

LITTLE THOMPSON RIVER JOURNAL – Issue 5, March 18, 2014

SAVE THE DATE-WED. APRIL 16 AT 7PM

The next public meeting of the Little Thompson Watershed Restoration Coalition has been set for Wednesday, April 16, 7 p.m., at the Berthoud Community Center. The consultant we plan to hire will describe the Master Planning process and how you will need to be involved. We will also review spring runoff preparation, update you on debris removal progress and pass along information on any programs that might help your recovery efforts.

BIG ELK MEADOW DAMS – PUBLIC MEETING – SAT. MARCH 29 FROM 3-5PM

Public Meeting on the Big Elk Meadows Dams on the Little Thompson River and the Re-Construction of the Dams after the September 2013 Flooding

Saturday March 29 from 3-5 PM at Rogers Hall, Lyons
Next to the Old Stone Church on High Street

Members of the state CO Division of Water Resources, Dam Safety Branch (DSB) will report preliminary findings of their ongoing study of the rainfall and resulting flooding, including the effects of the failure of dams in the Big Elk Meadows (BEM) sub-division on the Little Thompson River. They will provide a status update on the reconstruction of the dams.

All interested parties, neighbors, property owners and others are invited to attend, ask questions, make comments, and/or present information, data, or photographs.

Representatives of Larimer County Emergency Management, Larimer County Engineering, Larimer County Community Development, Boulder County Land Use Department, FEMA, Colorado Water Conservation Floodplain Management Program, and representatives of the BEM Homeowners Association and their engineer, will be on site to answer questions.

A primary goal of this meeting is to provide a forum for communication and information about the flooding along the Little Thompson River, and the Colorado Dam Safety Branch's regulatory role in the re-construction of the dams at Big Elk Meadows.

For more information, contact dnr_coloradods@state.co.us
Want to help? Contact GailHoag2010@gmail.com

RIVER MASTER PLAN

The coalition has issued a Request For Proposals (RFP) and has secured funds to hire a river restoration consultant to help the landowners develop a master plan for the Little Thompson Watershed. Proposals will be reviewed by volunteers from the technical and resource committees and expert advisors. The selection will be announced on April 1. To see the RFP, go to ltwrc.org and click "Documents." The company selected will speak to the Coalition at its Wed. April 16 meeting at 7pm at the Berthoud Community Center.

DEBRIS PICK-UP EXPANDED FOR ALL THREE COUNTIES

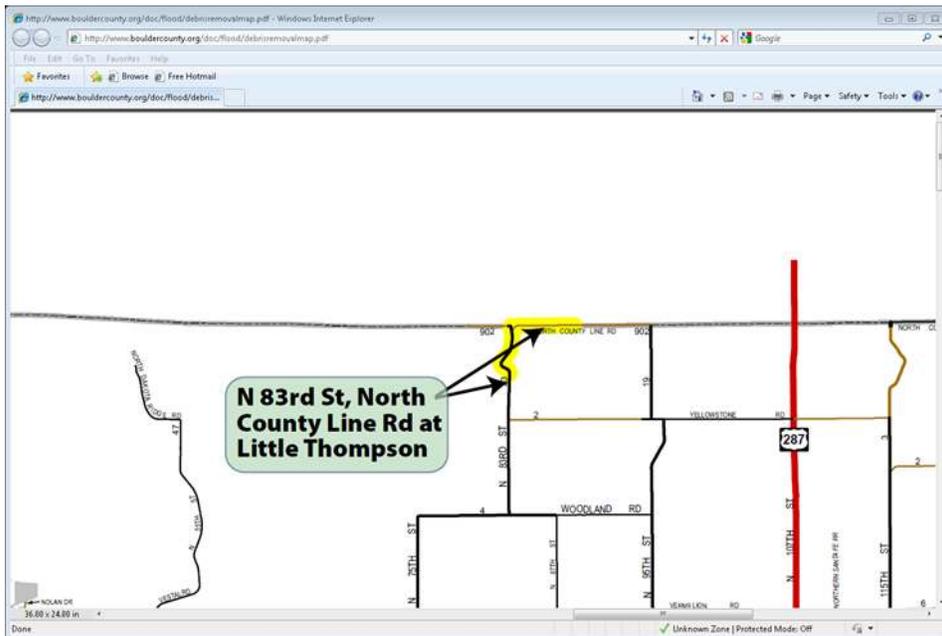
Boulder, Larimer and Weld Counties have received FEMA funding to remove debris from the Little Thompson River if that debris is considered a risk to public health and safety. This funding is a departure from normal FEMA guidelines and is a strong statement about the risk of further flooding in the spring. County employees from each county are scouting the river at this time and debris removal will begin shortly. If debris along your stretch of the river is selected for removal, please let us know at info@ltwrc.org. We will also be working with the counties to get this information. If they DON'T select debris along your stretch of the river, the LTWRC will work with you to have the debris removed by our volunteer organizations.

ROADSIDE DEBRIS PICK-UP EXTENDED

Boulder County is extending its right-of-way debris clean up program for hardest hit flood areas. More information at:

<http://www.bouldercounty.org/flood/health/pages/debris.aspx>

They may be able to pick up from outside the yellow area if you call and ask them. (such as farther west on North County Line) It has to be along a county road on the Boulder County side to be eligible for pick up. The neighbors in yellow don't necessarily know others might put debris there. If you put stuff in front of someone else's house, you'd want to make sure it was within the road right-of-way and if it's a lot, you may want to call someone in the yellow area that you know and give them a heads up before you put too much out there. Maybe there is a willing property owner who'd be ok with folks putting stuff in front of their property. Make sure to fill out the form on the website above to note when and where you're leaving it. It needs to be 3 feet away from the pavement but not more than about 8 feet or the truck can't reach it.



Larimer County will continue its right-of-way debris clean-up program for an additional six months as funding allows thru the Colorado State Office of Emergency Management has and the FEMA right-of-way debris removal program.

To schedule a debris pick up, please call the **Debris Hotline at 970-498-7140**.

Debris questions can be directed to Lori Hodges at **lrhodges@larimer.org**.

Larimer County and its hired debris removal contractor, TFR Enterprises, are currently picking up ELIGIBLE flood debris from the county maintained right-of-ways only, per FEMA regulations. This FEMA program is for residential private property owners who are removing debris from their property themselves, or with the assistance of volunteers and not paid contractors. In accordance with the FEMA guidelines, flood qualified debris does NOT include unimproved land, farm and ranch land, and commercial property.

Weld County plans weren't available to us at time of publication.

DEBRIS SPOTTING

Last week a coalition team met with a Larimer County official to inspect approximately four miles of river that experienced heavy damage in the vicinity of Stagecoach Trail on the upper reaches of the river. They documented potential hazards, materials that can be used for restoration, high water marks, sedimentation, and erosion using photographs and GPS coordinates. You can see photos from that excursion on our facebook page, **<https://www.facebook.com/groups/LTWRC/>**. Look for the posting made on March 17. Another team will be doing the same thing this week on a stretch of river in Boulder County.

TAX BREAK FOR FLOOD VICTIMS GAINS SUPPORT [LYONS RECORDER, 3-13-14]

A bill to reimburse homeowners for property taxes paid on property destroyed during the September floods passed the House Finance Committee this afternoon. The committee vote was 11-1. HB14-1001, sponsored by Rep. Jonathan Singer (D-Longmont), was recommended by the bipartisan Flood Disaster Study Committee. It requires county assessors to inspect and compile a list of all destroyed properties throughout their county and for the state treasurer to reimburse property owners based on their tax liability. "I originally thought of calling this bill, 'if you can't find it, you can't tax it,'" Rep. Singer said. "After visiting with property owners and seeing firsthand the damage caused by the floods, it honestly just didn't make sense for these people to pay taxes on property that no longer exists." After today's vote, the bill moves to the House Appropriations Committee.

DID SOMEONE SAY, TAXES? — CPAS WANTED

With tax deadlines approaching, many of us have questions about how to account for flood-related losses. The coalition is looking for volunteers to put on a tax workshop to answer questions such as:

- Are the Counties adjusting property value assessments for 2013 (payable in 2014)?
- How do I quantify losses for income taxes?
- When do I have to claim any losses?
- If I don't have the information I need, should I file an extension? Or should I ignore the losses and file an amendment later? What are the implications?
- What if I've applied for assistance from FEMA or other agencies?

- What if I eventually sell my property?
- What if my property is condemned?
- It may be years before I know if my property is now in the 100-year floodplain. How will that affect my tax-related losses?

And so on. If you're a CPA, or you know a tax expert who would be willing to share their knowledge with a group of interested members—or even better, if you know of any presentations that are already scheduled nearby—let us know, and we'll get the word out. Contact info@LTWRC.org.

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLES ARE REPEATED FROM THE LAST ISSUE

DEBRIS REMOVAL BY VOLUNTEERS

There are two action steps needed from all property owners along the LTR. We've had a good response, but if you haven't done so already, please do the following:

1. Please count the number of downed trees, as well as large or hazardous items of debris, in the river or within the flood-prone area of your property. As a rule of thumb, count any item larger than one person can drag or carry that is below the expected high water line for spring runoff. You can report this information (along with details about the location of your property) to info@LTWRC.org. You can also estimate the size of debris piles that should be removed.
2. Please print and sign the permission form. You can also find the form online at <http://www.ltwrc.org/page32.html>.

Please fax completed forms to 877-495-9157
 OR
 Scan completed form and email to info@ltwrc.org
 OR
 Mail to: Big T CD/LTWRC
 P.O. Box 441
 Berthoud, CO 80513

These two steps are critical to preparations for spring runoff, for your own safety and the safety of your neighbors. The information you provide will help us determine where to deploy equipment and volunteers as effectively as possible.

Teams of volunteers and equipment are already hard at work removing potentially hazardous items from the river and flood-prone areas below the estimated spring high-water line (in most areas this will be 3 to 4 feet above base flow). Whenever possible, trash will be taken to the nearest pickup point; small woody and vegetative material will be taken to the nearest chipping site or left in a designated spot on your property, if you wish; and large trees and root wads will be placed beyond the water's reach, where directed by property owners, for later use in stream restoration.

Be prepared for the teams when they arrive:

- Clear and mark a path for ingress and egress for pedestrians, vehicles, and backhoes.

- Mark utility lines, septic systems, and other infrastructure so it isn't damaged accidentally.
- Indicate where you want stream restoration materials to be stored.
- If you indicated on your permission form that you must be present, then be sure to check your email and the website, <http://www.ltwrc.org>, frequently for updates. If you aren't there when the teams move through, your property will be skipped!
- Keep track of your own related time, travel, and expenses, and report them to info@ltwrc.org. Your work counts towards matching funds that are required for many grants, and some of it may be reimbursable.

Do you have equipment or vehicles that can be used during clean-up?

Let us know if you have machinery or trucks that you are willing to use for debris removal. Contact us at info@ltwrc.org

WE HAVE A WEBSITE! – www.ltwrc.org

We now have our very own website. It's still under construction, but there's already a lot of useful information there, including downloadable forms, the restoration RFP, and links to data on precipitation and the snowpack. More is being added all the time.

WE HAVE A FACEBOOK GROUP! - www.facebook.com/groups/LTWRC, or just log in to Facebook and search Little Thompson Watershed Restoration Coalition, and ask to join the group. This is a great way to share stories, comments, and photographs, ask and answer questions, and get to know your fellow denizens of the watershed.

INDIVIDUAL ASSISTANCE

Each County now has a Long-Term Recovery Group (LTRG) for handling individual needs for assistance. This includes guidance, a variety of financial programs, and volunteer crews. The State and Counties are continuing to seek additional funds and extensions from agencies such as FEMA, and much of the money designated for individuals and communities is being allocated via the Long-Term Recovery Groups.

Even if you don't have immediate, flood-related needs, or even if you aren't eligible for existing programs, we urge you to register with your local LTRG. That is your best chance for receiving aid and helps the entire Coalition to qualify for funding to restore the river.

Boulder County Long-Term Flood Recovery Group Office
4775 Walnut St. Suite A
Boulder, CO 80301, Phone: 303-895-3429
Email: floodrecovery@unitedwayfoothills.org.

Larimer County Loveland office:
House of Neighborly Services
1511 East 11th Street
Loveland, CO 80537, Phone: 970-461-2222
Hours: Monday – Friday; 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Email: LCFloods2013@gmail.com

Weld County
Phone: 970-590-8401

LOST & FOUND

Did the river deposit someone else's treasures at your doorstep? Did it sweep away something you're hoping to get back? You can now report lost and found items to **lost.found@LTWRC.org**, and we'll try to facilitate a happy reunion.

RUMORS, RUMORS, RUMORS

Did you hear that the flood unearthed dinosaur bones? Chipped wood is radioactive? They're giving money away to farmers? Report what you've heard through the grapevine to **rumors@LTWRC.org** and we'll try to sort out the legends from the legitimate news.