

ST. VRAIN AND LEFT HAND WATER CONSERVANCY DISTRICT

St. Vrain and Left Hand Creek Stream Management Planning

South Platte Basin, Colorado



Completed in 2015, Colorado's Water Plan is a roadmap for addressing the state's projected future water needs. Among the plan's ambitious objectives is the goal to develop Stream Management Plans (SMP) to address local

concerns such as fire mitigation, water quality impairments, potential impacts of legacy mines, flood mitigation and recovery, aquatic and riparian habitat enhancement, and land use change for 80% of priority streams.

A Stream Management Plan provides an initial blueprint for improving and protecting waterways in a 500-square-mile watershed while also meeting the needs of its growing human population.

The St. Vrain and Left Hand Water Conservancy District, a non-profit that works to develop, manage and protect water resources in the Longmont area, and its project partners were among those responding to this call to action. Seeking to develop an SMP to improve environmental and recreation conditions in the 500-square-mile St. Vrain Creek watershed while meeting the needs of current and future water users, the District turned to Biohabitats. Stretching from the mountains to the plains, the watershed is home to 150 miles of major creek channels and a growing population with a wide spectrum of needs.

Biohabitats began by collecting, analyzing, and synthesizing data in a user-friendly

way that would empower stakeholders to prioritize projects to improve recreational and environmental needs. Informed by local knowledge and guided by stakeholder and stream health goals, Biohabitats identified priority goals and opportunities where future ecological restoration projects can inspire partnerships and transform challenges into benefits. This project calls for balancing the needs of the diverse populations of native fish, thriving agricultural communities, and recreational boating and fishing communities.

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