

BOXELDER STORMWATER AUTHORITY

Newsletter

boxelderauthority.org

P.O. Box 1091 Wellington, CO 80549

August 2011

970-443-9505

Who are we? Three local governments, Fort Collins, Larimer County, and the Town of Wellington have cooperated to form *the Boxelder Stormwater Authority*.

What do we do? The Authority was formed to finance and construct three improvements which act as a system to lessen possible damages from flooding along a 20 mile reach of Boxelder Creek and its tributaries.

What's New?

The Authority Board of Directors and interested members of the public toured Authority projects on July 21. The tour started at the Coal Creek Flood Hazard Mitigation Project where the group viewed preparations for dewatering dredged slurry from Clark Reservoir. The tour then stopped for a luncheon at the CSU Agricultural Research Development and Education Center. After lunch, the group visited a location where Middle Basin Improvements are planned on Road 50, and the intersection of Boxelder Creek with the Larimer-Weld Ditch.



What is new at the Authority?

The Authority Board has proposed changes in its Service Area, and the Larimer County Commissioners have proposed a “sunset” provision in the IGA. The managers of the three entities requested that the Authority prepare a timeline for construction of its two remaining projects. The Authority Board of Directors, at their June meeting directed Local Government Solutions, LLC to prepare financial scenarios taking into account various combinations of participation by Timnath, issuance or non issuance of debt, and whether or not a second PDM grant can be secured. This work is expected to result in a timeline for construction of the remaining projects and the period during which fees will be charged. The intent is that the IGA will then be revised to include a sunset provision in accord with the financial plan. The work so far has involved construction of financial models for Authority cash flow through construction of its remaining projects. Later work will involve interactive sessions with the Board of Directors to identify a preferred financial plan.

Timnath and Boxelder Creek

Officials from Timnath, the City of Fort Collins and the Authority are considering how stormwater improvements in the vicinity of the Prospect Interchange should be finally configured to best meet the needs of all parties when the Authority improvements are complete.

Why would Timnath be interested in the Authority when the natural course of Boxelder Creek flows into the Cache La Poudre River north and west of Timnath? FEMA floodplain maps show that flood flows do not all follow the natural path of the creek across I-25, then southwest into the Cache La Poudre River. Instead, about half of the flows continue south and east through Timnath, inundating homes and businesses south of Prospect on the east side of I-25. At some additional cost, Authority improvements could considerably lessen peak flood flows from Boxelder Creek through the Town of Timnath.

What is FEMA's Role?

In the early 70's, the Federal Government became concerned that there were repeated losses from flooding which needed to be addressed. A rule was adopted that any property found to be "in the floodplain" would be required to purchase flood insurance if the owners got a mortgage from a Federally insured financial institution. At the same time, it was decided that local governments would be required to have land use regulations for development "in the floodplain". Those rules are still in effect today. FEMA has produced and maintains Flood Insurance Rate Maps all over the country known as FIRM which show what areas are considered to be in the floodplain and thus required to purchase flood insurance. They also show what insurance rate zones various areas are in. Correspondingly, FEMA has developed elaborate technical requirements for making changes in the maps. ***Regardless of what property owners or local officials say or believe about hydrology, FEMA rules still apply when it comes to making changes in the FIRM maps.***

The improvements being financed and constructed by the Authority are being constructed in accord with FEMA hydrological rules so that when finished, they will result in changes in the official maps in those areas in which damages to existing structures would result from a 100 year flood on Boxelder Creek and its tributaries.