



Rio Grande Watershed Emergency Action Coordination Team

Hinsdale County • Mineral County • Rio Grande County
Colorado Water Conservation Board

www.rweact.org

RWEACT Core Team: Tom Spezze, Executive Director; Travis Smith, San Luis Valley Irrigation District / CWCB Board of Directors; Stan Whinnery, Hinsdale County Commissioner; Ramona Weber, Mineral County Commissioner; Karla Shriver, Rio Grande County Commissioner and Economic Recovery Team Leader; Heather Dutton, Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project Executive Director and Natural Resources Team Leader; Steve Belz, Black Creek Hydrology and Hydrology Team Leader; Kristine Borchers, Assistant and Communications Team Leader; Jerry Dennis, Rio Grande Emergency Manager, and Jerry Gray, Hinsdale County Emergency Manager, as Emergency Management Team Leaders. Dan Dallas, Forest Supervisor for the Rio Grande National Forest; Barry Wiley, Acting District Ranger for the Divide Ranger District; and Dale Gomez, liaison with the Divide Ranger District, serve RWEACT in an ex-officio, non-voting capacity.

Summer 2014 Update -- What RWEACT Has Done Since July 2013:

- Organization
 - Formation of organizational structure and function of RWEACT
 - Develop/foster multi-jurisdictional partnership/cooperation with agencies, organizations, cities, and counties along the Rio Grande.
 - Regular RWEACT committee and overall meetings held
 - Develop Strategic Plan, Executive Summary, and Organizational Structure
 - Develop and implement Core Committees (Hydrology, Emergency Management, Natural Resources, Communication and Economic Development) and identify Team Leaders for each.
 - Leadership (CORE) Team developed to establish forum for business.
 - Establish Hinsdale County as the Fiscal Agent of RWEACT (Rio Grande County to be fiscal agent for DOLA funds and Executive Order for Recovery)
 - Field trips / presentations with Governor Hickenlooper, Senator Udall, and Natural Resources Chief of Staff for Congressman Tipton
 - Presentation to RWEACT by CUSP (Coalition for the Upper South Platte on what worked)
 - Presentation to RWEACT by the Army Corps of Engineers
 - Presentation by RWEACT to the San Luis Valley Commissioners Association
 - Further partnership development with Mountain Studies Institute
 - Develop budget protocol and procedures
 - Participate in long-term recovery meetings with Forest Service



- Communications
 - Partner with BAER in presentation of findings at public meetings
 - Develop a Communications Strategy, Target Audiences, Key Messages, and Distribution Plan
 - Consistent branding with logo and all materials
 - Rack Card – development / distribution
 - Mailing to all residents in Hinsdale / Mineral / Rio Grande Counties
 - Website development and launch
 - Flood Awareness Poster / development / distribution
 - Facebook development / postings & flyer development / distribution
 - Periodic newsletters, press releases, and media cultivation
 - Regional advertisement campaign (seasonally – fall / spring)
 - Interactive Burn Scar/ RWEACT action Map with multiple layers
 - “Photo of the month” to visually depict natural changes
 - Commemorative poster
 - Safety message signs for posting at trailheads / campgrounds (in fabrication)
 - Crisis Communication Plan with all Committees / Partners (in progress)
 - Water 101 Publication (in progress)
 - 2 three-minute videos (one completed / one in production)
 - Billing inserts for San Luis Valley Rural Electric Company (in progress)

- Hydrology
 - Initial modeling of hydrological impacts and projections related to the burn scar
 - In coordination with DWR, FS and Office of Emergency Management, Installation of 6 rain gauges and coordination with 4 additional stream gauges and 2 RAWs (remote, automated weather stations) for a landscape-wide instrumentation process for storm forecasting, early warning system related to public safety
 - Coordination of all data and identification and implementation with emergency management
 - Deployment/ installation of temporary Doppler radar system on Bristol Head (Center for Severe Weather Research) at 11,000 feet.
 - Coordinate Doppler, National Weather Service, Emergency Management Team
 - Review and comment on findings of BAER team for modeling of hydrological conditions
 - Meetings with private landowners and Forest Service recreation special use permit holders to assess conditions and model outcomes
 - Install additional Stream Gauges (Little Squaw) with audible alarms for resort (in progress)
 - Install protective signage for existing rain gauges (in progress)
 - Post-Wildfire Flood Risk Potential Mapping (in progress)



- Natural Resources

- Initial field verification of July 3rd Burn Severity mapping to identify levels and locations
- Coordination with the BAER team to identify Values at Risk
- Review of High-Value, No BAER Treatment areas to identify opportunities (Little Squaw Resort, Box Canyon Summer Home Group, Road 520 Corridor, Goose Creek and Lake Humphreys, Crooked Creek) for RWEACT Values at Risk projects.
- Initial field studies, hosted field trips, and design research for high-value areas identified
- Release of findings with Debris Flow Potential Mapping with USGS
- Coordination of research with other organization and agencies including Division of Water Resources, CSU Research, Willow Creek Restoration Foundation, San Juan Silver, etc
- Support of Natural Resource Conservation Service / private landowners visits
- In coordination with DWR, Installation of 6 water quality probes to monitor dissolved oxygen, pH, temperature, dissolved solids, dissolved sediments etc.
- Concept Design work for debris flow abatement structure at Little Squaw
- Coordinate additional research with Dr. Stednick
- Cost-share for design work with trash rack and boom at Lake Humphreys
- Cost-share with initial dredging work at Lake Humphreys
- Facilitate design work / any assistance necessary for installation of Rosgen-designed check dams above the 4UR in Mineral County
- Installation of six Test Plots for research on best practices and continued monitoring
- Hydrological Sciences Research project with Colorado School of Mines (began June 2014)
- Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado – two weekends on fire-impacted trails (June 21st / 22nd and July 19th / 20th 2014)
- Fuels mitigation for Upper Rio Grande (submitted grant application for project with CSFS)
- Fuels mitigation for Ptarmigan Meadows (grant with Dpt of Natural Resources secured)
- Great Divide Project with Rio Grande National Forest (in progress)
- Fuels Biomass Project research, feasibility, and design (in progress)
- Little Squaw safety treatments (pending appropriate soil conditions)
- Saw Crews with Southwest Conservation Corps (in progress)
- Archaeological assistance through internship opportunities (in progress)

- Emergency Management

- Identify locations for installation of instrumentation for best-possible early warning system
- Development of approved Three County Flood Plan & Emergency Management Protocol
 - Mapping zones for Emergency Notification and Response
- Creation of Weather Spotter Program Checklist and Volunteer Training Held (May 2014)
- Installation of manual Rain Gauges and distribution of weather radios in key areas
- Distribution of materials and encouragement of Code Red sign-ups



- Creation / implementation of a County deployment plan for contacting high-risk residencies
 - Coordination with CDOT for highway Reader Board in South Fork to Move Up Not Out
 - Site / homeowner visits to high-risk areas / distribution of literature
 - Sandbagging Workshop with the Army Corps of Engineers held during Fire Preparedness Day
 - Design of structure to protect historic Forest Service structure (in progress)
 - Installation of Weather Radio Transmitter to improve coverage on Pool Table Road (in progress)
 - Tabletop Exercise (scheduled for July 2014)
- Economic Recovery
 - Identification of a National Disaster Area
 - Small Business Agency meetings with individual business owners and offerings of low-interest loans (South Fork, Del Norte, Creede, Lake City)
 - El Pomar Foundation emergency assistance grant application for “Immediate Needs” such as mortgage, utilities, emergency assistance for Rio Grande / Mineral residents
 - Letter of support to Colorado Tourism Office requesting regional assistance
 - Timber Sale Replacement discussions / public meeting with timber contractors
 - Flood Insurance Workshop for public residents (Summer 2013, Spring 2014)
 - Release of information of Colorado Wildlife & Parks for big-game hunting impacts and fishing
 - Discussions with local Lodging Tax Boards about regional efforts
 - Provided letter of support for the City of Creede’s letter of intent to the Colorado Main Street program
 - Implement Three-County Innovative Marketing Plan with DOLA of \$100,000 (in progress)
 - Recommendation to Rio Grande County Fiscal Agent regarding Consultant
 - Silver Thread Scenic Byway Council re-initiated
 - Participation with Archuleta County
 - Implement Recovery Efforts through Executive Order (\$195,000) for specific economic development initiatives (in progress)
 - Identification of five goals – new recreation-based activities, development of heritage-tourism based activities, assist with development of biomass industry, increased marketing, and support existing businesses

More information can be found at www.rweact.org
 Tom Spezze, Executive Director
info@rweact.org
tom@dinatalewater.com
 970-765-4231



Rio Grande Watershed Emergency Action Coordination Team

Hinsdale County • Mineral County • Rio Grande County
Colorado Water Conservation Board

www.rweact.org