

Notice of Intent
To prepare an Environmental Assessment for
Garden of the Gods Detention Facility and Camp Creek Stabilization
Garden of the Gods Park and Rock Ledge Ranch, Colorado Springs, Colorado

Public notification is hereby given by the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) of the intent to prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) for proposed projects on Camp Creek in Garden of the Gods Park and Rock Ledge Ranch in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The City of Colorado Springs has requested assistance from FEMA for the proposed construction of a stormwater detention and sediment collection facility in the northeastern corner of the park. A future project to add naturalistic grade control along Camp Creek through Garden of the Gods Park and Rock Ledge Ranch will also be included in the EA.

This notification is provided pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), Executive Order 11988 – Floodplain Management, and Executive Order 11990 – *Wetland Protection*, and Federal agency implementation procedures including 44 C.F.R. Parts 9 and 10.

FEMA is considering funding the detention pond project through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, which provides funds to states and local governments to implement long-term hazard mitigation measures after a major disaster declaration. The purpose of the HMGP is to reduce the loss of life and property due to natural disasters and to enable mitigation measures to be implemented during the immediate recovery from a disaster. In accordance with NEPA, an EA will be prepared to evaluate the potential impact of the proposed projects on the human and natural environment. The EA will also address any connected actions that will be carried out as part of the proposed projects.

BACKGROUND

Camp Creek drains a 10 square mile watershed, which originates in the steep and rocky Pike National Forest to the northwest. The Waldo Canyon Fire in the summer of 2012 altered the watershed. The Camp Creek watershed sustained soil burns and loss of vegetation from the fire. This condition has greatly increased the potential for storm runoff and sediment transport and has resulted in increased peak flow rates, runoff volumes, and frequency of runoff events associated with Camp Creek. Large amounts of sediment were deposited along portions of Camp Creek in a large storm event in 2013 and during several storm events this year. Erosion is occurring in other portions of Camp Creek.

The Pleasant Valley neighborhood borders the Camp Creek/31st Street channel and includes over 200 properties that are in the special flood hazard area. The risk of flooding is due to inadequate capacity in the channelized portion of Camp Creek that flows in the center median of 31st Street through the neighborhood. Important pedestrian corridors to neighborhood facilities and schools and 31st Street are included in the Camp Creek floodplain

All vehicle access to the northwest quadrant of the Pleasant Valley Neighborhood is across or

through 31st Street. Thus, emergency access to the neighborhood is cut off during large flood events. Many of the homes in the Camp Creek floodplain have basements that are subject to flooding. Thus, flooding associated with Camp Creek poses property damage and life safety risks.

Sediment deposits and erosion along Camp Creek are having a negative impact on Garden of the Gods and Rock Ledge Ranch. The Gateway Road Bridge over Camp Creek has marginal capacity for flood flows and thus, Gateway Road is closed when the potential for large flows in the creek exists during rainfall events.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed detention pond project is the initial element of a multi-phased Camp Creek Drainage Improvement Project that was developed through a planning process with robust public involvement in 2013 and 2014. The proposed pond and future naturalistic channel stabilization are part of the plan that was most favored by the public through the planning process.

The proposed pond will significantly reduce peak flow rates, sediment and debris that must be conveyed through Camp Creek within Garden of the Gods, Rock Ledge Ranch and the 31st Street Channel during large flood events. Thus, it will significantly reduce the potential for flood damage and life safety issues. The project will also reduce the potential for sedimentation and erosion in Garden of the Gods Park and closures of Gateway Road during large runoff events.

The proposed pond will store a portion of the runoff from the contributing watershed during large storm events and release flow to the downstream Camp Creek channel at reduced rates over an extended period of time. In the 100-year flood, the pond will control the peak rate of flow in the downstream portion of Camp Creek to less than half of the inflow rate which will result in a significant reduction in the size of the floodplain along the Creek. A portion of the pond will be configured to collect and store sediment and debris in a location that can be accessed for cleanout by the City.

The future naturalistic stabilization of Camp Creek through Garden of the Gods Park and Rock Ledge Ranch will add numerous drop structures constructed of boulders along the creek to mitigate erosion that is occurring with increased runoff from the Waldo Canyon burn scar.

The proposed projects will affect a segment of Camp Creek that is designated as “water of the United States” and has an associated FEMA designated floodplain. All required federal, state and local permits and approvals, including a Clean Water Act Section 404 permit from the regulatory office of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will be needed prior to construction.

COMMENT PERIOD

A public comment period related to the Proposed Action will remain open for 15 days following publication of this notice. In addition to this initial comment period, a final opportunity for public review and comment will be provided when the Draft EA becomes available. Interested parties may submit comments or request additional project information by contacting:

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