultural uniqueness
- Promote diversity of river
- Conservation of uses
- Recreation
- Responsible agriculture use
- Many uses have been identified and these uses need to be balanced
- Preconceived ideas of agriculture being the enemy
- Small scale famers= long term commitment
- Balancing different uses of the river
- Diversity of uses will hopefully help us notice red flags

### **OTHER IMPORTANT VISIONS**

- Mouth to merge (South Platte)
- Peyton on the Poudre—a calendar
- No status quo
- Benefits
- Negative impacts
- Water storage?
- Future generations
- Also have to think about what happens East of the Poudre
- Poudre is a case study—an experiment
- Systems thinking
- Stop it! (Shopping)

### **Questions brought up on participant's visions of the Poudre River**

*How do we weave together disparate values such as dollars, ecosystem services, water rights, community sustainability, spiritual values?*

*What are we willing to limit etc.?*

*Have world cafe where agriculture users are?*

*Who are the users of the river and how is it used?*

*Who are the polluters of the river?*

*Money, ecosystem services, water rights, and spiritual--how do we bring this together?*

*What is our responsibility to future generations and ourselves?*

*What if it's okay that some water comes from agriculture? Maybe it can look different and still be sustainable*

*How do we define "health" of the river?*

*What level of education do we use to reach the general public? Elementary vs. high school?*

*What do we focus on the most? High school is about to go vote, so should we focus on them?*



*Who are the users of the river and how is it being used? Who are the polluters of the rivers?  
How do we label the different stakeholders based on our perspectives?*



Participants discuss their visions for the Poudre River in small round table conversation

# Participant Insights on Communicating and Bridging Diverse Visions on the Poudre

## STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION

- Who are the users? Dilemma: most people in the community don't know who the users of the rivers are
- Show other stakeholders a map of where the diversions are
- Need to start the discussion on what we agree on; establish what your core beliefs are
- How can we get people more interested in the Poudre and how we use it? How can we understand each other better?
  - Making it known that it is a conversation that everyone can get involved in

## ENGAGING THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

- Get the agriculture folks involved. Less than 10 agricultural representatives here but use 85% of water. Agriculturalists are far away (we need more connections with the agriculture community)
- Have agriculture represented at the World Café (not obvious, not proportional). Farmer friends would say it is proportional because everyone eats
- We need more discussion about agricultural users
- How do we bring together environmentalists and agriculture?
  - Use common language
  - Partnerships are key! Reach out to agriculture community (would bring them into events like the world café)
  - Poudre Runs Through It—are meeting with people from two different ditch companies to put diversion structures back in place that are more fish friendly (diversions damaged in the flood)
  - Articulate each other's needs and concerns to develop an understanding
  - There is a pre-conceived idea that agriculture is the enemy
  - Agriculture is reacting to a demand
  - If you want to engage agricultural users you need to go to them; engage them where they are. Don't have the World Café in Fort Collins. To reach agriculture users, need to have a World Café in Eaton, Ault, Greeley, Pierce, and Windsor
  - Start the discussion with what we agree on in order to develop trust and facilitate a more open discussion
  - Approach the discussion on commonalities; the differences between the agricultural community and the environmental community aren't that different.
  - Go out in the field and introduce yourself; their ethic is right on the same; no one is talking a different language; they're trying to preserve a culture and way of life for their kids. They live out on 2,000 acres where you can see the stars.
  - Is the heritage and ethic the same as ours? We're out on a limb; there's not judgment attached to the observation. There can be an unwillingness to engage in that conservation because of preconceived notions.

- Water is to feed our demand, which is cutting us off from the tree of life.
  - Small family farmers—the need for ideas and techniques that can give them an advantage over large corporate firms; help them have a better long term land tenure; there is so much that can be gained by small land farmers and researchers, environmentalists
  - [Agriculture folks] facing similar pressures
  - Poudre Water Sharing Working group (domestic water providers meeting with ditch companies)—Idea: instead of a farmer selling water and land to Castle Rock, the community that's concerned about keeping water in agriculture, had come up with enough money to buy the farmers land and water and keep it in agriculture. Are you willing to be taxed? I'll farm it if you buy it because I can't get into agriculture any other way
  - Interruptible supply: three years out of ten, a municipality can lease water to use it in circumstances of drought---a way for municipalities and agriculture to share
  - Can you secure the water from municipalities?
  - The challenge: have a mature utility with a senior portfolio vs. new (has to secure a base water supply). Sharing programs don't secure a base water supply
- We have to embrace the ideas of farmers as well as the ideas of urban water managers. No magic rule to stop growth in these communities
  - Are there any agriculture trusts like there are land trusts?
    - Number of trusts that are buying agriculture land and water is a part of that.
  - Should not incentivize mono-crops

### **GENERAL STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IDEAS**

- Poudre Heritage Alliance gave funds to put gauges on the river so people can see and get a feel for flows in cubic feet per second (CFS)
- River festival: a lot of people that had an interest in the river in a variety of ways (environmentally and different ways)
  - good way to engage community and spark interest
- Continue the dialogue at the Poudre river forum

### **NORTHERN INTEGRATED SUPPLY PROJECT (NISP)**

- NISP review process has been proceeding for years now, going forward at the same time as these collaborative efforts; another delay to NISP—different tone being taken in the press about the inevitability about NISP happening. Concerns about the apathy towards these projects happening.
  - How can we bring together those who are pro storage vs. those who are not (one of the more difficult polarizations)?
  - If the EIS keeps getting put off and everyone keeps waiting, what can we be doing in the meantime to create understanding about it? Poudre Runs Through It is struggling to come up with a solution
  - If you have strong feelings one way or another about it, try to seek out others that have different opinions and see if you can come together

- NISP review process – Article in the Coloradoan about the delay in the project

## **OTHER THEMES**

- Legislative
  - Beneficial use vs. use it or lose it
  - Ban sod?
  - Not allowed to collect rainwater, issues of evaporation
  - Recognize water constraints like Los Angeles does
  - Why do we have tropical plants in Fort Collins?
- Need to reuse gray water
- Water used for intrinsic benefit, family recreation, cultural connection (Poudre Hospital), mental health, it's a lifeline, to drink, wash clothes, dishes (which no one talks about)
- Decree exchange between agriculture and municipal
- Water diversion vs. consumption
  - Efficiency does not necessarily result in more conservation
- Supply (Northern Water "Conservation") vs. actual protection/conservation
- Flood -> better legislation for flood plains, better storage capacity
- History of Poudre – people don't realize trash down drain on the street ends up in Poudre
- Need to keep the long-term in mind

Graphic Recording of Poudre River World Café by Karina Mullen Branson



**Appendix A**  
**Photos of the Poudre River World Cafe**



New Belgium was fantastic in providing beer and our own bartender!



Participants engage in lively round-table conversations



The harvesting of round table discussions begins with participants sharing their insights with post-its and a large group discussion



Arren Mendezona Allegretti harvesting participant's visions for the Poudre River in a large group discussion



Participants shared their insights and ideas over food and drink. Thank you to New Belgium Brewery for providing the beer and the Poudre Runs Through It for sponsoring delicious food from Rainbow Café!



**Appendix B**  
**Insights Shared at The Poudre River Forum on the World Café and Visions of the Poudre River**

Vision for the Poudre River

Connect Fort Collins, Timnath, and Greeley Poudre River Train Together. This would tie the economic, recreational, ecological, and cultural issues of all parties. How? Approach Colorado Oil and Gas Commission to assist, with right of way and corporate funds to cross under I-25.