



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: August 31, 2018

AGENDA ITEM: Agenda Item11, 2013 Flood 5-Year Anniversary

Background:

September 2018 marks the five-year anniversary of the costliest natural disaster in Colorado state history. This disaster came in the form of a regional flood along Colorado's Front Range and northeastern plains.

The flood was caused by a long-duration subtropical rainfall event that began on September 9, 2013 and lasted over a week. The peak rainfall recorded during this event was 19 inches, which fell in Boulder County. Ten people were killed as a result of this event, making it the deadliest flood in Colorado since 1976. While damage estimates vary wildly (due to differences in the definition of "damages"), it is generally accepted that over \$4 billion (2013 dollars) of damages occurred as a result of the event. This level of damages exceeds all previous disasters including the 1965 floods through Colorado, the 1921 Pueblo Flood, and the 1976 Big Thompson Flood, even when those events are adjusted for inflation.

The water community was particularly hard hit, with a large number of structures impacted by this event. Hundreds of miles of roads became impassable. Over 16,000 homes were damaged, with 1,900 destroyed. In total, eighteen counties were declared disaster areas and became eligible for federal recovery assistance.

In the five years since the event occurred, the CWCB has been remarkably active in recovery activities to restore the resilience of the flood-affected communities. Some of these activities include:

- Zero-interest loans to water providers impacted by the event
- Partnering with the NRCS to administer the \$60M Emergency Watershed Protection Phase II Program
- Implementing the Colorado Hazard Mapping Program (CHAMP) (SB 15-245) which, among other things, reevaluates the majority of floodplains throughout the flood-affected areas in northern Colorado
- Participation on the Colorado Resilience Working Group and chairing it's Watersheds and Natural Resources Sector



- Partnering with other state departments, notably Departments of Public Safety, Local Affairs, and Transportation in recovery activities
- Creation of numerous watershed coalitions made up of local stakeholders charged with identifying and prioritizing recovery activities within their watersheds through the creation of watershed master plans partially funded by state dollars
- Participating in the Long-Term Stream Recovery Steering Committee (often referred to as the "Stream Team") headed by the Governor's Office
- Administering SB 14-179 program providing state-funded recovery grants
- Ongoing technical assistance throughout the flood-affected areas

Staff will provide a presentation showcasing the work the agency has done over the past five years, including new ways of doing things, lessons learned, and success stories. In addition, staff will provide to the board a copy of "Colorado Watershed Flood Recovery", a 20-page booklet prepared for the 5-year anniversary.

Staff recommendation:

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

