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***From the Director's Desk....
Guest author Torie Jarvis -
Co-Director, NWCCOG Water Quality/Quantity
Committee***



Each day reminds me of why I am so grateful that my professional and personal passions intersect. I started raft guiding when I was eighteen. That love of rivers took me on a path first as an AmeriCorps* VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) working with watershed groups around Colorado, on to law school to study environmental and natural resource law. I still raft as much as possible, discovered that fly fishing and rafting go really well together, and that the whitewater parks all around Colorado are incredibly fun for surfing on a standup paddle-board.

I'm feel lucky to work for NWCCOG's Water Quality/Quantity Committee, or QQ for short. QQ members have made protecting the region's rivers and streams their top priority. Water quality and healthy rivers mean a vibrant recreation and tourism economy and happy residents like me who get to surf and fish on healthy rivers.

Water is becoming more and more of a focus for local governments in planning for the future. In our region, January and February provided an amazing amount of moisture to the NWCCOG region, and having solid snow-pack means many of us in the state are able to exhale, knowing we won't be in drought mode this year. And of course, it means increased visitor numbers at the NWCCOG region's ski resorts enjoying those powder days. In California,



Oroville dam and spillway

we've watched as massive flooding as challenged the capacity of aging infrastructure. Water supplies, demands, and extreme events will play bigger roles in planning for community growth and development. Local government leaders have to plan for major storms, as well as droughts that we've seen in past years.

QQ is at the forefront of linking land use and water management in Colorado. In the headwaters region, we are focused not only on better integrating water conservation measures into land use codes-we are focused on addressing water quality at the local level. QQ leads the state in its focus on water quality because, in our region, water quality ensures our recreation and tourism economy continues to thrive and our communities continue to grow sustainably. This year, we will be redeveloping a set of model water quality land use standards for the QQ region-standards that will take into consideration major storm events and how they affect water quality. We're looking forward to 2017 and hoping for plenty more powder days in the months ahead!

I'd be happy to answer and questions about our water. Just contact me at qqwater@nwccog.org.

Want to have more productive meetings? Have a crucial group conversation ... about rabbits

February is the month we watch for the groundhog to see his shadow.

Make a March pledge to not chase after rabbits, especially down holes.



What do I mean? Most of us have been in meetings and suddenly wondered "how did we get here" when one person seems to chase a topic and suddenly, the conversation follows "down the rabbit hole" and a half hour later everyone is worked up (or tuned out). Add elected officials who want to be responsive and want to make a difference ...quickly, add citizens in the context of a public meeting, throw in one of those high-strung community issues, and staying on track becomes a serious challenge.

It can happen at any time - in a staff meeting, a committee meeting, or in public meetings. Local elected officials and staff have a hard enough time

staying strategic, staying focused with so many different questions, issues, people coming at them. After all, it is your job to be accountable, available and responsive. Right? But does that mean for any topic for any person any time? Do you spend a lot of time in your meetings wondering "how did we get here?"

So take a pledge to work together to stay on track, respect your group's time together as a valuable resource (the same with the staff time, and the public's too). If you need training in managing meetings, managing priorities, being efficient and strategic there are many resources available, at NWCCOG, we would be happy to point you in the right direction.

Some questions to ask yourself or your group:

- Do we have permission to keep each other on topic (and call out rabbit holes before we all leap)?
- Is object of the discussion and the framework for decision made clear for every agenda item, either by a memo in packet, written on the agenda, or verbalized by the chair?
- Do we have a strategy like a "parking lot" for gathering questions or input for later focus, or is every new topic an impromptu top-priority agenda item?
- Have I prioritized what I want to accomplish, and communicated that to my peers? Do I know and understand what my peers would like to accomplish or what they value?
- Have we as a board or council done strategic planning lately and are we clear about balancing group priorities with individual priorities?

Snowmass Village "Leans In"

At a recent NWCCOG meeting, Alyssa Shenk, town board member from Snowmass Village mentioned a "Planapalooza." We caught up with her to learn more about Nashville based Town Planning & Urban Design Collaborative (TPUDC) LLCs' engagement effort. "We are the Aspen-Snowmass brand for visitors, so how do we carve out an identity for Snowmass?" asks Shenk, "we have to engage the visitor base as well as the locals."

With a small local population, thousands of devoted, regular visitors, and seasonal owners, the challenge of gathering input required some innovative thinking. TPUDC built www.plansnowmass.com, including a "what we've heard so far" section where viewers see previous comments, like a blog. The site urges visitors to "take a quick survey," and to pin their thoughts to an on-line map. The site even sports a photo of a "planner on duty" who can interact over

the website with citizens or call the phone number and give input to an actual person. Yes, operators are standing by!

In this day of social media this may not sound groundbreaking for a local government, but consider how modernizing the classic easel-sticky note process makes it possible to have a community conversation across time and distance.

The week-long Planapalooza kicks off on February 23rd with a "speed planning" session followed later in the week with a "Lets get technical" session. Shenk notes that another creative concept is a "central hub point open till 10 pm each day that week" and input booths in on-mountain restaurants. "



Click on the Photo to Contribute

Snowmass already has two citizen committees actively visioning. One called POSTR (Parks Open Space Trails and Recreation) whose plan was adopted by the Council in 2016. The other committee, CCP (Community Connectivity Plan) which focused on both pedestrians and automobiles, whose ambitious plan has not yet been adopted because town leaders wanted more buy-in, which is why Town Manager Clint Kinney urged the council to check in with stakeholders by updating the 2010 Comp plan.

"We live in this tiny town with so many visitors and not a lot of locals. I've been so impressed with how many have already come out for this, people who are not on town committees, people who I've never seen come out for anything before," said Shenk.

New claims payment system impacts Mountain Ride Medicaid transportation reimbursement timing



On March 1, 2017, The Colorado Department of Healthcare Policy and Financing (CDHPF) is launching a new Claims Payment System causing claims processing to be suspended during the transition from the old to the new systems.

Clients of the Mountain Ride Transportation Resource Center, who are considered non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) eligible in Medicaid (now called Health First Colorado), fills out a handy form, has the doctor sign it, and returns it to the

Mountain Ride resources team. Our team then enters the information into the Online Medicaid Claims system and once each week the claims are processed. CDHPF processes the information we sent, then sends us a check for all the claims we processed that week. We then assign payments for all who had trips during the week.

There will be a transition period between the old system and the new system that will necessitate a suspension in processing claims from from February 17, to March 1, 2017. Thus the Mountain Ride Transportation reimbursement payments will stop on February 20, and resume on March 6, 2017.

We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

If you have questions, please contact callcentersupport@nwccog.org or go to www.mtnride.org

Healthy work-sites, healthy employees, healthy economy

Rachel Lunney, Director of the Economic Development District, also serves as the regional coordinator of the Work Well Collaborative. This initiative works to create a healthy economy by creating healthy work-forces through the development of work-site



Work Well Collaboration Core Team
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wellness programs.

Since the beginning of this initiative (July 1, 2015), 74 employers across Region 12 have received kick-start funding or certification through Health Links Colorado; over 10,000 employees are being influenced by organizations committing to work-site wellness through Health Links across the five-County region. (Approx. 8,000 full-time, 1,500 part-time, 350 contract). We're proud of the work we're doing with our partners and look forward to an even more healthy future in coming years.

If you'd like more information about how to get your business "healthy", contact Rachel at

2017 NWCCOG COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE

Thursday, January 26, 2017

Full Council, EDD Board & NLF Board Meetings

Location: Colorado Mountain College Vail Valley, Room #258, Edwards

Time: 9:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Primary Agenda Items: Introduction of new members/representatives; elect executive committee & officers; adopt 2017 meeting schedule; annual Northwest Loan Fund (NLF) Board meeting; EDD Board meeting & election of officers.

Thursday, March 23, 2017

Full Council Meeting

Location: NWCCOG Office/Conference Call

Time: 10:00 a.m. - noon

Primary Agenda Items: Approval of final 2016 financials; program updates.

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Full Council & EDD Board Meeting

Location: North Branch Library, Blue River Room, Silverthorne

Time: 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Primary Agenda Items: Review/acceptance of the 2016 audit

Thursday, July 27, 2017

Full Council Meeting

Location: Community House, Grand Lake

Time: 10:00 a.m. - noon

Primary Agenda Items: Approval of 2018 dues; approval of 2017 budget revisions; discussion re: Annual Planning Meeting Agenda

Thursday, August 24, 2017

Full Council & EDD Board Annual Planning Meeting

Location: Airport Operations Center (AOC), Aspen

Time: 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Agenda Items: Strategic Planning for 2018

Thursday, October 26, 2017

Full Council Meeting

Location: NWCCOG Office/Conference Call

Time: 10:00 a.m. - noon

Primary Agenda Items: Review of draft 2018 budget

Thursday, December 7, 2017

Full Council, EDD Board & Foundation Board Meeting

Location: TBD - Summit County

Time: 10:00 a.m. - noon

Primary Agenda Items: 2017 budget revisions; approve 2018 budget; adopt 2018 meeting schedule; annual NWCCOG Foundation Board meeting.

Northwest Colorado Council of Governments

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN NWCCOG!