

**BIG THOMPSON CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
LITTLE THOMPSON RIVER RESTORATION MEETING  
Saturday, January 18, 2014  
Organizational Meeting at Berthoud Community Center**

The meeting was held at the Berthoud Community Center, Berthoud, CO at 10:30 a.m.

**PRESENT:** Big Thompson CD board members: Gordon Gilstrap, Bill Zawacki, Bill Markham, Nate Stoffregen, Terry Parrish, and Lisa Butler, DM. Also present: Todd Boldt, NRCS; Brian Harding, Boulder County; Zach Shelly, Big Thompson Watershed Forum; Omar Herrera and Sandy Freeo, town of Milliken; Tim Katers, town of Berthoud; Jeff Crane, CWCB; Senator Kevin Lundberg and approximately 140 landowners on the Little Thompson River.

Gordon opened the meeting with introductions of the Big Thompson CD board members and the District Clerk. He proceeded by explaining who the Conservation District is and what the District's role is in the Restoration of the Little Thompson River as an identified "sponsor for the non-exigent work and watershed design.

**Key Players**

Natural Resources Conservation Service - NRCS

Colorado Office of Emergency Management

Colorado Water Conservation Board – CWCB

Army Corp of Engineers

Counties:

Larimer

Boulder

Weld

Towns:

Berthoud

Johnstown

Milliken

US Senators and Congressmen

Volunteer Organizations

The Methodist Church being a key player in having available 100-150 people to clean up debris

Media

The Big Thompson Conservation District – "sponsor"

**Order of Duties Regarding Restoration of the Water Shed**

NRCS defines the exigent progress

NRCS identifies the sponsors of each project

The Restoration Design of the Water Shed is created

Landowners on the project apply for their grants

**Todd Boldt – NRCS – Overview of Process/Progress**

EWP funds the project. Money is appropriated by Congress

**PHASE I:**

NRCS assesses the damage of all of the areas involved addressing the exigent sites

NRCS has requested \$10 M for the work to be done with the NRCS paying 75%. The State pays 12.5% and the local sponsor(s) pays 12.5%. Larimer County is the local sponsor for exigent repair in Larimer.

8 engineers have come in and assessed the sites and have identified 50 exigent sites.

Engineers design-work is aimed at being completed by January 31, 2014 with the work completed by April 15, 2014

FEMA has brought in the Army Corp of Engineers to refine the cost estimates. The work defined to being done is removal of debris and sediment as well as river bank reconstruction.

None of these allocations can be used on personal "farmland" i.e. fences, sediment/debris removal, irrigation equipment, BUT the ECP (Emergency Conservation Program) from the Farm Service Agency can be used.

**PHASE II**

Engineers come back in and assess the non-exigent projects. They have completed the Little Thompson River area  
No funding is available for Phase II

A damage survey report has been written that lists general area projects but not an exact location of property. This report will be put on the Big Thompson CD website

**Big Thompson CD Funding for hiring a watershed consultant**

We have applied for a grant from the CWCB and are waiting to hear from them. We will also look into more grants

**Process for Funding for the Landowners**

All processes for action start by coming to the Big Thompson CD – the sponsor for this project

1. Landowner identifies their needs for funding and a dollar amount

2. Get that information to the Big Thompson CD
3. Big Thompson CD gives information to NRCS
4. NRCS gives information to Congress to appropriate the funds

### **Organizing the Coalition for the Little Thompson River Restoration**

Just by being at this meeting today we have created a coalition. Rules will need to be established by the group regarding its conduct and goals. We will need to create 5 committees:

Steering Committee – Steering Committee that works directly with Big Thompson CD

Interface with Government entities

Make overall decisions

Work with all other committees

Fiscal Committee

Monitor all money transactions

Write the checks needed

Audit allocation decisions

Technical Committee

Develop the watershed

Work with consultants

Resource Committee

Find and apply for grants

Crowd funding

Set up websites

Allocation Committee

Make recommendations to Steering Committee on which projects to work on first, etc

### **Information Needed from Landowner When Working with Grants**

The information that is kept regarding the repairs and work on private property is crucial for grants. The following is a list of information that will need to be provided for the grants all given in very specific terms:

Tell your “story”

How much damage has your property sustained?

Describe in detail what type of work has already been done on the property

Use lots of before and after photos. (If you don't have any before photos, Weld and Boulder Counties probably do)

What is the estimated cost of your project?

All of this information needs to be sent to Big Thompson CD..

### **QUESTIONS**

Q – How much of the new width of the streambed falls under NRCS design and funding rules.

A -- The width attributed to a 25 year event. Todd will check with the NRCS State Conservationist to see if the rules can be changed to include more of the streambed.

Q – Is Boulder County involved with this?

A – Brian Harding came up and introduced himself and told the group that they are involved in the 6-7 mile stretch of the river that is in Boulder County and they will work with us

Q – Is the Army Corp of Engineers cleaning up the debris or should we start doing that ourselves?

A – There is no funding appropriated for this right now so you need to get the equipment and do this yourself. BUT, please seek guidance from the river consultant on what/how debris removal should be done.

Q – Where do we put the debris that we are able to move?

A – Jeff Crane, consultant to the CWCB, can help with determining how to remove and process debris.

We will also ask the Counties to help with disposal of debris.

Todd Boldt advised people to keep trees with a 16” or larger diameter for use in rebuilding stream banks

Q – Who do we tell that we have debris piles that are not visible from a road?

A – Big Thompson CD

Q – Can water quality be an exigent situation?

A – Zach with Big Thompson Watershed Forum said they continually monitor water quality. If a problem is identified they will involve the appropriate agency.

Q – If I have not been contacted yet as to whether I'm on the exigent list does that mean I'm not?

A – Not necessarily

Q – Is anyone speaking to the State of Colorado Congress about this yet?

A – Senator Lundberg explained that there are several pending bills to address flood relief. The bills generally "get the government out of the way" of flood recovery work. Examples include not requiring flood relief workers from other states to pay Colorado income tax for work done here and allowing ditch companies to move diversion structures a certain distance without having to go to water court.. He asked for people to keep in touch with him – they are still open to ideas

Q – Is the State looking at the issues of private water storage facilities and what are they doing about that?

A – Senator Lundberg said they are still looking at reasonable solutions

Q --It was reported that during the flood water had been diverted from the Big Thompson to the Little Thompson. Who authorizes this type of diversion and for what reasons?

A -- Senator Lundberg is aware of the report and has made initial inquiries. The watershed design process will need to take this issue into consideration.

Q – Are private bridges be considered for exigent repairs?

A – Todd Boldt answered that EWP doesn't cover roads and bridges. Gordon said he would check if there is help from the county.

Q – How do we start the work process?

A – Gordon will find out from the Army Corp of Engineers and Jeff Crane.

Q – How do we get the railroads to cooperate if their existing trestles are deemed to be high risk for increased flooding?

A – No answer available at this time. The coalition will need to research how to get railroad cooperation if needed.

## **COMMENTS**

Larry Glover received a round of applause after he indicated the number of volunteers that the Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Methodist Church can bring in starting as early as February.

Cliff Roberts suggested landowners in the coalition should form a co-op to get the debris removal work completed before spring runoff. The idea was received very positively.

There was unanimous agreement among landowners for year round minimum stream flow in the Little Thompson.

Mike Cook with the Berthoud Fire Department said that the Fire District has applied for a grant that will pay for equipment that can process debris – shredders, chippers, etc. They are still waiting to hear on that

The counties, acting as local agents for FEMA determine the Flood Plain Designations. The flood plain designations now in place may have to be changed as more information is gathered from the watershed designs. The town of Milliken working directly with the CWCB on a flood plain survey

## **Volunteers to be on the Various Committees**

### Steering Committee

Brad Clark

### Technical Committee

Cliff Roberts - Chair

Brad Clark

Kevin McCarty

Mike ???

Ron Blackmer

Terry Parrish

### Fiscal Committee

Cindy Befus

Norma Stemme

Jody Marken

### Resources Committee

Deirdre Daly – Chair

Sandy Freeo

Julie Stapp

Terry Parrish

Larry Glover

Recorded and submitted by:  
Lisa Butler, District Manager