

\$2.35M Poudre Canyon culvert project starts this week

Crews will start construction this week on six culverts in the Poudre Canyon as part of a \$2.35 million project to improve drainage in the High Park Fire burn zone.

The project to replace and expand culverts will take place from mile markers 102 through 115 on Colorado 14, the Colorado Department of Transportation said Monday. Chicago-based Collins Engineers Inc. will design the project.

The transportation department also will host a public meeting at 6 p.m. Tuesday at the Poudre Park Community Center, 10000 W. Highway 14, to review the culvert project goals, outline the schedule and discuss traffic with residents and highway travelers.

"The project is designed to improve existing drainage infrastructure and remove fallen trees and debris before it has a chance to come down the hillside," Project Manager Justin Pipe said in a statement. "These efforts will reduce road closures and maintenance emergencies regularly occurring along the corridor during inclement weather, and will help improve the safety of the highway."

The absence of vegetation made the hillsides unstable, leading to mudslides and washouts that affect public safety, traffic flow and the road conditions. Colorado 14 will be impacted by the High Park fire for at least the next five years while the vegetation is re-established, according to the transportation department.

The transportation department already has installed several signs in the canyon to warn travelers about the burn zone. The signs will remain up until the burn scar has healed.

During the project, traffic will be reduced to a single lane and traffic will be directed through the work zone by a traffic signal. Only one direction of traffic is allowed to travel through the work zone at a time, and the configuration will be in effect 24 hours per day, seven days a week. Flaggers may be present at times to stop traffic in 10-minute increments.

Crews will work on the project from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays, and on Fridays from 6 a.m. until noon.

No more than two sites will be under construction at a time in order to keep delays to 20 minutes or less during work hours and no more than five minutes during non-working hours. The speed limit through the work zone will be reduced to 30 miles per hour, and width restrictions will be set at 11 feet for commercial vehicles.

The transportation department expects to finish the project by January.