NEWS RELEASE

December 12, 2016

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Kim Melchor
Lead Communications Specialist
719-385-5248

Work Begins on a Three-Phase Stormwater Project to Restore Monument Creek Tributary

Project Addresses Erosion impacting Air Force Academy, Sediment Entering Monument Creek

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — Work is underway in the first of a three-phase project on the Monument Branch (tributary to Monument Creek) to stop erosion and extensive sediment from entering Monument Creek where it empties onto the United States Air Force Academy and restore the area to its natural habitat.

"Thanks to the collaborative efforts of several stakeholders we can mitigate the impacts that continued extensive sediment and erosion have on existing infrastructure in the area and downstream. Investment in the restoration of this area now will significantly lessen sediment entering Monument Creek and saves residents far costlier repairs in the future," said Mayor John Suthers.

A recent study of Monument Creek found that Monument Branch currently contributes 4,366 tons (equivalent of 200 semi truckloads) of sediment each year into Monument Creek. Once all three-phases of the project are complete along Monument Branch and the channel is fully stabilized, it is estimated that only 17 tons (less than one semi truckload) of sediment each year will flow into Monument Creek aleviating future costly repairs downstream.

The City identified Monument Branch as in need of significant repairs and was added to the 2016 project list to be funded through the Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) with Pueblo County. The first phase begins thanks in part to a federal grant received earlier this year from the Natural Resources Conservation Service for $700,000 to repair a small section of the channel between Voyager Parkway and I-25.

The City worked with several agencies to coordinate work on federal, state and private properties including the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU), United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) to restore this section of the Monument Branch that was significantly impacted by the heavy storm events in 2013/15 that caused flooding in several area and prompted a federal disaster declaration.

“The Monument Creek Restoration Master Plan identified this as a high priority project that will help protect wetlands and riparian habitat on the Air Force Academy as well as address the significant threat to utilities and structures that storm flows pass through as they cross I-25. We appreciate the efforts by the City of Colorado Springs, Colorado Springs Utilities and the Air Force Academy to reduce dangerous sediment flows impacting Monument Creek,” said Larry Small, Director of the Fountain Creek Watershed, Flood Control and Greenway District.

This $4 million project, consisting of approximately one and three-quarters mile of channel improvements extending from Voyager Parkway west to Monument Creek is divided into three construction phases from November 2016 through 2018.

Phase I: Monument Branch - Voyager Parkway to I-25

Phase I will consist of approximately 900 linear feet of channel improvements between Voyager Pkwy and I-25 to address an area of severe erosion that threatens utilities infrastructure crossing the channel. The improvements will include sculpted concrete drop structures to stair step, or slow the rate water reaches the channel bottom, re-grading the channel and banks, and planting new vegetation to protect City infrastructure. This phase is funded through the federal NRCS grant, Colorado Springs Utilities, and City General Funds dedicated to stormwater projects under the IGA. The project began construction in late November and will continue through March 2017.

Phase I Project Construction Costs: $1,300,000

Timeline: November 2016- March 2017

Phase II: Additional Channel Improvements between Voyager Parkway and I-25

The second phase of the project will include additional improvements to the channel between Voyager Pkwy and I-25 with a focus on smaller repairs to the channel closer to Voyager Pkwy where the channel is still in a better condition and larger repairs closer to I-25 where the channel is more severely eroded. The improvements will prevent further channel erosion and prevent more costly repairs in the future. Work conducted in the first two phases will significantly reduce the amount of sediment entering Monument Creek and futher damaging the area along the final project phase.

Phase II Estimated Project Construction Cost: $1,100,000

Timeline: Expected to begin Fall 2017

Phase III: Monument Creek to New Santa Fe Regional Trail

The third and final phase of the project will stabilize and improve the channel between Monument Creek and upstream to the New Santa Fe Regional Trail on the west side of I-25. This reach of the channel is approximately 2,500 linear feet long and has continued to deteriorate due to the increase in sediment washing downstream from the Phase II and II project areas. In 2009, the Air Force Academy worked to stabilize this section of the channel, but heavy rains and sedimentation in 2013/2015

destroyed those improvements. The Academy had identified this section of the channel as ideal habitat for the endangered Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse. Improvements will help recreate the habitat needed for the endangered species to thrive.

Phase III Estimated Project Construction Cost: $1,300,000

Timeline: Expected to begin Winter 2017

Background on Monument Branch

Monument Branch is a natural channel in the northern section of Colorado Springs that empties into Monument Creek on the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA). Monument Branch originates in the Flying Horse Community and continues west between North Gate Boulevard and Interquest Parkway until joining with Monument Creek near USAFA.

###

Media Note: Attached are before photos and future renderings of work to be done along the Monument Branch. The second attachment shows the areas where each phase of work will take place.