

LTWRC Meeting - March 9, 2015

Deirdre will provide corrections to the February minutes.

EWP Grant – Sam Adams

Colorado will be receiving an Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) grant in the amount of \$56.9 million through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). \$47.4 million will go directly to on-the-ground implementation projects in Larimer, Weld, Boulder, and El Paso Counties.

The program requires a sponsor who will be the point of contact to landowners. This sponsor must be a government or quasi-government entity that has taxing and condemnation authority, although they have never condemned land. There are a lot of agencies that are interested in sponsoring the program. There can also be a secondary sponsor.

NRCS will only provide assistance for measures that:

- Reduce threats to life or property from a watershed impairment, including sediment and debris removal.
- Provide protection from additional flooding or soil erosion by retarding runoff.
- Remove debris deposited by a natural disaster that would affect runoff or erosion.
- Restore the hydraulic capacity to the natural environment to the maximum extent practical based upon pre-event conditions.
- Are economically, socially, and environmentally defensible and technically sound.

The EWP program funds may not be used to:

- Provide assistance on any Federal lands (including Federal-aid highways), with some exceptions.
- Provide recovery assistance for structural measures to a site more than twice in any 10-year period.
- Solve watershed or natural problems that existed prior to a natural disaster.
- Repair, rebuild, or maintain public or private transportation facilities
- Increase the pre-disaster capacity of a channel by constructing a new channel, enlarging the old channel, or relocating the stream. Sediment and debris removal is not considered new construction.
- Repair landscaping exclusively for aesthetic purposes.
- Drill or modify wells, construct pipelines, install irrigation equipment, or purchase portable equipment.

The EWP program funds may not be used to reimburse project sponsors for work performed before a document obligating funds has been signed by the project sponsor and NRCS. It is anticipated that the document will be signed within two weeks.

Damage Survey Reports (DSR) will be developed over the next couple of months to identify and prioritize how and when projects will be done. The old DSRs will be reviewed and new ones will be created based on work that has been completed. The DSR priorities will be tied to the master plan and must be completed within thirty days. Landowners will be contacted by the sponsor to ask if they want to participate in the program and then the engineering design will be contracted. It is expected that

implementation will begin in the fall. Full biological and cultural assessments are required. The EWP funds must be spent in three years.

More information can be found at the NRCS website:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/ewp/>

John Andrews is coordinator of the EWP program. The Forest service is on the task force.

The NRCS had a clock start 3 days after the flood, but this clock starts anew after the contract is signed. Everything has expired from the old agreement.

All of the paperwork needs to be established and signed up front before work can be done. COCO will help record volunteer services through their systems

The survey will be on the ground, not just working from the master plan. Deirdre suggested coordination with conservation corps and forest service to assess debris. Sam will consult with John Andrews on these questions. EWP money can not be spent on federal property.

Gordon suggests a high ranking forest service representative get involved in the next meeting.

Projects

Larimer County is planning to reroute the river through the bridge at the Sherman property.

Boulder is replacing the bridge at CR 23. The county will work on the river near the bridge, but the coalition wants to extend that work further.

Gordon suggested that work to reinforce the bank at the property with the 40 foot silo SW of Berthoud would be a good demonstration project for the CWCB and CDBG-DR money.

Larry said that the Army Corps of Engineers might be working on some of the projects. They have money available for engineering. We should follow up with them so were not duplicating efforts and money on these projects.

The 83rd Street Bridge is a FEMA- funded project. There are sediment problems with the diversions. Before the flood, there was a sand gate that helped with this problem. The county is holding a meeting about the bridge in this room on March 10.

National Disaster Resiliency Competition Grant

Colorado is in the running for the \$820 million National Disaster Resiliency Competition grant. This program was established to address unmet needs in presidentially declared disaster areas. 47 states are competing for the funds, where the maximum grant is \$500 million. Naren Tayal of FEMA has reviewed the master plans of the affected watersheds and put the unmet needs into a spreadsheet to submit with the grant request. There is a public meeting at the Ranch in Loveland on March 18th at 6:00 p.m. or you can participate in the webinar on the 18th at 2:00 p.m. The program is managed by the Colorado Recovery Office. For more information visit the Colorado United website.

Phase 1 - document unmet needs and future vulnerability

Phase 2 – implement specific projects

Ag Update

The Ag survey was sent to 66 applicants for feedback. 18 responses were received. Many participants complained that there were too many forms and surprises. The point person for the Department of Agriculture is no longer working there. Landowner names were not allowed to be shared, so farmers were on their own to work with the grants. DOLA may be taking over the Ag grants. FEMA will check if DOLA is taking it on. Terry suggested working with Larimer county Ag extension.

The Conservation District received a small weed grant from state. There will be 4 more workshops between now and May. The grant allows a cost-share on seed. The first grant was turned down. The Department of Ag has allotted \$500k for the program for the entire state. Terry will put together something about the nine diversion ditches that are spreading the weeds. This issue can be in the EWP needs assessment

Conservation Corps

Maelly is working on the NEG grant for the Larimer County Conservation Corps. The Conservation District has to provide a paid employee to be on site at all times. 72% of the District Conservation Tech salary is paid by state, the District must make up the difference. This year re-vegetation will be the focus.

Larimer County

The coalition needs to work together with the county so both parties aren't competing for funding on similar projects. Terry Gilbert is creating a database that will utilize GIS systems within Larimer County including coordination of funding. The county is working on a master plan to incorporate how all of the master plans can work together and tie in to planning. They are considering hiring a coordinator to work with all of the coalitions. Details of projects would go into the database including CDOT work and LTRG volunteer work.

Unmet needs and project lists will need to be updated. Larimer County is trying to get from the CDBG-DR 12.5% of the money it has spent on inspection for structures, removing houses and hazards, and repairs to roads and bridges. They have already put in applications for new projects under round two including property acquisitions. Unmet needs and project lists need to be updated. Terry Gilbert can discuss building information and variances at one of the meetings.

The long term recovery group needs to reengage with landowners because there are new programs available.

A stream monitoring system has been ordered for the Big Thompson and North Fork, but not for the Little Thompson.

Slash piles are being burned by the forest service in Big Elk Meadows and Pinewood Springs. There is great concern about carbon getting into the river. Residents spoke to the county commissioners about the problem. This is another reason why we need a forest service representative at the coalition meetings. FEMA will make the contact.

Financial Report

Currently the coalition has no debt, but only has \$348.63 in the bank. However, Karla will be writing grants, so the account may soon have a negative balance. We are fortunate that TetraTech has provided a lot of free service. Peggy has not charged the coalition for writing the grants.

Coalitions and Collaboratives (COCO)

Carol can come to talk to the coalition about the 501c3. COCO offers a menu of services. They will be the employer of record for the Watershed Coordinator and Assistant, but the coalition will be giving direction and performance review. COCO will also help with grants and auditing. Incorporation of the LTWRC should be considered under the auspices of COCO.