



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 and Flood Protection Section

DATE: September 4, 2015

AGENDA ITEM #15: Emergency Watershed Protection Phase II Update

Background:

The State of Colorado, through the Colorado Water Conservation Board, is preparing to distribute \$47.4 million of federal funds through Phase II of the Emergency Watershed Protection Program. These funds, administered federally by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), have been allocated to the State of Colorado for the purposes of stream and watershed restoration, debris removal, and other related activities in the areas affected by the September 2013 flood.

The first step of this program is for CWCB and NRCS to identify and scope projects to be funded under this program. This is done through the Damage Survey Report process with input from watershed coalitions and local governments. The Damage Survey Report will determine Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) eligibility, document damages caused by the flood, and develop treatment alternatives and cost. The process will also determine structures, properties, and other items that may be at risk if the project is not done along with their value. This information will be used to calculate the benefit/cost ratio of the proposed treatment. The DSR process will also document any environmental and cultural effects within the project area and minimize impact to those areas. All EWP work must reduce threats of life and property. It must be economically and environmentally defensible and sound from an engineering standpoint. If a DSR does not meet the eligibility criteria for EWP, work will not proceed through this program.

All watershed coalitions were asked to provide ranked projects that are eligible under the EWP program, and these rankings have been received. The NRCS and CWCB are currently preparing Damage Survey Reports based on these rankings, with reports from the highest priority projects expected to be complete by the end of September. Following this, additional Damage Survey Reports will be prepared until all the funds are allocated. Depending on the number of projects, this process could extend through the end of November.

A Technical Agreement (TA) has been signed with NRCS and CWCB which allocates a portion of the EWP funds to be utilized to assist with the design process. CWCB is in the process of hiring a team of specialists to work through the design process. Also, these funds can be utilized by a “local” sponsor to assist with construction design. Local sponsors are entities, towns, counties, Watershed Coalitions,



or others that meet the CWCB requirements. Local sponsors will sign an agreement with CWCB to complete this work.

When the project area has all of the necessary designs, permits, and other requirements met, a Financial Agreement (FA) or construction agreement will be signed between the CWCB and the NRCS. This will allocate the funds for the project construction. EWP funds may bear up to 75 percent of the construction cost. The State, through an intergovernmental agreement with the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, will contribute 12.5 percent from the Disaster Emergency Fund. The remaining 12.5 percent will need to be covered by the local sponsor or from other sources.

It will be the responsibility of the Watershed Coalition and Coordinator to obtain access permission from all landowners where EWP assessments, and ultimately construction, will take place. Landowner consent is required to proceed with any project work. If a landowner in a project area does not want work completed on his/her property, that work will not be done.

Project design will be underway for the highest priority reaches by Fall 2015 with construction generally anticipated to begin in Spring 2016. Funding for proposed projects is less than declared unmet needs for eligible projects in the flood-affected area, so not all reaches identified in the watershed master plans will be funded.

Staff recommendation:

This is an informational item and no board action is requested.

