

STATE OF COLORADO

Colorado Water Conservation Board Department of Natural Resources

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TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

FROM: Kevin Houck, P.E., Chief
Watershed & Flood Protection Section

DATE: January 11, 2012

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item 13**
January 23-24, 2012 Board Meeting
Watershed & Flood Protection Section – Alamosa Levee Update

John W. Hickenlooper
Governor

Mike King
DNR Executive Director

Jennifer L. Gimbel
CWCB Director

Background

The Corps of Engineers, in partnership with the City of Alamosa, constructed a levee within the City to protect significant areas from flooding by the Rio Grande. This levee, completed in 1998 along the south bank of the river, was built to FEMA requirements, including three feet of freeboard above the 100-year flood profile. As such, FEMA regulatory floodplain mapping currently shows lands on the south side of the river as being protected by the levee. Following an inspection in September 2008, the Corps of Engineers (Corps) rated the levee as "unacceptable" for a number of reasons including vegetative growth, encroachments, and substandard maintenance. Follow-up inspections indicate that problems discovered during the 2008 inspection still remain.

Due to issues raised during recent inspections, CWCB staff is concerned about the levee and its ability to perform as intended during a major flood event. The CWCB Board expressed its support during the July 2011 meeting in Walden to continue to investigate the situation and determine the adequacy of the floodplain mapping as it relates to meaningful risk identification to the public.

Staff, in partnership with local officials and FEMA, initiated a floodplain map update for the San Luis watershed. It should be noted that the watershed labeled as "San Luis" by FEMA includes the Rio Grande within the City of Alamosa. This map update will include stakeholder participation and will include an investigation into the protection provided by the levee. Staff is also working with Anderson Consulting Engineers to develop a detailed assessment of the levee and to determine what needs exist for certification of the levee. The CWCB is performing this assessment to assist the community, but the actual certification will be a local responsibility.

Staff will update the board on the status of the map project, the levee needs assessment, and the plan for public outreach.

Staff Recommendation

This is an informational item and staff is not requesting board action.