

STATE OF COLORADO

Colorado Water Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources

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TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

FROM: Chris Sturm, Stream Restoration Coordinator

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item 12, October 21, 2013 Special Board Meeting, Watershed and Flood Protection Section, Colorado Stream Team Update**

John W. Hickenlooper
Governor

Mike King
DNR Executive Director

James Eklund
CWCB Director

Staff Recommendation

This is an informational item, and staff is not requesting Board action.

Background

The Stream Team (Team) evolved from the Debris Removal Team, which was formed shortly after the September 2013 floods. The latter was led by FEMA. FEMA initiated the formation of the Team, but State and Federal officials determined that it would be best led by the State. CWCB staff is currently leading the Team. Team members include staff from federal agencies (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, FEMA, NRCS, Federal Highway Administration), state agencies (CWCB, DWR, CPW, Office of Emergency Management, CDOT, WQCD), and local governments (city and county). The Team is actively meeting with local communities. The Team also conducts a weekly conference call on Friday mornings.

Discussion

The Stream Team is assembled to help communities strategize the rehabilitation of stream channels. The members of the team can advise on all aspects of the rehabilitation process including:

- Assembling local stream coalitions
- Permitting
- Technical Assistance
- Funding
- Project Design, Prioritization, Implementation

The Team does not have authority to reconfigure stream channels. It will not be putting the streams into their historic configurations. Stream alignment decisions should ultimately be made by local communities and affected land owners.

The Team is advocating master planning/conceptual design for river alignments, especially those with significant damage. The landowner is ultimately responsible for the river, and they should be cognizant of the fact that discrete fixes do have the potential to damage upstream and downstream channel (property) owners. The Team is willing to work with those interested in a holistic approach to restoration, but the Team's only regulatory authority is through permitting (USACE) and water rights issues (DWR).