



August 21, 2015

Dear Watershed Coalitions:

Thank you for your response regarding your list of Highest Priorities of reaches. These lists are being prioritized and work on the DSRs has been started.

Within these Priority areas, a Damage Survey Report (DSR) will be completed to determine Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) eligibility, document damages caused by the flood, and develop treatment alternatives and cost. The process will also determine structures, properties, and other items that may be at risk if the project is not done. This information will be used to calculate the benefit/cost ratio of the proposed treatment. The DSR process will also document any environmental and cultural effects within the project area and minimize impact to those areas. All EWP work must reduce threats of life and property. It must be economically and environmentally defensible and sound from an engineering standpoint. If a DSR does not meet the eligibility criteria for EWP, work will not proceed through this program.

As a DSR team is ready to collect field data for a given watershed, the Watershed Coordinator will be contacted. Dates and time for field work will be set. It will be the responsibility of the Watershed Coalition and Coordinator to obtain access permission from all landowners where EWP assessments will take place. Landowner consent is required to proceed with any project work. If a landowner in a project area does not want work completed on his/her property, that work will not be done. A DSR team is made up of individuals from Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB), the Watershed Coordinator, interested landowners, and other individuals that may be able to assist with obtaining and collecting needed information within a reach.

Watershed Coalition Master Plans are broken down into reach areas. Each reach was evaluated and prioritized within the Master Plans. Through the DSR process, more than one reach may be combined into a project. The extent of a project will be determined through the evaluation process to maximize the benefit to the stream system and potential practices.

A Technical Agreement (TA) has been signed between NRCS and CWCB which allocates a portion of the EWP funds to be utilized to assist with the design process. CWCB is in the process of hiring a team of specialists to work through the design process. Also, these funds can be utilized by a "local" sponsor to assist with construction design. Local sponsors are entities, towns, counties, Watershed Coalitions, or others that meet the CWCB requirements. Local sponsors will sign an agreement with CWCB to complete this work.

As DSRs are completed, plans can be made to start design work. This work will need to meet the thirty percent design criteria. This criteria is being developed by NRCS and CWCB and will be sent in the near future. As the 30 percent design criteria has been completed, reviewed, and approved by interested


parties, plans can be made to proceed to complete the design and proceed to construction. Each DSR will go through this process.

When the project area has all of the necessary designs, permits, and other requirements met, a Financial Agreement (FA) or construction agreement will be signed between the CWCB and the NRCS. This will allocate the funds for the project construction. EWP funds may bear up to 75 percent of the construction cost. CWCB will contribute 12.5 percent. The remaining 12.5 percent will need to be covered by the local sponsor or from other sources. The 12.5 percent required from the local sponsor can be cash or "in-kind" match. Only work done after there is a Financial Agreement in place can be used as the match contribution. The CWCB will initiate contracting with the local sponsor.

NRCS and CWCB will continue to work with and assist the Watershed Coalitions and Coordinators as we move through this process. For questions or concerns regarding this information, please send an e-mail to richard.mullaney@co.usda.gov

Sincerely,


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