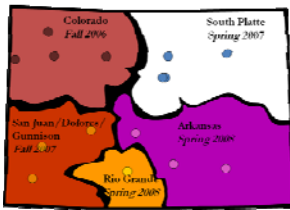


## Spotlight on the Colorado Water Quality Monitoring Council

### Colorado's Data Sharing Network - How to Foster Effective Information Exchange at the Watershed Level



Products of Colorado Water Quality Monitoring Council's Data Sharing Network are SWAPS. These are rotating, one-day events where participants exchange targeted, place-based information on their local monitoring and assessment activities, priorities, needs and concerns. Dots represent locations of specific one day SWAP events.

priorities, needs and concerns. The information, that is exchanged, is documented on a fact sheet, posted on the website and distributed to participants, adjacent watersheds, and state and regional decision makers. Also, on the ground monitoring collaborations are negotiated.

Each SWAP participant is categorized into "data generator", "data user", "both" or entities are lumped by common monitoring and assessment needs and concerns. These categories provide a communication strategy for the CWQMC to ask for financial and in-kind support, conduct "data nag updates" and market services. SWAPS are a cost effective voice for local efforts to be heard within the watershed, across watersheds, at a state level and for state level information to reach the local level.

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Effective action requires adequate information in the right place at the right time between the right audiences. The Colorado Water Quality Monitoring Council (CWQMC) (<http://www.coloradowaterquality.org/>) exists to strategically facilitate communication that progresses movement along the action continuum of data generation, sharing, translation to information and use. The purpose is to drive and guide watershed restoration and protection activities, policies and regulations in the most cost effective manner - so water is clean and available in sufficient amounts for all users.

A flagship communication product and service of the CWQMC's Data Sharing Network are called SWAPS. These SWAPS work in collaboration with two other CWQMC services, a statewide interactive map and a STORET database. SWAPS are targeted, place-based, local level, one-day events where participants exchange or "swap" their monitoring and assessment activities,



The Colorado Water Quality Monitoring Council hosted a SWAP in the Rio Grande Basin during the spring of 2008 where participants shared their water monitoring needs and challenges in an attempt to identify monitoring gaps and possibilities for increasing monitoring efficiency throughout the watershed. *(Photograph by Chris Burns, CHA, Inc.)*