



## BOULDER COUNTY FLOODPLAIN REMAPPING NEWSLETTER

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition – Fall 2016



In this edition of the Boulder County Floodplain Remapping Project newsletter, we'll focus on the Colorado Hazard Mapping Program's (CHAMP) work to remap and map for the first time floodplains throughout Boulder County and the Front Range. Plus, we would like to share news on the county's code changes as they relate to floodplain regulations.

We value the knowledge Boulder County residents have about the places you call home. As we move forward in the remapping process, we recognize the value resident input has in the development of well-informed, accurate floodplain maps and encourage you to be part of the process by attending a community meeting focused on a waterway near your home. Continue reading to learn more about community meetings and other ways you can stay informed and get involved.

Residents living along North and South St. Vrain creeks and St. Vrain Creek from Longmont Dam Road and Red Gulch Road to Lyons, and from Lyons east toward Longmont should attend the following meeting:

#### **Draft Map Review for St Vrain Creek (reaches in unincorporated Boulder County)**

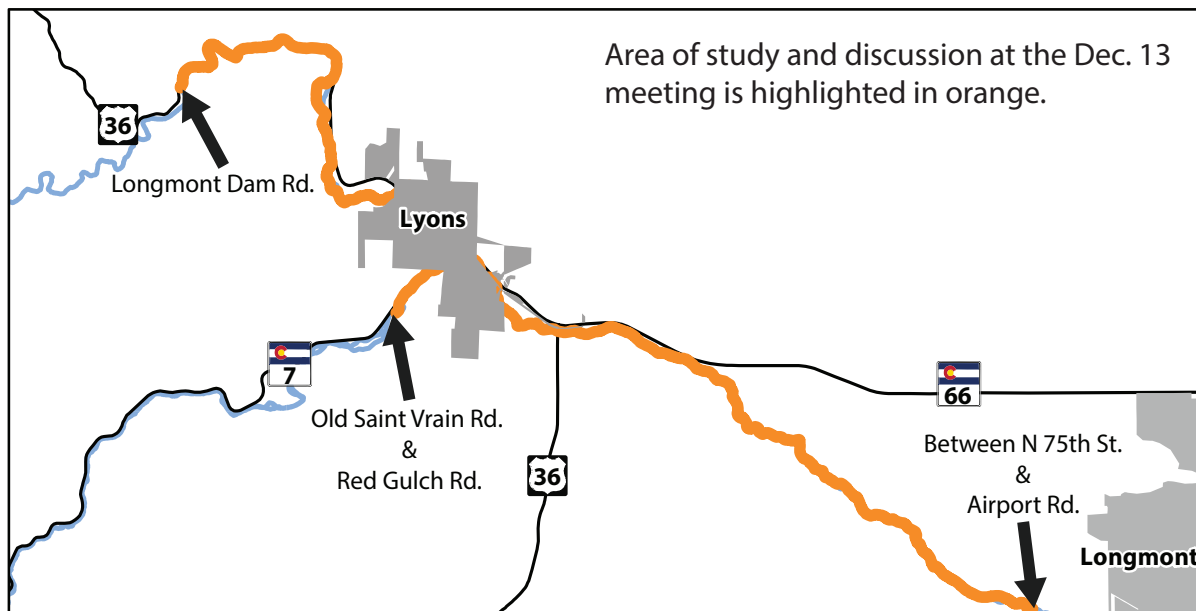
Tuesday, Dec. 13, 2016

6 to 8 p.m.

The River Church

18668 N. St. Vrain Rd., Lyons, CO 80540

Although the entirety of the St. Vrain is being remapped, residents of Lyons and Longmont should refer to their town/city website for more information.



Area of study and discussion at the Dec. 13 meeting is highlighted in orange.

---

## Colorado Hazard Mapping Program (CHAMP) Update

---

The Colorado Hazard Mapping Program, or CHAMP, was established after the 2013 floods to enable the state to take steps toward long-term planning and resiliency efforts for flooding and other natural hazards such as erosion and debris flow events. Currently, CHAMP is conducting technical surveys and stream modeling to inform new floodplain maps throughout the Front Range. The streams within these watersheds are being studied in two phases – Phase I draft floodplain maps are currently being developed, and Phase II maps will be drafted in 2017.

Draft map data from the state's remapping team – including engineers with AECOM, a nationally-recognized engineering firm, and the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) – has been released to local governments for review. This current data set includes new information for the currently mapped and extended reaches of the following Phase I streams within unincorporated Boulder County:

- Cabin Creek
- North – Middle – South St. Vrain Creek(s), St. Vrain Creek
- North – Middle – South Boulder Creek(s), Boulder Creek
- Upper Fourmile Canyon Creek
- Two Mile Canyon Creek
- New Dry Creek
- Dry Creek No. 2
- Rock Creek
- Coal Creek

Data for Phase II streams, including Left Hand Creek, James Creek, Fourmile Creek, and the Little Thompson River will be delivered in the fall of 2017. Upon receipt of the maps, Boulder County will follow the same review process for Phase II, including holding community meetings in these areas.

### **What the county is doing:**

Boulder County's Floodplain Management team is reviewing CHAMP data and draft maps for accuracy and is providing technical comments to the CHAMP team for review and integration into the information that will ultimately be sent to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The county will host public hearings before the maps are locally adopted and during the formal FEMA appeals period, before the maps are incorporated on the FEMA Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (DFIRMs).

We want the draft maps to accurately reflect local conditions and, for this reason, are looking for your input on the draft map data. We hope that you can attend an upcoming community meeting where Boulder County staff will guide attendees through the draft map information and collect comments to provide to the CHAMP team as additional input for their next iteration of modeling. We are looking for feedback on structure location and recent land use changes that may not be indicated by the draft data. This information is critical for accurate mapping not only on your property but for the entire river corridor.

### **How you can get involved:**

Community meetings to review draft maps and provide comments on the proposed map changes will be held in the coming months for Phase I areas. Look for follow-up information coming soon with dates, locations, and more details about how you can provide your comments to Boulder County if you can't attend a community meeting.

### Why are floodplains being remapped – or being mapped for the first time?

The 2013 flood significantly changed creek size, shape, and location in many areas throughout Boulder County. The flood also provided new hydrology information that will be used for future floodplain maps. It is important to have updated mapping to accurately portray risk, which helps property owners determine if their property is threatened by flooding, if the property is within a regulatory floodplain, if any structures on one's property are impacted, and if one should obtain flood insurance.

**Please note: Properties that fall within the existing regulatory floodplain must continue to comply with all FEMA and county floodplain regulations.**

All Boulder County residents are eligible for flood insurance because even homes not located near the floodplain may suffer flood damage. You can learn more about flood insurance at [www.floodsmart.gov](http://www.floodsmart.gov).



### What is the purpose of a floodplain map?

Boulder County has 13 major drainages with mapped floodplains that provide the foundation for Boulder County's floodplain management program. Boulder County is supporting the state's remapping 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.

## Floodplain Regulations & Code Change Updates

We would like to thank all who participated in the floodplain question & answer sessions over the summer as we revised the Boulder County Land Use Code. The feedback received at those meetings was influential in finalizing the code amendments that were approved by the Board of County Commissioners in September and went into effect on October 17, 2016. These new floodplain regulations were approved with the intent to:

- Create a transparent public process and make possible the incorporation of best available data for regulatory use in current and future floodplain remapping;
- Revise language in the floodplain regulations regarding non-conforming structures and uses to be consistent with the rest of the Code;
- Revise language regarding appeals and variances to decisions made under the floodplain regulations to be consistent with the rest of the Code; and,
- Update related provisions in the Code in order to best protect the health, safety, and welfare of Boulder County residents in the event of future flood events.

### Uses/Activities that may be covered by the General FDP\*

As a result of the code revisions, residents with property in the floodplain can now use a General Floodplain Development Permit (FDP) for development activities that pose minimal or no impact to the floodplain. While the General FDP allows certain projects and uses to take place without the need for an Individual FDP, some projects still require notification of the County Engineer. Full details on project/use eligibility, notification requirements, and the downloadable permit form(s) are provided on the Boulder County website at:

<http://www.bouldercounty.org/roads/permits/pages/floodcontrol.aspx>.

\*Additional details and limitations of the General FDP are specified in the code – Section 4-407 (see link above to access the code online)



In some cases, projects like installing a mailbox will now only require a General FDP.

Follow this link to read and download the revised code (see section 4-400 starting on page 59):

<http://www.bouldercounty.org/doc/landuse/lucodearticle04.pdf>

The Boulder County website provides detailed information about the process of amending the code, with a link to Resolution 2016-111 signed by the Boulder County Commissioners:

<http://www.bouldercounty.org/property/build/pages/lucodeupdatedc150004.aspx>

### **Outcome of the Code Changes:**

The new floodplain regulations will provide clearer floodplain management guidance that will better serve county residents, reduce risk in future flood events, and prevent costly property damage.

Boulder County is an at-risk flood community and our efforts to build responsibly, document floodplain development with proper permitting procedures, and keep the floodplain free of trash and debris will promote the health of our streams and the safety of area residents.

---

## **Stay informed about future developments**

---

### **Websites**

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 (FEMA), the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), and CHAMP activities, including a link to CHAMP's website.

### **Newsletters**

Boulder County will email newsletters regularly as updated information is available for our residents. 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. Not on our newsletter list?

Registration is available on the Boulder County remapping website.

#### **In Our Next Newsletter:**

We'll send out dates and locations for upcoming community meetings in early 2017 for the rest of the Phase I streams. We will also provide access to a platform for online map review through which you will be able to provide comments regarding specific locations; this will serve as an ongoing resource and will also allow those who cannot attend their public meeting to provide input. To help prepare you for community meetings, we'll also provide an overview of what floodplain maps are and how they are interpreted.

### **Listserv**

Boulder County manages a listserv that any interested person can register for and receive regular updates about the floodplain remapping process. Sign up information can be found on the remapping website and the county website homepage.

### **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.Facebook.com/bouldercounty](http://www.Facebook.com/bouldercounty) and [www.Twitter.com/BoCoDOT](http://www.Twitter.com/BoCoDOT).

### **Community Meetings**

Boulder County will host additional public meetings to review Phase I draft map data in early 2017.

Details on dates and locations will be released in the next newsletter.

#### **Contact**

Floodplain eMapping Contact

Erin Cooper

720-564-2866

[floodplainmapscomment@bouldercounty.org](mailto:floodplainmapscomment@bouldercounty.org)