



**COLORADO**

**Colorado Water  
Conservation Board**

Department of Natural Resources

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**TO:** Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

**FROM:** Stephanie DiBetitto, Community Assistance Program Coordinator  
Watershed and Flood Protection Section

**DATE:** July 20, 2017

**AGENDA ITEM #25: Fluvial Hazard Mapping**

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**Background:** Approximately half of the private structure damages and losses experienced in the 2013 flood were located outside of the regulatory floodplain designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Flood-related risks associated with erosion (fluvial), deposition, degradation, lateral migration, and avulsion created these disastrous outcomes, which may occur again in future flood events. Thus, the identification of fluvial hazard zones has become a high priority as Colorado recovers from the September 2013 floods and transitions toward long-term river corridor planning. Planning for erosion hazards is an essential component of effective river corridor management and the prevention of future flood damages. Broadly defined, the Fluvial Hazard Zone (FHZ) is the area a stream has occupied in recent history, could occupy, or could physically influence as it stores and transports sediment and debris during flood events.

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 (CHAMP) 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 CWCB as the lead agency coordinating these updates.

The fluvial hazard mapping portion of CHAMP is now underway and the CWCB is working to provide technical standards, conduct studies for communities requesting mapping, and provide regulatory guidance for communities interested in voluntarily adopting the map products produced. The objective of a mapped FHZs is to identify lands most vulnerable to fluvial hazards in the near term. Communities will be provided with maps and a model land use code at project close out and will be encouraged to voluntarily adopt the land use code to regulate development in areas susceptible to fluvial hazards.

**Staff recommendation:**

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

