



City of Cañon City

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Fourth Quarter 2013 Stormwater Management Program News

Flood News

While the City experienced some isolated damages to infrastructure, our city faired extremely well compared to our neighbors in northern Colorado.

It sometimes takes tragic events to bring important discussions to the forefront. Our city experiences flooding often for which the Arkansas River is not the source and in areas that are not in identified risk areas. That is why it is important for each individual property owner and resident to assess their risk appropriately and plan for it. Part of anyone's plan should be to talk to their insurance broker about what type of coverage is appropriate for their property. A common myth is that flood insurance cannot be purchased for property that is not in a mapped floodplain. Flood insurance can be purchased even if the property is not in a mapped floodplain for a reduced rate compared to those that are in special flood hazard areas. The City participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) so that flood insurance is available for all of our citizens and so that we can build smarter in the future, avoiding placing property and people in high risk areas. We then take further steps that earn us discounts on those insurance rates. Please contact the City Engineer if you have questions regarding your flood risk and the NFIP.

Unfortunately, our city was built around the river with little or no drainage infrastructure over the past 100 years. The Stormwater Utility Enterprise was formed to manage the City's water quality permit and fund the maintenance of what stormwater infrastructure we do have. Not much capital has been funded in the current fee assessment for the larger drainage projects that are needed. We are beginning to accumulate enough funds now that some larger projects are being planned and implemented. Some of the funds may be used as matching dollars for construction grants. Needed property and easements continue to slow progress for infrastructure improvements as many of the drainage ways do not have adequate outlets to the Arkansas River. Regardless of these obstacles, we are working diligently towards solutions and are making progress.

Announcements:

- The Public Notice for the draft revision of the General MS4 Stormwater Permit from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) has been delayed from September to early October. CDPHE also anticipates holding a public meeting sometime in November to receive oral comments on the draft. Any person or entity can submit comments on the draft permit during the Public Notice period. To obtain a copy of the current permit please visit their website at <http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/CDPHE-WQ/CBON/1251596875370>. When the new draft permit is released it will be announced in the Denver Post and on the above website. Interested parties may also contact the Cañon City Stormwater Program for updates.

- Save the Date! The Cañon City Stormwater Program is once again partnering with the City of Pueblo Stormwater Utility and the Pueblo County Engineering and Public Works Department to host a Stormwater Seminar on February 5, 2014. This year's seminar is tentatively scheduled to be held in Cañon City from 8 am to 12 pm. The seminar is designed for contractors, developers, builders and the general public. More details will follow. The Cañon City Stormwater Program may be contacted at 719-276-5265 for more information.

- EPA news: On September 4, the EPA published a Public Notice in the Federal Register for a proposed rule making on Water Quality Standards Regulatory Clarifications. This rule change would directly affect the CDPHE's methods of setting State Water Quality Standards. To view the Public Notice visit <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2013-09-04/pdf/2013-21140.pdf>.

Source Water Protection Plan (SWPP)

The Cañon City Stormwater Program has been involved in a pilot project to develop a Source Water Protection Plan for the Upper Arkansas River Basin since January of 2012. Other entities involved in the project include the Cañon City Public Water System, The Florence Public Water System, the CDPHE Source Water Protection Plan Program, the CDPHE Non-Point Source Program and the Upper Arkansas Area Council of Governments. The purpose of the pilot project is to develop a process to reduce potential degradation to our source water – the Arkansas River. Additional results the pilot project hopes to achieve include improved water quality, reduction of future drinking water treatment costs, promotion of sustainable recreation areas and the preservation and restoration of wetland and aquatic ecosystems for fish and wildlife and for the public's enjoyment.

Over the series of meetings best management practices were discussed for a variety of possible contamination sources. Some of these sources include mining; wildfires and forest health; roads, transportation and spills; septic systems; land use planning; and agricultural practices. The Cañon City and Florence Public Water Systems have both developed draft plans which will be presented to their respective City Councils in October. They will be asking the City Councils for letters of support for the draft plan and for a draft Memorandum of Understanding which they will present to the Fremont County Commissioners at their November 12, 2013 meeting.

Fire News:

Fire mitigation efforts from the Royal Gorge fire are continuing. Erosion control measures are being installed in many of the drainages in the Royal Gorge area to slow down runoff and help control sediment and debris from being swept into the river. The Colorado Water Conservation Board has given a grant to assist with the costs of hydro-axing and re-seeding the area.

An interesting study was just published by Oregon State University researchers concerning snow pack and runoff in burned areas of forests. The study found that snowpack in charred forest areas disappears 23 days earlier and had twice the melting rate than adjacent unburned forest in the same watershed. This could lead to earlier spring runoff which could impact water supplies later in the year. To view the entire article visit <http://oregonstate.edu/ua/ncs/archives/2013/sep/new-study-finds-charred-forests-increase-snowmelt-rate>.

Please feel free to direct any concerns or questions to Glenda DeBekker, City of Cañon City Stormwater Program at either 276-5265 or grdebekker@canoncity.org. You may also write to The City of Cañon City's Stormwater Program, P.O. Box 1460, Cañon City, CO 81215-1460.



Remember: The responsibility for keeping our City's and State's waterways clean for all to enjoy ultimately falls to everyone in the choices they make. Please make wise choices.