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## **Resources available to help residents plan ahead for spring runoff**

In the Estes Valley, spring runoff typically starts in April and peaks in June. Each spring there is a chance that warmer temperatures and higher than average snow packs will result in higher flows and rising water levels along streams and rivers throughout the Estes Valley. Sudden, prolonged warm spells combined with heavy rains increase the chances of localized flooding. The 2013 flood changed local rivers and streams -- some channels are wider and deeper and can carry more water; others are shallower and narrower and can carry less water. The ground also remains saturated from last year's rains. While local floodplain managers cannot predict the effects of the upcoming runoff, there is potential for heavy flows. The Town is already preparing public property by clearing debris and excess sediments where needed, and private property owners along rivers and streams should consider doing the same.

It is ultimately every citizen's responsibility to protect their own private property and to consider how risks on his or her property affect neighbors up and downstream. The Town of Estes Park encourages residents to reach out to their neighbors and work together to address potential problems. The Town and River Coalition teams are available for technical guidance. Some actions private property owners can take to protect property are:

1. Stabilize undercut and unstable river banks and reduce blockage potential
  - a. Cut down unstable trees (leave stump and roots in place) that could fall and block water flow along the channel or at downstream bridges and culverts.
  - b. Leave existing roots and small woody and vegetative debris on riverbanks to reduce flow velocities and resist bank erosion.
  - c. Apply quick-growing seed mixes, such as Regreen (*Triticum aestivum*) and other cover crops (i.e., annual species that germinate quickly).
  - d. Selectively remove problematic debris from river; permits required; contact the Town for assistance.
  - e. Permits for all work in the floodplain are required and available to residents within the Town limits by calling the Town of Estes Park's Building Safety Division at 970-577-3726. Floodplain manager Will Birchfield is available to provide mitigation advice during the permit process.
2. Prevent or reduce flood water damage using sand bags or hydro barriers.
  - a. Increase available flow area by opening floodplain areas that were blocked by 2013 flood deposition; permits required; contact the Town of Estes Park's Community Development Department at 970-577-3721 for assistance.
  - b. Bags can be placed adjacent to buildings to divert water around buildings and to stabilize banks, NOT in the river channels.

**MORE**

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- c. For more information on filling and using sandbags, visit [www.larimer.org/flooding2013](http://www.larimer.org/flooding2013).
- d. Local hardware and lumber stores sell sand bags and hydro barriers.
- e. Larimer County, Red Cross and SERVE 6.8 are collaborating to provide sandbags to the Estes Valley public April 12 and 19. For more information please visit [www.larimer.org/news](http://www.larimer.org/news); to volunteer or request sandbags contact SERVE 6.8 at 970-231-6445 or email [info@serve68.org](mailto:info@serve68.org).
- f. Several properties identified by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) as in need of immediate protection are participating in the NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program. Eligible property owners have been contacted, and work is scheduled to be complete by the end of April.

### **Consider purchasing flood insurance for peace of mind**

Because the Town of Estes Park participates in the National Flood Insurance Program, all properties are eligible to hold flood insurance, not just those that are required to hold flood insurance by insurance companies. Purchase flood insurance with your local agent or at [www.Floodsmart.gov](http://www.Floodsmart.gov). New policies have a 30-day waiting period before they go into effect, so the time to purchase is now.

### **Runoff Preparedness Program April 21**

To help prepare for what could be a significant run-off season after the 2013 flood, the Town of Estes Park invites residents and businesses to a public meeting on April 21 from 4:30 to 6 p.m. in the Town Board Room of Estes Park's Town Hall, 170 MacGregor Avenue. Several resource and emergency management agencies will attend to provide resources and answer questions. The April 21 "Preparing for spring runoff" meeting will air live at [www.estes.org/videos](http://www.estes.org/videos) and local cable television channel 12, and will be available for viewing online later.

### **Participate in Fish Creek and Fall River Coalitions and long-term master planning**

Fall River and Fish Creek Coalitions have formed to administer stream corridor master plan funding from the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB), with the ultimate goal of building resiliency in our community, economy, and river systems. The coalitions are open to everyone interested and create a forum for working cooperatively, helping residents get to know their neighbors and connect with agencies and other technical experts. The master plans will guide the prioritization and implementation of projects that protect life and property from flood hazard, while enhancing riparian ecosystems for wildlife and recreation. The master plan process requires comprehensive collaboration, supported by strong and broad-based technical expertise.

Master Plan meetings are on-going and include information on both emergency and long-term efforts to protect and restore our watersheds. In tandem with the Runoff Preparedness Program April 21, a meeting for both coalitions is scheduled from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m., in the Town Board Room. These coalition meetings will also air live at [www.estes.org/videos](http://www.estes.org/videos) and on local cable television channel 12 and will be available for viewing online later. For more information please visit [www.fallrivercoalition.org](http://www.fallrivercoalition.org), [www.facebook.com/fallrivercoalition](http://www.facebook.com/fallrivercoalition) and [www.facebook.com/fishcreekcoalition](http://www.facebook.com/fishcreekcoalition). A website for the Fish Creek Coalition is in development. For more information please contact the Town of Estes Park's Community Development Department at 970-577-3721 or email [planning@estes.org](mailto:planning@estes.org).

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