



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

DATE: July 5, 2017

AGENDA ITEM: 8 - 2013 Flood Recovery - Emergency Watershed Protection Program Update

Background and Discussion:

The CWCB continues to administer various programs to address river and watershed concerns associated with the 2013 floods. These include the Emergency Watershed Protection Program - or EWP - an NRCS-funded program managed by CWCB, and the Colorado Hazard Mapping Program authorized by Senate Bill 15-245. Both programs have been underway since 2015 and are scheduled to be complete by June 2018 or earlier.

The Emergency Watershed Protection program continues to make steady progress. All financial agreements between the State and the NRCS have been signed, and funds have been obligated for all projects that will be moving forward. Numerous projects are currently being implemented, with some already completed and many others already nearing completion. A status of the projects within the program and numerous technical documents can be found on the program website, www.coloradoewp.com. Project sponsors and other grant recipients are encouraged to view the pages on this website as they answer many of the frequently asked questions.

Under the program timeline, all projects must meet the implementation deadline established by the NRCS of January 2018. In total, 70 projects with a total implementation value of approximately \$60 million have been funded in the flood-affected area. It is important to note that by NRCS rules, once an implementation agreement is in place, project sponsors have 220 calendar days to complete the construction, unless an extension is applied for and received. As of mid-June, 12 projects with a total value of \$8.3 million are fully complete and 29 additional projects have already started construction. The remaining projects will start construction no later than this fall.

Watershed recovery for the 2013 flood recovery is a complex, coordinated effort involving numerous funding sources, including the NRCS, HUD's disaster recovery program (known as Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery or CDBG-DR), and Federal Highway Administration federal programs. In addition, many projects will involve various state, local, and private funding sources. Each of these programs have their own timelines and regulations.

Project delays associated with items outside of the sponsor's control are factored into the decision by the NRCS to grant extensions. These may include such things as high flows during runoff season, project shutdowns due to raptor nesting, and high flows in the Big Thompson Canyon due to Bureau of Reclamation infrastructure maintenance work. Regardless of these



factors, it is essential to demonstrate sufficient progress toward project completion when a request for an extension is made.

The CWCB staff would like to thank the NRCS, local watershed coalitions, other State partner agencies, and the local sponsors for their amazing work and partnership and for their patience throughout the process. We are confident that our efforts will result in more resilient and lasting solutions as a result of this coordination and leveraging of efforts.

The presentation will focus on successes to date, lessons learned, and funding sources utilized and will provide a comprehensive description of the status of the program.

Staff recommendation:

This is an informational item only. No Board action is required.

