

Estes Valley Watershed Coalition
Minutes – June 10, 2015

Board					
Black C:		Jay Blackwood	X	Jim Sloan	
Big T:	X	Gary Miller		Carly Lober	
Fall R:		Phil DuChateau	X	Marcus Snyder	
Fish C:	X	Sue Durnford	X	Chuck Bonza	
At Large:		Jim Daugherty	X	Ron Wilcocks	X Frank Theis
Advisory Group:		Jeff Crane		Katherine Luscher	X Naren Tayal
		Chris Sturm		Kim Slininger	Curt Gleaves
		Branden Krueger	X	Tina Kurtz	Christy Crosser
	X	Mary Banken		Chris Bieker	
Non-Voting Members:		Barb May			
Guests		Todd Boldt		Molly Mills	

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:38 pm by President Frank Theis. The meeting was held at the Estes Valley Public Library in Estes Park, Colorado.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was given at the meeting.

III. COALITION STATUS

A. Minutes of the May 13, 2015 Meeting

MOVED (Gary Miller/Sue Durnford second) and passed to accept the minutes from the May 27th meeting.

B. Committee Reports

1. Hiring Committee

• Capacity Grant Status

We are still awaiting the paperwork for the contract. Banken received word from KC McPherson that HUD has finally approved the language for the Advanced Payment option for the grant, which should clear the way for completing the contracting.

Banken noted that the advanced payment will allow EVWC to get started, but that the problem of cash flow does not really go away. EVWC will have to work

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on getting a cash reserve built up to facilitate cost reimbursable grants. Potentially this could be through another capacity grant, though grants typically have specific tasks and due dates to meet, and EVWC needs a fund that is “permanent” for these uses. This mentioned that he had talked to a bank about the potential to borrow money. Banken mentioned that EVLT has annual membership drives which might also work for EVWC.

- **Coordinator Candidates Update**

Molly Mills was introduced as the top candidate for the position. This will be discussed in the Executive Session.

2. **Grants/Projects Committee**

- **Implementation Grant Status**

We are still awaiting the award letter for this grant. Once it is received, we will initiate action to get the Environmental Review initiated; DOLA has contracted with Aegis to complete all of the environmental reviews. 404 permit will be required for the project. Banken will check with Cornerstone about that piece of the process. Naren identified a Access-based grant resource database that has been provided to the State, and will get a copies for EVWC (Banken, Kurtz and Durnford).

- **Planning Grant Status**

Still awaiting the contract for this grant. We received a set of guidelines for the 30% Design specifications.

- **Senate Funds Project status**

We are still awaiting approval by Chris Sturm for the transfer of the grant award to the EVWC. Also awaiting a description of a proposed scope of work for this Fish Creek funding by Julie Ash.

- **CWCB Grant Status**

Have not yet heard a response from Chris Sturm on this grant request.

3. **Public Outreach Committee**

Marcus Snyder has set up the domain name for EVWC (evwatershed.org) through GoDaddy.com (and personally payed for it). One free email address came with the registration. Development work is still pending.

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II. CWCB+ UPDATE

Naren Tayal (FEMA) reported that Brandon Krueger has accepted a permanent position within another division of FEMA, and will be leaving for that position in early July.

Todd Boldt attended the meeting to provide an update on the NRCS EWP Phase 2 funding. (NRCS: Natural Resources Conservation Service of the US Department of Agriculture. EWP: Emergency Watershed Protection)

Todd's first message: Lower your expectations!

Todd has spent 24 years of his NRCS career in Colorado, including 20 in Fort Collins. He has worked through seven EWP projects. Since March, he has been in charge of the EWP Phase 2 project.

Todd distributed a copy of the NRCS letter to Watershed Coalitions and a page on project sponsorship responsibilities. From that letter, Todd pointed out that the \$56.9 million appropriation, \$47 million will be FA (financial assistance) for construction projects and \$9 million will be for TA (technical assistance) by the NRCS staff. NRCS will work closely with CWCB to implement the program. Normal rules would have required that all projects be completed within 220 days after the \$56.9 million in funding comes in; however, NRCS Colorado staff have obtained a 220-day extension to that deadline. With that extension, the front-end work will have a waiver on time, and the 220-day clock will start when the project agreements are signed and construction is ready to begin.

Todd requests that each Watershed Coalition participate in the project prioritization process. What are the top 5-10 priority sites based on the Master Plans? Submit these to NRCS, and NRCS will put together a Damage Survey Team that includes coalition representation to come out and complete Damage Survey Reports on each site. Projects will be selected based on these reports.

Criteria for eligible projects include: (1) Will this project reduce erosion and reduce potential for future flooding that might cause damage to life/limb/or property? (2) Projects cannot do an infrastructure "betterment" such as a bridge improvement. (3) The project must be technically and economically feasible. (4) Is the project appropriate with respect to Environmental Justice, NEPA assessment, etc.

Todd also explained the role of Project Sponsors (see attachment) for the program. Town of Estes Park might be such a sponsor again.

Todd said this will be starting pretty quickly, with Damage Surveys beginning in July. Projects will be done on a reach basis. There will be a lot of competition for the dollars.

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A workgroup has been formed to review priorities and develop recommended input to NRCS. That group includes: Frank Theis, Sue Durnford, Gary Miller, Tina Kurtz and Mary Banken.

III. TOWN UPDATE

Tina Kurtz reported that she submitted the application for the Moraine Ave Bbridge on May 29 with minutes to spare.

Tina will be working on RFP's for the hydroplant project and the hydrology project.

Tina is working on an editorial review of the Fall River Master Plan, and should have that loaded and completed soon.

Recent flood-related publicity has will included a Frank Lancaster article summarizing the status of flood recovery efforts, and a "snippet" in the Town Bugle, with an eye toward spring run-off preparations.

Tina served on the proposal selection committee for the EVRPD's Trails Master Plan. SE Group out of Frisco was selected to complete the project.

IV. ADDITIONAL ACTION ITEMS

Banken announced that, through a generous donation by Marcus Snyder, EVWC now owns a computer for the Coordinator to use. It is a relatively new and powerful HP laptop computer, complete with touchscreen functionality. Thru TechSoup, EVLT has purchased a copy of Microsoft Office Pro (\$32) to install on the computer, as well as Adobe Acrobat (\$45). EVLT has an extra copy of ArcGIS to load onto the system. The computer is currently at EVLT's IT shop and will be installed onto the EVLT network in the near future.

V. EXECUTIVE SESSION – TO DISCUSS EMPLOYEE NEGOTIATIONS

The Board went into Executive Session at 8:27 p.m. to discuss updates on the Coordinator hiring process.

VI. ACTION ITEMS – NEXT MEETING

- A. *Coordinator Contract*
- B. *Start-up budget issues*
- C. *Technology issues*

VII. ADJOURN MEETING

Following the Executive Session, the meeting adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

Prepared by: Mary Banken

Approved/submitted by: Jim Daugherty, Secretary

Commented [TK1]: Would you be willing to take this out? Even though this is what happened, I'd appreciate it not being in here.

Commented [TK2]: This is an upcoming column.

Estes Valley Watershed Coalition

United States Department of Agriculture


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Monday, June 01, 2015

Dear Watershed Coalitions:

On February 26, 2015, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will invest \$84 Million through the Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWPP) to help recovery efforts through more than 150 projects in 13 states.

One of the projects includes assisting Colorado communities rebound from the massive flood in 2013 that caused \$3 billion in damages in Colorado. NRCS is investing \$56.9 million in the second phase of a project to help restore stream corridors, remove debris, reduce erosion, and prevent future flooding. \$47 million of this amount is for construction of treatments. This second phase of work builds on the \$12.9 million invested in 2013.

The main focus of the funds will support a variety of projects, including the restoration of stream function, stream bank stabilization, reconfiguration of sediment, and removal of trash debris. 11 watershed coalitions were formed through the assistance of the State of Colorado after the flood and those coalitions will provide valuable input and direction to EWPP Phase 2.

These funds will be utilized to dovetail with projects that are being planned and implemented in the affected areas. EWP work must be sponsored by a public agency of the state, tribal, county or city government. NRCS provides 75 percent of the funds for the approved projects and the public organization pays the remaining 25 percent.

NRCS is working closely with the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) to be the local sponsors of the program and utilize the plans developed by the Watershed Coalitions to maximize the efforts already occurring within most of the watersheds.

NRCS and the CWCB are currently working on a sponsor agreement which will determine each agency's roles and responsibilities going forward with Phase 2 planning and implementation.

NRCS in Colorado is currently working with its National Headquarters in Washington DC to receive a waiver to the 220 day project implementation deadline as established in EWPP policy.

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NRCS is coordinating the formulation of Damage Survey Teams to assist Watershed Coalitions in completing Damage Survey Reports (DSR). A Damage Survey Report documents eligible treatments, the benefit/cost ratio, values at risk and social and environmental considerations of the proposed eligible treatments. NRCS will be looking to the Watershed Coalitions for their input on the establishment of priorities in their respective watershed and active participation on the Damage Survey Teams.

NRCS has two individuals that are focused on these efforts. Todd Boldt, EWP Specialist, has worked with numerous EWP projects while he was the District Conservationist in Fort Collins for over 20 years. Rich Mullaney, retired NRCS, has assisted with project coordination in numerous locations throughout his career. These two individuals along with CWCB will assist the Watershed Coalitions as plans are being developed and implemented throughout the watersheds affected by the 2013 flood.

For more information on this topic, please contact Todd Boldt at 970-215-9897 or Rich Mullaney at 970-466-2355.

Sincerely,


John Andrews, P.E.
State Conservationist Engineer

Estes Valley Watershed Coalition

Title 390 – National Emergency Watershed Protection Program Manual

(390 - Parts 510 – 515, 4th Ed., October 2014)

510.3 Responsibilities

K. Project Sponsors

The project sponsors are responsible for—

- (i) Providing a written request to the STC for assistance with appropriate documentation.
- (ii) Accepting requests for assistance from landowners.
- (iii) Obtaining the necessary real property rights, including any rights needed for the relocation of fences, bridges, etc.
- (iv) Obtaining a signed Form NRCS-ADS-78, "Assurances relating to Real Property Acquisition," and a signed attorney's opinion, as appropriate.
- (v) Obtaining the required Federal, State, Tribal, and local permits.
- (vi) Arranging for any necessary relocation of utilities.
- (vii) Providing the required local share of construction costs.
- (viii) Executing an O&M agreement and ensuring compliance with the O&M plan, as necessary.
- (ix) Helping to establish priorities for work.
- (x) Publicizing the availability of the EWP Program.
- (xi) Participating on a DSR team as needed.
- (xii) Accepting the completed work for projects installed using locally awarded contracting procedures as appropriate.

511.3 Eligibility for Recovery Assistance

A. General

EWP recovery assistance is made available to eligible project sponsors as defined in section 511.3B. Private entities or individuals may only receive assistance through sponsorship by a project sponsor (see 7 CFR Section 624.6(a)(1)).

B. Project Sponsor Eligibility

- (1) A project sponsor is any legal subdivision of a State government or a State agency, including the following:
 - (i) Cities
 - (ii) Counties or parishes
 - (iii) Towns
 - (iv) Municipal authorities
 - (v) Townships
 - (vi) Soil and water conservation districts
 - (vii) And when chartered under State laws, entities such as—
 - Levee districts
 - Irrigation districts
 - Drainage districts
- (2) Any Native American Tribe or Tribal organization as defined in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. Section 450b).
- (3) A project sponsor must—
 - (i) Have a legal interest in, or responsibility for, the areas threatened by a watershed emergency.
 - (ii) Be capable of obtaining necessary land rights and required permits.
 - (iii) Be capable of performing all required operation and maintenance (O&M) responsibilities.
 - (iv) Administer contracting when part of a local agreement.