

Dry Creek

Drainage Improvement Project

A periodic newsletter for property owners in the Dry Creek Floodplain

Winter 2004

Dry Creek Drainage Improvement Project begins in January

After years of discussion, study and research, the City of Fort Collins is about to begin the Dry Creek Drainage Improvement Project.

The Flooding Situation

Approximately 62 square miles of land drains into the Dry Creek Basin. (See Flooding History on other side.) The Dry Creek Floodplain contains hundreds of residential and commercial structures in the city and county. In a 100-year rainfall event (a storm that has a one percent chance of occurring in any given year), 8,800 cubic feet of water per second (cfs) would flow through Dry Creek and enter Douglas Reservoir. To put this in

perspective, the average flow in the Poudre River at maximum spring runoff is between 5,000–7,000 cfs. This amount of water would cause devastating flooding as it flowed toward the Poudre River.

Past Planning Efforts

Over the past 15 years, the City of Fort Collins and Larimer County talked with property owners about ideas for increasing flood protection for both city and county properties in this basin. Conceptual ideas, like those outlined in master plans, cover a broad range of possibilities. As more detailed information is gathered, the ideas are refined into final design and construction plans.

Initially, the City and County arrived at a master plan solution that totaled approximately \$15.6 million. At this time, Larimer County is unable to provide any financial assistance to the project. The City completed reassessment of the proposed solutions and found more cost-effective alternatives that resulted in two significant changes. Now

it will not be necessary to use Dry Creek or construct a pipeline to convey irrigation water. Preliminary field work was conducted last summer as surveyors,

field researchers and drilling operators gathered data on vegetation, wildlife, soils and topography.

The Project Today

We now are moving ahead with final design of the project. Construction of some components will begin as early as spring of 2004.

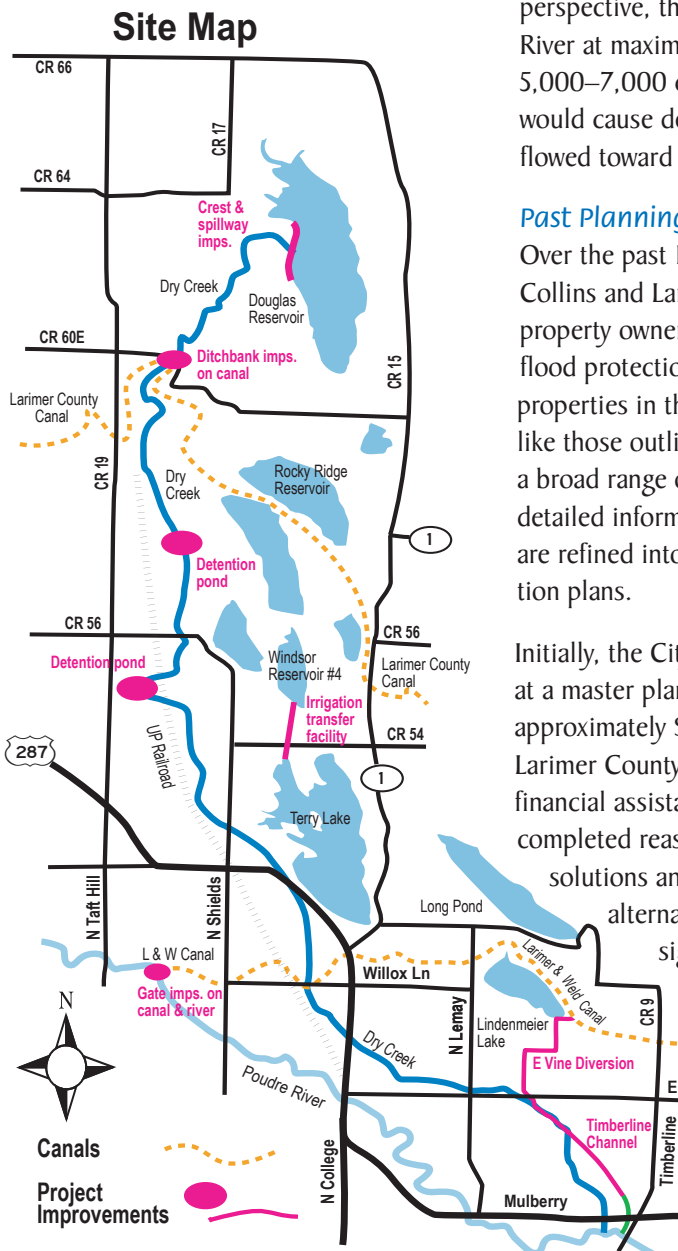
The goals of the Dry Creek Drainage Improvement Project are:

- to protect people and properties within the Dry Creek Basin, and
- to reduce or eliminate the FEMA regulatory floodplain for Dry Creek in the city limits.

The streamlined project consists of two major components: stormwater detention and stormwater conveyance (moving the water). The three areas to be used for stormwater detention are Douglas Reservoir and two proposed detention basins on Dry Creek between the reservoir and the Larimer and Weld Canal. (See map at left.)

The Larimer and Weld Canal will be utilized to carry additional flows from Dry Creek to a diversion near Lindenmeier Lake. A new channel will be constructed from this diversion south under Vine Drive and the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe railroad tracks where it will intercept Dry Creek.

Through an agreement with the Eaton Companies, the City will use Douglas Reservoir and the Larimer and Weld Canal for storage and transfer of water. As part of the agreement, the City will build a structure to transfer water from Windsor Reservoir No. 4 to Terry Lake as well as construct minor upgrades to existing ditches.



Flooding History of the Dry Creek Basin

Dry Creek is a tributary of the Cache la Poudre River. The Dry Creek Basin, which begins near the Wyoming border, has a drainage area of about 62 square miles with a series of irrigation canals and reservoirs dominating the upper basin. Due to agriculture and development, only a fraction of the original drainage channel remains. Dry Creek enters Fort Collins near Willox Lane and College Avenue and meanders through small remnants of ditches and channels until it joins the Cache la Poudre River near Mulberry Street and Timberline Road.

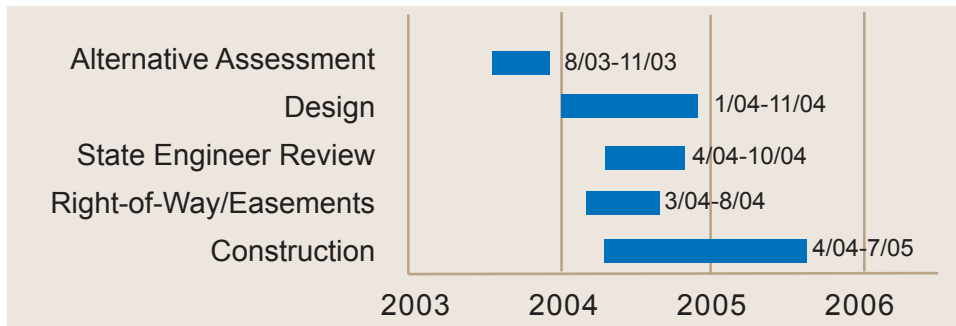
Although local newspapers reported numerous floods over the last 100 years that affected different areas in and around Fort Collins, many floods in Dry Creek probably went unnoticed due to the sparse population in the upper basin. A local resident documented that in 1924 flooding was “belly deep to a horse” in the area that is now JAX.

In the August 1951 flood, the *Coloradoan* reported that two breaks in the Eaton Ditch (Larimer and Weld Canal) spilled over into Dry Creek and “flooded tourist camps,

stores and houses on the west side of North College Avenue north of city limits.” In the same storm, another 20 houses flooded in the Goering Addition, west of the old speedway track at the northwest corner of Willox Lane and College Avenue. In 1977, another storm brought 4.28 inches of rain in 24 hours, flooding basements north of town, most likely in the Dry Creek basin.

In spite of the small number of reported floods in the Dry Creek Basin, it contains a very large drainage area—significant flooding could occur at any time.

Dry Creek Drainage Improvement Project Schedule



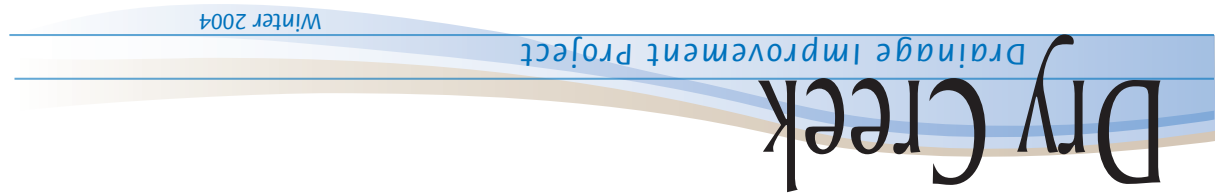
For more information, contact:

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For detailed information about the Dry Creek Drainage Improvement Project, join City of Fort Collins Utilities for an

Open House

Wednesday, Jan. 28
 4–6 p.m.
 Utilities Service Center
 700 Wood St., Training Room



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED