



COLORADO

Colorado Water Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources

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TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

FROM: Thuy Patton
Watershed and Flood Protection Section

DATE: November 4, 2015

AGENDA ITEM #12: Colorado Hazard Mapping Program Overview

Background:

Colorado has taken significant steps toward supporting local communities to become more resilient with the creation of a new State Hazard Mapping Program, which aims to provide more accurate representations of natural hazard risks. Shortly after the September 2013 flood disaster, the newly created Colorado Recovery Office helped the State of Colorado pass Senate Bill 15-245. This Bill created the Colorado Hazard Mapping Program and set up a funding source to map natural hazards in areas most likely to be affected by future flooding, erosion, and debris flow events. This is intended to be a 3-year program, with the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) as the lead agency coordinating these updates.

Phase I of this Program involves preparing updated flood hazard information for the streams most affected by the September 2013 flood event. Flood hazard area limits reflecting changed conditions are being developed for more than 500 stream miles and across two watersheds totaling almost 5,000 square miles - the largest floodplain mapping effort ever to be undertaken in the State of Colorado. Results will be used to help community leaders assess risk and identify mitigation opportunities in their community. The updated information is also intended to eventually be used to update more than 250 Flood Insurance Rate Maps for 39 counties, communities and other entities along the Front Range north of Denver. Phase I also includes establishing technical standards for mapping Fluvial Hazard Zones and regulatory guidance for communities and developing debris flow models in high risk areas within the State. The next phase of the program will include updating floodplain maps in those counties that currently have not been updated by FEMA, and conducting pilot projects for debris flow and fluvial hazard zone mapping.

This new program supports FEMA's Risk MAP vision of collaboration, provides leverage for additional funding from other agencies including FEMA, and provides a nexus for the success of the Risk MAP program in Colorado.

Staff recommendation:

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

