



**A Rancher, a Scientist, an Angler and a Conservationist Walk into a Room....  
How the Crystal River Management Plan is moving from paper to project  
Proposal for Oral Presentation  
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A rancher, a scientist, an angler and a conservationist walk into a room... “Wait a minute,” you say, “I’ve heard this one before! Something about water being for fighting, right? Remind me the punchline again?” Well, this isn’t the same old story with the same old punchline. Roaring Fork Conservancy (RFC), and our project partners are working with an empowered group of stakeholders to rewrite the story of water in the Roaring Fork Valley.

During the 2012 drought, the Crystal River experienced significantly low flows, to the tune of 1 cfs in the lower reach where the instream flow right is 100cfs. The Crystal Valley, a mecca for both ranching and recreation, was feeling the demand gap of the drought. Is it possible to look out for the interests of all water users, including the river? Enter Stream Management Planning: a new way of conducting river studies that listens to stakeholder concerns and works cooperatively to answer the tough questions about how to use and share valuable water resources. Published in 2016, Crystal River Management Plan, one of the first stream management plans in Colorado, is the product of 18 months of research and outreach.

Now, with much statewide focus on Stream Management Planning, implementation is the next big conversation. In many ways, a plan is only as good as its ability to facilitate real, on the ground change. How do we bring that same rancher, scientist, angler, or conservationist from meeting and planning, to action and results? Partners from local, state and national organizations have come together to work in conjunction with interested stakeholders to pool institutional expertise, strengths and funds to pursue: agricultural non-diversion agreements, municipal ditch efficiencies, public river and riparian restoration projects, and invasive species removals. Sounds pretty chummy, right? Well... sometimes.

All of these projects have garnered support- sometimes in unexpected places, but also raised some concerns and opposition- both predictable and unforeseen. The challenging conversations and compromises don’t stop just because the plan is written. In fact, in many ways, the plan is just the beginning. The journey of each project, like a river, develops with ever-evolving twists, turns, and obstacles. Navigating this process has involved, creativity, persistence, and teamwork. We will illuminate the highs and lows of the implementation process, from management plan to on-the-ground work. Because each time we walk into a room to discuss water with a rancher, a scientist, an angler and a conservationist- and maybe the occasional elected official, recreationist, or federal employee- we know something interesting is going to happen!