

# FLOODPLAIN REMAPPING NEWSLETTER | SPRING 2016



In this first edition of the Floodplain Remapping Program newsletter we will introduce the Colorado Water Conservation Board's (CWCB) floodplain remapping program, explain why it is necessary to remap the floodplain, describe how the remapping will be completed, and define some common floodplain terms.

The information contained in this newsletter will help you identify whether the floodplain remapping program will impact the predicted flood risk for your property.

## Colorado Hazard Mapping Program (CHAMP)

The 2013 Flood caused widespread damage along waterways throughout Boulder County and in many other areas of the state. In response, the State of Colorado is taking steps towards bolstering long-term planning and resiliency efforts by funding the Colorado Hazard Mapping Program (CHAMP) that will update local hazard information including new regulatory floodplain maps for the most affected waterways. Boulder County is supporting this initiative because accurate floodplain maps provide detailed information for property owners on their own flood risks and enable proactive measures to protect people and property before the next significant flood event. Boulder County is a high-risk community for flooding.

## Common Floodplain Terms

### Regulatory Floodplain

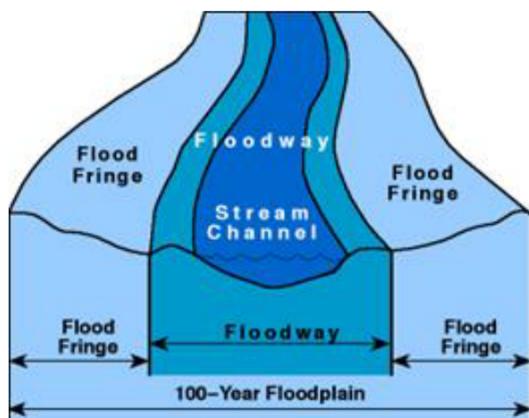
The regulatory floodplain delineates the predicted flood height and boundaries of a storm that has a 1% chance of occurring in any given year (also known as the "100-year flood"). The predicted water level during the 1% annual chance event is called the base flood elevation. The regulatory floodplain is what FEMA and local authorities use to regulate public and private development and calculate flood insurance rates.

### Floodway

The floodway is a regulatory term that can be thought of as the piece of the floodplain that conveys most of the water. As such, water in the floodway is generally deeper, faster, and more dangerous and destructive than in other parts of the floodplain. The part of the floodplain outside of the floodway is commonly referred to as the floodfringe.

### Special Flood Hazard Area

The Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) is that area of land predicted to be inundated with flood water in the 1% annual chance event and generally shown on a Flood Insurance Rate Map as Zone A, AE, AH, or AO.



## Timeline for Program

Work on the new floodplain maps has already begun. Draft maps for the South St. Vrain, North St. Vrain, Middle St. Vrain, and main St. Vrain rivers as well as the upper reaches of the Middle Boulder, North Boulder, South Boulder, Little Thompson, Fourmile Canyon, Cabin, Rock, and Coal creeks will be available on the Boulder County website this fall (2016). Draft maps for the Fourmile, Left Hand, and James creeks are scheduled for release in the fall of 2017.

To see if your property is in an area that will be getting updated for new floodplain maps, use the location map found on the CWCB website:  
[www.coloradohazardmapping.com/hazardMapping/phaseOneFloodplainMapping/Map](http://www.coloradohazardmapping.com/hazardMapping/phaseOneFloodplainMapping/Map)

## Why re-map the regulatory floodplain?

New regulatory floodplain maps are important to enable well-founded flood risk management for Boulder County residents. Most of the current effective regulatory floodplain maps for Boulder County are based on information and technology that was available in the 1980s. Since then, many land use changes have occurred, the 2013 Flood caused significant changes to the location of waterways, and the available information and technology has increased in accuracy. All of these changes reduce the accuracy of the current regulatory floodplain maps, which in turn reduces the effectiveness of flood risk management. Once finalized, the new regulatory floodplain maps will improve this situation and will more accurately represent where floodwater will inundate.

In addition to having accurate flood maps, maintaining the function of the floodplain by keeping debris and trash out of streams and building with the appropriate permits is also important.

## What has happened so far?

The CWCB is managing the CHAMP process and has engaged a private consultant, AECOM, to undertake the flood risk analysis that will ultimately produce new floodplain maps. The flood risk analysis predicts stream flows for different sized flood events (for example the 1% annual chance or 100-year event) and uses topographic data to predict the extent of inundation and flood water elevation. The result will be regulatory floodplain maps that predict areas at risk of flooding.

Thus far, ground surveying has occurred where necessary for waterways that are part of Phase I (including the South St. Vrain, North St. Vrain, Middle St Vrain, and Boulder Creek among others). The incorporation of topographical information and predicted flows will combine to produce new floodplain maps. The draft floodplain maps for Phase I waterways are expected to be released in fall 2016. Ground surveying of some Phase II waterways (including Fourmile Creek, Left Hand Creek, James Creek and others) will occur in 2016. Phase II draft floodplain maps are due to be released in fall 2017.

To learn more about which streams will be surveyed, explore the following interactive map:  
[www.coloradohazardmapping.com/hazardMapping/phaseOneFloodplainMapping/Map](http://www.coloradohazardmapping.com/hazardMapping/phaseOneFloodplainMapping/Map)

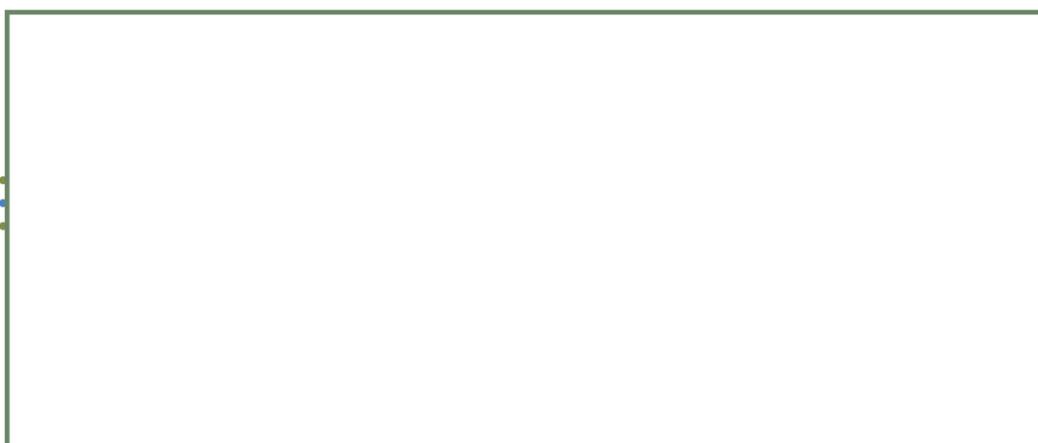
# BOULDER COUNTY FLOODPLAIN REMAPPING PROGRAM



Boulder County supports CWCB's floodplain remapping program. CWCB is producing the maps and Boulder County will locally adopt them for regulatory purposes shortly thereafter. Ultimately, the new floodplain maps produced by CWCB will be adopted by FEMA as Flood Insurance Rate Maps.

In the lead up to the availability of the draft floodplain maps, Boulder County will be distributing general floodplain information to prepare property owners and residents for any changes that might occur, particularly with respect to flood insurance and regulatory floodplain development requirements.

All properties are eligible for flood insurance and having flood insurance is highly recommended even if your property is not within the regulatory floodplain. More information about flood insurance can be found on Boulder County's floodplain remapping website: [www.BoCoFloodplainRemapping.com](http://www.BoCoFloodplainRemapping.com)



## Stay informed about future developments

### Website

Boulder County has a website dedicated to the floodplain remapping process: [www.BoCoFloodplainRemapping.com](http://www.BoCoFloodplainRemapping.com).

This website provides general information about regulatory floodplains, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the National Flood Insurance Program, and will provide updates on the CHAMP process as they are released.

### Newsletters

Boulder County will distribute newsletters bi-monthly. Each newsletter will provide updates on the CHAMP process as well as other information relevant to the regulatory floodplain remapping process. The newsletters will also be available on the website.

### Listserv

Boulder County will be managing a listserv that any interested person can sign up to and receive regular updates about the floodplain remapping process. Sign up information can be found on the Remapping website.

### Watershed Coalitions

Boulder County will be partnering with the Fourmile, St Vrain, Little Thompson, Coal Creek, and Left Hand Watershed Coalitions to distribute newsletters to all members.

### Social Media

Important news will also be distributed via Boulder County's social media outlets on Facebook and Twitter at [www.Facecook.com/bouldercounty](http://www.Facecook.com/bouldercounty) and [www.Twitter.com/bouldercounty](http://www.Twitter.com/bouldercounty).

### Community Meetings

Boulder County will host public meetings following the release of draft floodplain maps. Details on dates and locations will be released closer to the time.

### Next Newsletter

The second newsletter will be released towards the end of June 2016 and will provide an overview on the National Flood Insurance Program and address how the new floodplain mapping process may change flood insurance requirements for property owners. A progress report about CHAMP will also be provided.

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