Final Report
WALDO Recovery

GRANTEE: Coalition for the Upper South Platte

PRIMARY CONTACT: Carol Ekarius

ADDRESS: Box 726, Lake George, CO 80827

PHONE: 719-748-0033

PROJECT NAME: Waldo Fire WARSSS Implementation

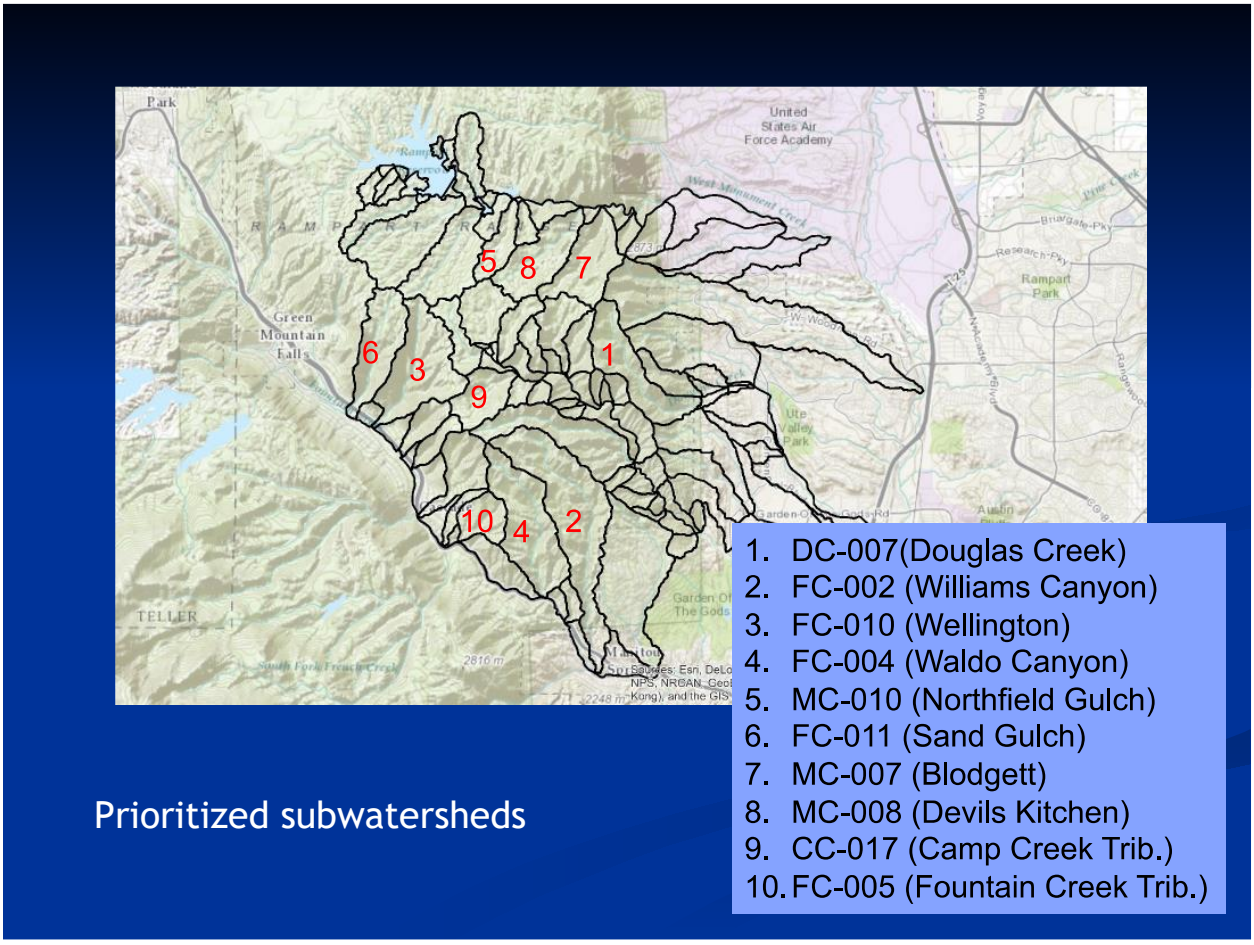
AMOUNT REQUESTED: $100,000

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Waldo Canyon Fire burned 18,247 acres over 19 days in June and July. Though most of the fire burned on National Forest System Lands, the post-fire flooding impacts have the potential to cause hundreds of millions or billions of dollars of damage downstream.

CUSP contracted with Dave Rosgen of Wildland Hydrology to perform a assessment, develop a plan, and implement a plan for post-fire restoration in the Waldo. The Waldo WARSSS with the Pike National Forest and the Waldo Recovery Committee (made of El Paso County, the Cities of Colorado Springs and Manitou, Colorado Springs Utilities, Regional Building, CDOT, and other stakeholders), and funded by the Pike, the Waldo Recovery Committee members, and CWCB,This assessment is the Watershed Assessment for River Stability and Sediment Supply or WARSSS. The WARSSS effort has yielded lessons that we will now apply to the Waldo fire. Rosgen and a crew of experts are collecting data for a comparable assessment and planning process across the Waldo fire. This project will provide a strategic path forward by early spring, 2013, so that the partners involved in the project, including the Pike National Forest, NRCS, City of Colorado Springs, City of Manitou Springs, Colorado Springs Utilites, El Paso County,

CDOT, and others. The WARSSS identified top priority subwatersheds for work based on hydrology, potential sediment movement and flood flows, and values at risk (identified by a separate committee of community experts). The WARSSS also identified potential solutions and opportunities for implementation using natural channel design and approaches developed by Wildland, CUSP, and the USFS in the Hayman Fire Trail Creek Restoration Project.



Beginning in early spring, 2013, CUSP and various partners began implementing solutions in subwatersheds.

This funding will provide support and matching funds to federal grants to continue implementing rehab strategies, as discussed below.

OBJECTIVE:
The primary objects are to: 1.) Reduce flooding and debris flows, and mitigate the impacts of floods that do occur; 2.) Hasten ecological restoration and return hydrologic function to channels and drainages.

TASK ACCOMPLISHMENTS

TASK 1 – Implement Hand Treatments in North Douglas (priority drainage 1)

CUSP and our partners completed handwork, associated with drainage construction in North Douglas, including 1.) revegetating ~40 acres of alluvial fans with both grasses and willows in areas that are appropriate based on depth to groundwater, 2.) installation of 12000 feet of log erosion barriers or straw wattles on hillslopes, and 3.) seed and mulch ~ 30 acres of hillslopes in area of erosion barriers/wattles.

TASK 2 – Implement Sediment Catchments and Channel Stabilization in Wellington (priority drainage 3)

We have implemented most of the catchments and channel stabilzation that were intended in the top priority watersheds, however we have not yet completed them in this drainage, so CWCB funds will provide critical non-federal match to complete outstanding. The inundation study shows 483 acres of flood zone, including Manitou Springs, below Wellington.

We completed construction/redevelopment of three sediment catchments and stabilization on at least 300 feet of channel. We also completed 8,000 linear feet of log erosion barriers and seeding on 17 acres.

TASK 3 –Facilitating and Coordinating Projects Across Landscape and Reporting

CUSP facilitated project oversite of contractors and staff, and worked with partners. After the first of the year in 2015 we will be creating a comprehensive report of Waldo related activities that will be shared with all partners and funders.

Funding to match and support these outcomes came from private landowners, CDPHE 319, and the City of Colorado Springs.