



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 Item10, Lower Boulder Creek Floodway Update

Background:

Staff presented a floodplain designation item at the July 2018 meeting which included a proposed floodway for Boulder Creek from Kenosha Rd/115th Street to the Weld County Line. As discussed during that item, this reach is in draft status as part of the Colorado Hazard Mapping Program (CHAMP) prepared by CWCB and its contractor. Despite the draft status, Boulder County was pursuing a floodplain designation for all reaches prepared during the CHAMP program so that they could begin regulating to what they perceived as "Best Available Information".

In the end, all reaches in Boulder County were designated at the July 2018 meeting with the exception of the Boulder Creek Floodway. The reason this reach was not recommended by staff for board designation is that it utilizes a newer two-dimensional modeling process that has unproven accuracy when delineating floodways. While it is generally accepted by the engineering community that two-dimensional models provide very accurate floodplain information, the floodway delineation process remains full of questions at the national level. CWCB staff do not have the technical resources to review this work and evaluate its technical sufficiency.

Compounding this technical issue is the fact that this reach has very controversial political issues surrounding it as well. This is simply a subject of visibility; the designation process has always been intended to address technical adequacy without concern for economic, social, or political factors.

The staff recommendation to the Board at the July 2018 meeting was to delay designation for this reach until it could be reviewed by FEMA to be technically sound since CWCB staff is unable to do so. Since the meeting, a review was completed by FEMA with comments provided to the mapping consultant. As of the date of this memo, CWCB's consultant, AECOM, has been actively working to address the comments provided by FEMA. According to AECOM, the hope is to wrap up the comment responses to FEMA's satisfaction prior to the date of the board meeting. They further explain that the floodway mapping along this reach



varies little from that presented at the July 2018 meeting due to the comment and response process.

Staff recommendation:

Because this remains a work in progress, a final staff recommendation is not provided here. The Board should be aware that it will be staff's intent to recommend designation of this reach if FEMA's review comments are adequately addressed between the date of this memo and the board meeting as expected. A discussion with recommendation will be provided at the board meeting.

