

# Fountain Creek Watershed Newsletter



Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments & Pueblo Area Council of Governments

October 2006

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This newsletter and agendas for upcoming meetings are available on the Fountain Creek Watershed website at [www.fountain-crk.org](http://www.fountain-crk.org). If you have suggestions for articles for an upcoming newsletter, please call Rich Muzzy at (719) 471-7080 x109, or email Rich Muzzy at [rmuzzy@ppacg.org](mailto:rmuzzy@ppacg.org).

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## GREETINGS!

Many new activities have taken place within the Fountain Creek Watershed since the last newsletter, including the Fountain Creek Watershed Vision Workshops, the Peak to Prairie Project and the completion of many Army Corps of Engineers technical studies and reports. The Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG) and The Pueblo Area Council of Governments (PACOG) present the annual Fountain Creek Watershed Newsletter, which has been made possible through a donation from the Central Colorado Conservation District and a grant from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE). Articles in this newsletter will focus on on-going activities in the Fountain Creek Watershed. This newsletter is available electronically, along with additional information regarding Watershed activities on the Fountain Creek Watershed website at [www.fountain-crk.org](http://www.fountain-crk.org).

## Army Corps of Engineers Watershed Study Update

The Army Corps of Engineers Watershed Study began in March 2003. The Study, a comprehensive analysis of the Fountain Creek Watershed, establishes the existing conditions and identifies an array of problems and opportunities in the form of a Watershed Management Plan.

Most of the technical work for the Army Corps of Engineers Watershed Study which will provide baseline study conditions has been completed. The study will include the following reports which are available on the Fountain Creek Watershed website at [www.fountain-crk.org](http://www.fountain-crk.org).

- Environmental Studies: Hazardous Materials, Wetlands, Threatened and Endangered Species, Fish, Water Quality, Soils, Wildlife, Migratory Corridors, and Planned Projects Inventory and Restoration Opportunities.
- Technical Studies: Hydrology, Hydraulics and Geomorphology.

## Next Steps

The next steps of the Corps Study will be the project formulation and evaluation phase. This will include identification of project opportunities and constraints, which will be defined for Ecosystem Restoration, Sediment Management, Flood Damage Reduction, Erosion Protection, and Recreation (as part of a multi-use project). These will be used to identify potential structural and non-structural measures for evaluation. The array of potential actions will be evaluated without respect to organizational constraints, and will be presented in the findings of the study based on technical and economic feasibility, prioritized based on need, and categorized in accordance with the likelihood of Federal participation. Potential local and state project opportunities will also be evaluated. This study will not lead directly to projects and additional funding for these projects will be required.

## Federal Funding

A total of \$449,000 is needed in federal funding to complete the study. The Senate mark up of the Energy and Water Resources Appropriations Bill included this funding; however, neither the President's budget nor the U.S. House version of the Energy and Water Resources Appropriations Bill included the necessary funding. The House and Senate Conference Committee will meet to resolve any differences between the two versions of the bill before voting on a final appropriations bill. It is not known when this will occur.

## Project Timeline

The Project Formulation is expected to be completed by May 2007, Project Evaluation by September 2007 and the Corps Study is expected to be completed by December 2007 if the full amount of Federal funding requested is appropriated. If partial Federal funding is obtained, the project will be completed by mid 2008.

## Funding Sources Sought for Policy Evaluation Workshop

PPACG is seeking funding sources to conduct a one day workshop to review all the current zoning ordinance regulations and drainage criteria policies from each of the eleven local governments within the Fountain Creek Watershed that effect the watersheds health. These documents provided by the local governments will be evaluated in order to provide a common, consistent baseline for decision making. These regulations and policies must address the non-point source origins of problems within the watershed and also recognize specific issues, such as erosion, sedimentation and flooding.

Results of the hydrology, hydraulics and sediment transport modeling completed through the Army Corps of Engineers Study, along with environmental resource documents will be used to assess possible changes in policies and initial recommendations made in the Summary of Policy of Technical and Management Strategies section of the Fountain Creek Watershed Plan completed in 2003.

The target audience for this workshop will be planners directly involved in developing and reviewing regulations and policies. The objective is to help planners in the region to be aware of watershed problems and issues and recognize that policies could be used to more effectively address erosion, sedimentation and flooding problems.

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

- **South Platte Forum – From the Gold Rush to the Urban Crush: The Past Present and Future of the South Platte River Basin**  
**October 25-26, 2006**  
**Radisson Conference Center, Longmont, CO**  
**[www.southplatteforum.org](http://www.southplatteforum.org)**
- **Arkansas River Basin Water Quality Standards Issues Formulation Hearing**  
**November 13, 2006 at 9:00**  
**Inn of the Rio Grande, Alamosa, CO**  
**[www.cdphe.state.co.us/wq/bulletin/wqbulletin1006.pdf](http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/wq/bulletin/wqbulletin1006.pdf)**
- **Technical Advisory Committee Meetings**
  - **October 20, 2006 - 10:00 a.m. PPACG**
  - **November 17, 2006 - 10:00 a.m. PPACG**
  - **December 15, 2006 - 10:00 a.m. PPACG**

For more information, meeting agendas or copies of previous newsletters, please call Rich or Jayne at (719) 471-7080, ext. 109 or 119. This newsletter was written, compiled, edited and produced by PPACG Staff.

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## Fountain Creek Watershed Technical Advisory Committee

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Gary Belew, Fort Carson

Andre Brackin, El Paso County

David Buttery,

City of Woodland Park

Jay Frost, Central Colorado CD

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Bob Hamilton, SECWCD

Kim Headley, Pueblo County

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City of Fountain

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Green Mountain Falls

## Fountain Creek Watershed Vision Workshops and Report

Two workshops have been held to begin the development of a broad based community vision for the Fountain Creek Watershed. The first workshop was held in Colorado Springs on July 21<sup>st</sup> and the second workshop was held in Pueblo on September 24<sup>th</sup>. El Paso County Commissioner Chairperson Sally Clark facilitated both workshops.

Presentations were given on the Army Corps of Engineers Study, the Peak to Prairie Project, the City of Colorado Springs Stormwater Enterprise, the City of Pueblo Stormwater Utility, the Colorado State Parks and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

The Pueblo workshop was attended by over 80 people, including elected officials from within the Fountain Creek Watershed and the Arkansas River. Landowners – farmers and ranchers, aides for congressional representatives, and state and federal agencies were in attendance. There was agreement that a steering committee should be formed in order to develop and outline a process to be followed in defining a vision statement. This committee will be professionally facilitated.

Senator Salazar's office has produced a report, entitled Fountain Creek: Crown Jewel Project, which details some of the components that should be included in a long term Master Plan. The plan would take a more holistic approach than previous plans to address the problems in the watershed. This includes creating State Parks, establishing more conservation easements, improving water quality and treating Fountain Creek as a front-range asset. This report can be downloaded on the Fountain Creek Watershed Website at [www.fountain-crk.org](http://www.fountain-crk.org).

### E. Coli Study

Within the Fountain Creek Watershed there are two segments that are listed as high priority on the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) list of water quality impaired segments (303d list) for E. Coli. The two segments are:

- Upper Fountain Creek from the headwaters to the confluence of Fountain Creek and Monument Creek.
- Lower Fountain Creek from confluence of Fountain Creek and Monument Creek to the Highway 47 Bridge.

A study will be conducted on Upper Fountain Creek to determine the sources of E.Coli contamination. This study will be a cooperative effort between USGS, CDPHE, Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU) and PPACG. The proposed study has three aspects:

1. Measurement of spatial and temporal patterns of E. Coli concentrations in the Upper Fountain Creek to detect when and where fecal contamination enters the streams.

2. Measurement of microbial source tracking (MST), molecular markers to detect the presence of fecal contamination from various sources (human, ruminant, or other). Microbial source tracking tools are proposed for this investigation to provide supporting evidence about sources of fecal contamination to complement hydrology and patterns of other constituents such as land use and wastewater organic chemical concentrations.

3. MST marker detection rates and patterns, and ancillary data such as hydrology, land use, precipitation, water physico-chemical properties, nutrient concentrations, and wastewater organic compound concentrations will be used to assess sources and pathways of fecal contamination to the Upper Fountain Creek.

This project will begin May 2007 and will be completed by May 2009. A final report will summarize the results of the study.

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[www.fountain-crk.org](http://www.fountain-crk.org)

### Fountain Creek Conflict Assessment Report

The Fountain Creek Conflict and Assessment Report was funded by the CDPHE to determine any issues, concerns and challenges within the Fountain Creek Watershed. Twenty five (25) individual interviews were conducted as a part of the assessment report.

The interviews revealed:

- Over two-thirds of those interviewed feel that conditions on Fountain Creek are worsening.
- Organizations are addressing some of the concerns, but these organizations could be more effective.

The report produced two main recommendations:

1. Form a policy committee to complement the technical work of the Technical Advisory Committee, as a structural mechanism to address a number of the specific water-related challenges
2. Develop better community collaboration to convert what many see as a liability into a community asset

This report is available to download on the Fountain Creek Watershed website at [www.fountain-crk.org](http://www.fountain-crk.org).

### Peak to Prairie Project

The Peak to Prairie Project is a large-scale conservation initiative headed up by Colorado Open Lands and The Nature Conservancy and focuses on key resources in El Paso and Pueblo Counties.

In 2004, funding for this Project was provided through a Greater Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) planning grant. The project involves many partners and stretches from Cheyenne Mountain in the west to the El Paso County line in the east, from the City of Colorado Springs in the north to the City of Pueblo and the Arkansas River in the south. The project covers over 900 square miles of prairie, creek, mountain and plains and includes valuable resources such as working agricultural operations, scenic vistas, threatened wildlife habitat, military assets, and open space. The goal of the Peak to Prairie project is to preserve and protect these resources by knitting together and protecting public and private lands. The resulting landscape will be a relatively intact landscape in one of the last remaining stretches of unfragmented land along Colorado's Front Range.

This project has protected 1,185 acres through 5 conservation easements and additionally, three more easements are expected to be completed by the end of 2006. A listing of the areas that have been protected so far is available at [www.coloradoopenlands.org](http://www.coloradoopenlands.org).

The final report on the planning grant is entitled "Peak to Prairie Conservation Project" and is available at [www.fountain-crk.org](http://www.fountain-crk.org). This report contains a list of specific recommended implementation strategies which includes submitting a GOCO Legacy Grant application to provide further funding for private land conservation efforts.



Fountain Creek above South Circle Drive, downstream view showing Pierre shale on left bank. Photo courtesy of URS Corporation

### Fountain Creek Watershed Reach Analysis Study

The Fountain Creek Watershed Reach Analysis Study, is funded by the Colorado Water Conservation Board and will focus on collecting field data in critical stream reaches (mainstem and tributary streams) identified in the Fountain Creek Watershed Geomorphology Study. Data collected from each stream reach will provide a baseline record to document changes in stream geomorphology which have resulted in lateral or vertical movement in the channel, which have, or may produce potential problems to infrastructure or critical habitat. The study will include conducting longitudinal and cross sectional surveys and collecting sediment transport data. Field data collected through this study is critical to determining appropriate environmental restoration projects and best management practices which will help decrease erosion, sedimentation and provide bank and bed stability. This project will begin in 2007 and is designed as multi-year study with continuation contingent upon the USGS, local governments and other stakeholders.



Fountain Creek at Williams Creek confluence, downstream view on Frost property of aggrading channel reach with large cut bank. Photo courtesy of URS Corporation

### A Historical Look at Fountain Creek How did Fountain Creek get its name?

Rufus B. Sage published "Scenes in the Rocky Mountains," a collection of essays based on his adventures in the West, in 1855. In his book, Sage described Fountain Creek as it appeared during his visit to the region in the late 1840's: "Fontaine qui Bouit, or boiling fountain, is the name bestowed upon a considerable stream that heads under Pikes Peak, and pursues a southerly course till it unites with the Arkansas." "The name is derived from two singular springs, situated within a few yards of the creek's head, both of which emit water in the form of vapor, accompanied with a hissing noise – the one strongly impregnated with Sulphur and the other with soda."

"The soda water is fully as good as any manufactured for special use, and sparkles and foams with equal effervescence. This spring, though at present cool, is said to have been formerly quite the reverse. Some twenty years since, the heat was sufficient to cook flesh in a half hour's time, if submerged in its waters."

"The Arapahoe's regard this phenomenon with awe, and venerate it as a manifestation of the immediate presence of the Great Spirit. They call it the Medicine Fountain, and seldom neglect to bestow their gifts upon it whenever an opportunity is presented."

"These offerings generally consist of robes, blankets, arrows, bows, knives, beads and moccasins, which they either throw into the water or hang upon the surrounding trees. Sometimes a whole village will visit the place for the purpose of paying their united regard to this sacred fountain."

"The vicinity affords an abundance of game, among which are deer, sheep, bear, antelope, elk and buffalo, together with turkeys, geese, ducks, grouse, mountain fowls and rabbits."

"Affording, as it does, such magnificent and delightful scenery; such rich stores for the supply of human wants, both to please the taste and enrapture the heart; so heaven-like in its appearance and character, it is no wonder the untaught savages revere it as the place wherein the Good Spirit delights to dwell, and hastens with his free-will offerings to the strange fountain, in full belief that its bubbling waters are the more immediate impersonation of Him whom he adores."