

Waldo Canyon Multi-Jurisdictional Major Flash Flood

Table Top Exercise

HOW CRYSTAL PARK IS IMPACTED

Exercise Purpose and Scope

- ◆ Held on March 21, 2013 this exercise was an eye opener for everyone affected by a possible flood
- ◆ In preparation for a possible flash flood event, Federal, state, regional, local, and non-government organizations and agencies came together to conduct a one-day, facilitated, scenario-driven, discussion-based tabletop exercise.
 - Crystal Park VFD was a participant in the planning sessions and the work-streams that were established (e.g. Medical, Command)
- ◆ The exercise allowed the “whole of community” the ability to exchange ideas, coordinate processes and procedures, and share lessons learned.
- ◆ The exercise encompassed the areas of ***jurisdictional communication***, ***public interaction and information sharing***, and ***resource management*** over the course of a 72-hour time period.



from this...



**Waldo Canyon Fire 346 Homes
Destroyed >\$110M to Rebuild**



...*to this*...



...to this!



DEADLY FLOODING

AT LEAST 17 DEAD. 22 REPORTED MISSING.

EXERCISE INPUT

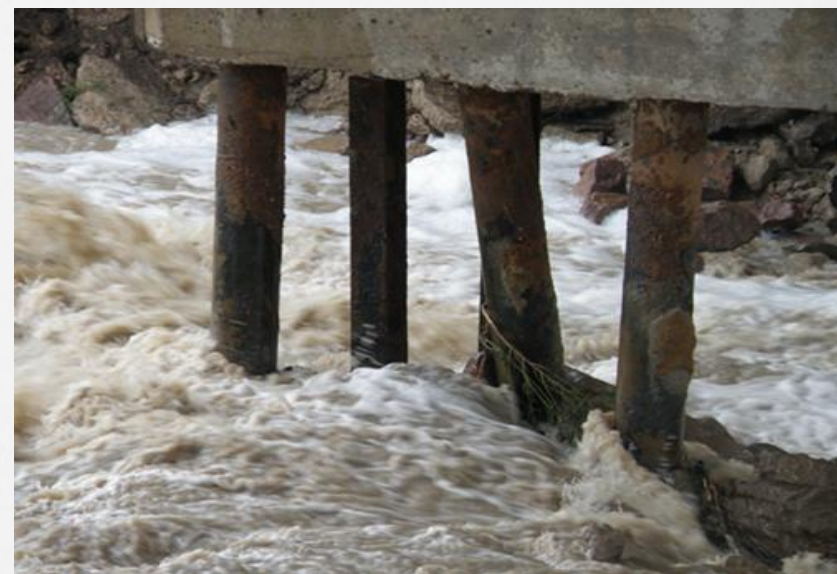
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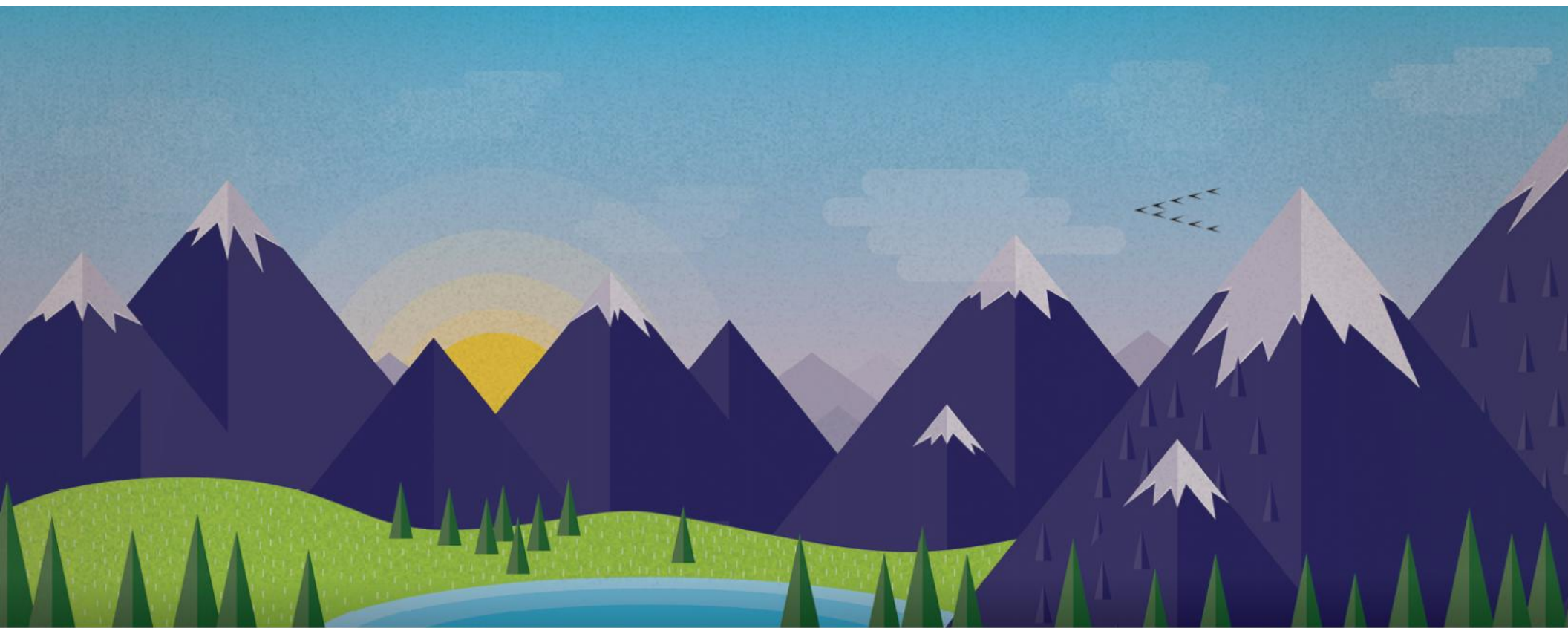
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Current Major Concern

“Fire to Flood”

- ◆ Flooding around the “burn scar” is a major concern
- ◆ Issues: Readiness of all first responding agencies
 - Resources
 - Communications
 - Planning
 - Command
 - IC Location (multiple IOCs and EOCs)
- ◆ For Crystal Park, what is happening outside the District will/could impact us since critical infrastructure we rely on will be affected

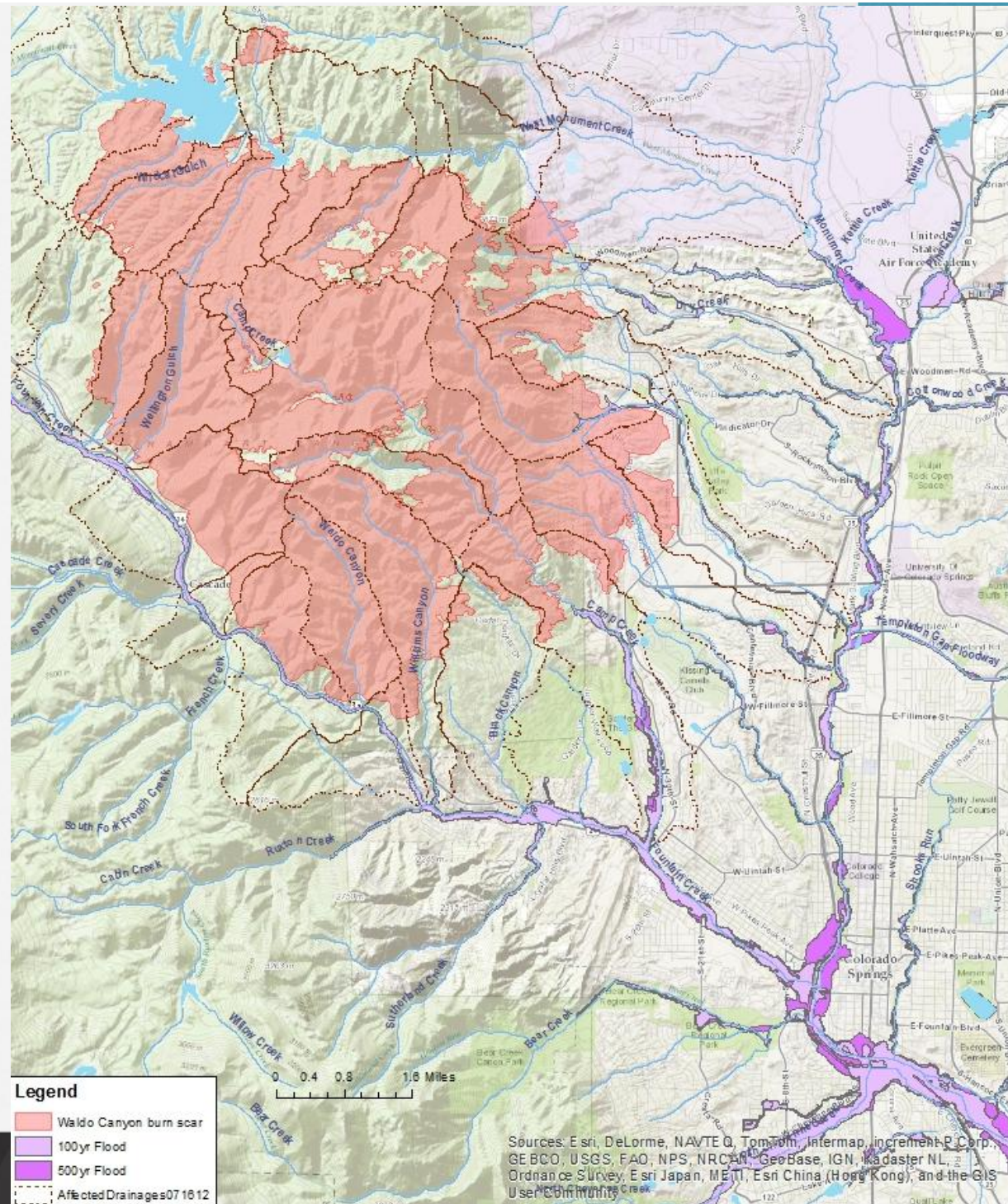




Exercise Overview

Exercise Area Overview

- ◆ Flash Flood event will impact:
 - Manitou Springs
 - Ute Pass
 - Camp Creek to 31st Street
 - North & South Douglas Creeks
 - Monument Creek to Fountain Creek
- ◆ This was for the event; real world it could be worse
- ◆ The idea of a 100 year flood is not so far fetched now that we have a large burn scar



Participants

Local

- ◆ Cascade Volunteer Fire Department
- ◆ Colorado Springs Fire Department
- ◆ Colorado Springs Office of Emergency Management
- ◆ Colorado Springs Police Department
- ◆ Colorado Springs Public Information Officer
- ◆ Colorado Springs Public Works
- ◆ Colorado Springs Utilities
- ◆ County Public Services
- ◆ Crystal Park Volunteer Fire Department
- ◆ El Paso County Commissioners
- ◆ El Paso County Office of Emergency Management
- ◆ El Paso County Public Health
- ◆ El Paso County Sheriff's Office
- ◆ Green Mountain Falls Fire Department
- ◆ Green Mountain Falls Police Department
- ◆ Manitou Springs Fire Department
- ◆ Manitou Springs Police Department
- ◆ Manitou Springs Public Services

State

- ◆ Colorado Department of Emergency Management
- ◆ Colorado Department of Forestry
- ◆ Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
- ◆ Colorado Department of Transportation (Highway and Business 24)
- ◆ Colorado State Patrol
- ◆ Great Outdoors Colorado
- ◆ National Guard

Federal

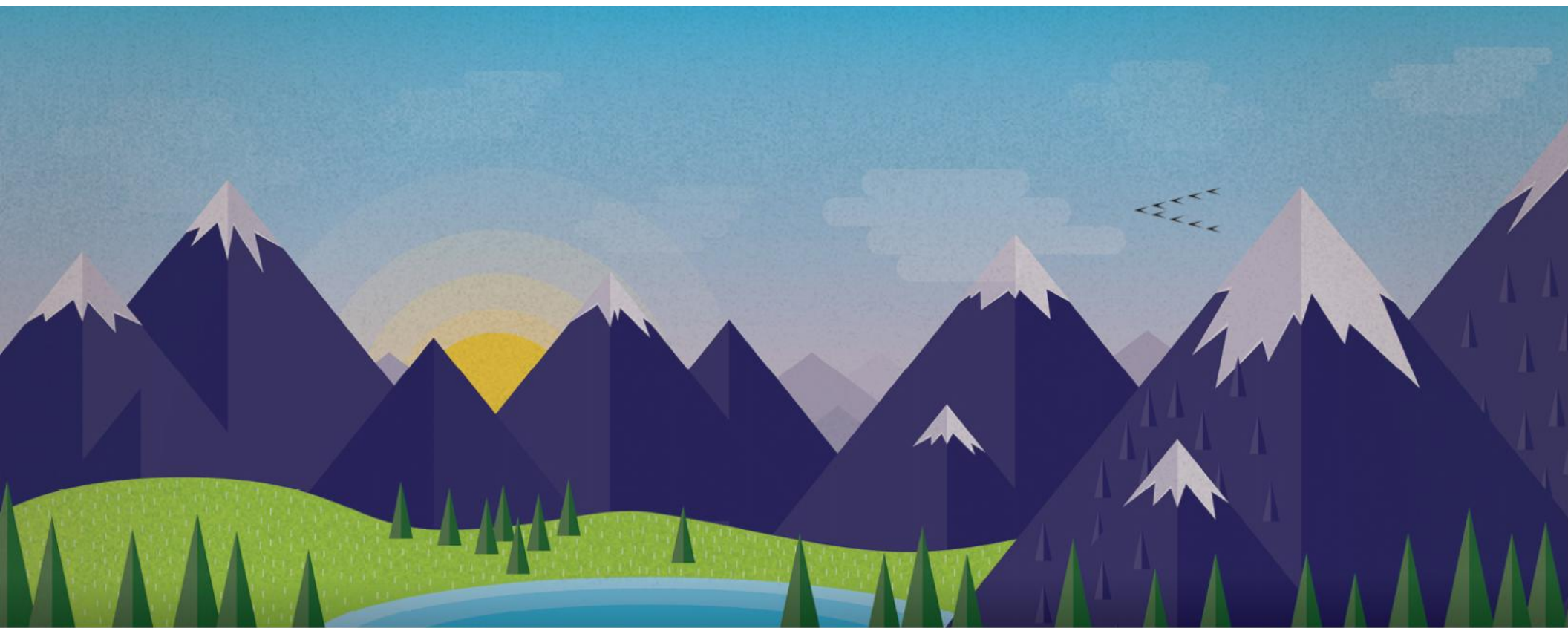
- ◆ Army Corps of Engineers
- ◆ Defense Coordinating Element 8
- ◆ Federal Emergency Management Agency (Region 8 and 9)
- ◆ Fort Carson
- ◆ National Guard Bureau Liaison
- ◆ National Fire and Aviation Program Manager
- ◆ National Weather Service
- ◆ North American Aerospace Defense Command
- ◆ United States Air Force Academy

Other

- ◆ Red Cross
- ◆ Non-Government Organizations
- ◆ Volunteers
- ◆ Subject Matter Experts

PARTICIPANT DATA

- ◆ **Total Participants: 102**
- ◆ **Total Data Collectors: 3**
- ◆ **Total Facilitators: 4**



Module 1 – Jurisdictional Information Sharing

Module 2 – Public Interaction and Information

Module 3 – Resource Management

Exercise Objective – Jurisdictional Information Sharing (Response)

Module 1 (1st 24-hour period)

1. Discuss Key action decision making authority, processes and the dissemination of decisions to stakeholders.
2. Discuss how to communicate information between EOCs and agencies using formal and informal (social) networks to create a Common Operating Picture (COP)
3. Discuss and coordinate evacuation trigger points across organizational, agency, and municipal jurisdictions



Exercise Objectives – Public Interaction and Information (Response)

Module 2 (2nd 24-hour period)

1. Discuss developing a public relations strategy in order to communicate response plans to the public through formal (media) and informal (social) networks.
2. Discuss the roles and responsibilities, and integration of volunteer organizations into recovery operations.
3. Identify public health issues and discuss how to communicate the issues to the public through formal (media) and informal (social) networks.

Exercise Objectives – Resource Management (Recovery)

Module 3 (3rd 24-hour period)

1. Discuss and coordinate public works projects.
2. Discuss and organize resource ordering and the concurrent jurisdiction prioritization process for resources such as bridge inspectors, cranes (state system), and volunteers.





Some Highlights

Challenges for Manitou Springs:

- ◆ **Manitou Springs is a small jurisdiction that must wear a lot of 'hats'** with no help.
- ◆ Manitou Springs will concern themselves with their community during a flood.
- ◆ **Unification when creating an incident command structure** (MS PD and MS FD).
 - Include individuals with experience and from different teams.
 - ONE Incident Commander (IC), not separate entities.
- ◆ Manitou Springs does not have the resources to build an EOC.
- ◆ Educating the public and communicating with tourists.
- ◆ **Define terms such as pre-evacuation. What does that mean to the public? What should they do?**
- ◆ Developing options for 'shelter in place' for community versus evacuation.
 - Set *one hour* as the determined time Manitou Springs will have to evacuate people.** If power is down, use their website and Twitter account as main source.
 - A shelter requires medical attention. Manitou Springs must coordinate with Colorado Springs to arrange for the location of health department personnel.
- ◆ What about the residents that need to come back, not leave? Where do they go and how will they receive the message?
- ◆ **Public health exceeds Manitou Springs capacity** and must be handed off to the county.
- ◆ Lack of available resources, especially engineering services, Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT) response, and debris removal.
- ◆ **Guidelines for when to ask for help are not clear.**

Some Highlights

Opportunities for Manitou Springs:

- ◆ Create an effective Incident Action Plan that includes county and State representation, relationships, and resources.
- ◆ **Open a Fire Department Operating Center (FDOC) immediately.**
- ◆ Preposition assets at staging areas before an incident actually occurs.
- ◆ **Educate the public about ‘trigger points’**, walk the avenue and tell people to be aware of the possible threats. Pre-evacuate if necessary. Also, could create flyers or other media options (town meetings, press releases, etc. – but no mass mailings).
- ◆ Plan safe centers for the public immediately (unify PD and FD).
- ◆ Unified number for emergency updates, rather than calling 911, to save dispatch time.
- ◆ Think about using Crystal Park VFD during emergencies.
- ◆ Continue to use Scenario-Based Planning techniques to address evacuation scenario.
- ◆ UNIFY a Twitter account between county, city, and State.
- ◆ Use text messaging to alert the public as a ‘reverse 9-1-1.’
- ◆ If roads are useable, drive down Main Street with a siren.
- ◆ **Connect Manitou Springs Mayor’s Office PIO with local, county, and State.**
- ◆ Manitou Springs relies on tourism to survive, so there needs to be a strategic plan to restore the local economy as soon as possible.
- ◆ Other utilities in the State are put in a group and these utilities can lend resources. It does not cost anything, but you must be a member.
- ◆ **Manitou Springs is working on a water distribution plan in case the city is ever without water.**

Some Highlights

Suggested Action Items for Manitou Springs

- ◆ **Continue to mature and iterate the Incident Action Plan** and work to deliberately move away from siloed decisions and structures.
- ◆ Document decisions made at the Tabletop Exercise (TTX) in ICP structure and locations:
—**ICP at Public Works. Second option of the local high school. FDOC at the local elementary school**
- ◆ IC structure should be preplanned incorporated into ICP.
- ◆ Intensify efforts to preplan and educate public and businesses about Flood response.
- ◆ **Develop pre-evacuation plans.** Include:
 - Methods to get notifications of a flash flood beforehand.
 - Director spotters in Cave of the Winds instead of Waldo Canyon (safety reasons).
- ◆ Remind the public of the effects off flash floods and how disastrous they can be. Specifically three types of information to have available for the public: Pre-evacuation—Evacuation—Post Event
- ◆ **Create plan for safety zones/areas and educate the public beforehand.**
- ◆ Have MS FD PIO designee attend/participate in the Multi-Agency/Multi-Jurisdictional PIO WG that the county conducts.
- ◆ Conduct Decision Support/Trigger Point analysis for two decisions. These need to be a combination of event-based (i.e. no water in the city) and status-based (i.e. all Taxpayer Bill of Rights [TABOR] funds been expended):
 - Disaster Declaration, Delegation of Incident Management to the county
- ◆ Update Emergency Response Plan with Trigger Point Analysis.
- ◆ Create priorities for resource management after event:
- ◆ **Bridges must be repaired (and/or roads – depends on HW 24 damage).**
- ◆ **Sewer system (must get out of the city).**
- ◆ Open water systems (while also providing a different water source for the people)

Some Highlights

Opportunities for El Paso County

- ◆ A “pre-event” needs to occur to have the workers available to give vaccines to the SAR team, to the fire team, etc.
- ◆ A Lighthouse project was mentioned in which a 1.5 mile radius around community centers, schools, churches, etc. would be established. People would meet there to get information on all things and would become a communication center. A first responder would be present. This is especially useful for those that do not have power.
- ◆ The American Red Cross wants to have a fair in the Ute Pass area to try and get citizens involved in the preparedness activity.
- ◆ The DOH is developing pre-messaging plans as of right now so that the public knows how much water to store ahead of time.
- ◆ The Commissioner’s office wants people to set up miniature pods (food, water, shelter). There is limited time to teach the community about disaster preparedness because of the Waldo Canyon fire.
- ◆ The Commissioner’s office states that Teller County needs to be tied into this plan as well.
- ◆ The DOH has acknowledged they need to do some prep work to figure out what to do with flood debris. The comparison between the Waldo Canyon fire and a flood is very different.
- ◆ **The Health department is going to put together training for emergency responders.**
- ◆ Inter-jurisdictional coordination;
 - They will need to refine more communication and use Web EOC as a communication tool (El Paso County). They need to relook at this as it is not a user friendly system.
- ◆ There will need to be first responder training. A flood is a new area to this jurisdiction, especially flash floods off the burn scar. They will be fighting a different monster. **The Fire departments are not trained for flash floods and will need to work on safety.**
- ◆ They already do mutual-aid support fairly well, but this will be slightly different since this is more about road clearing than firefighting.
- ◆ **Dual command status can be worked on and reached sooner.**

Some Highlights

Suggested Action Items for El Paso County

- ◆ Figuring out if all responders need to be on one radio frequency so they can have direct/cross communication.
- ◆ The Commissioners need to figure out what they are going to do. They want a checklist so they aren't calling six different people. They also want a liaison that they can speak to.
- ◆ **El Paso County asked if Manitou or Colorado Springs would do any night ops. Manitou responded that swift flow water night ops would not happen. In other areas of town they would for medical and things of that nature. Colorado Springs would do night ops if it was standing water, but any type rushing water they would not.**
- ◆ The Army asked that the procedure for response would be worked out now so that this can be expedited in crisis.
- ◆ The Commissioner wants a liaison when people call for situational awareness on the region.
- ◆ They also all need to understand road clearing priorities.
- ◆ Damage assessment is their first priority and the need to set up an air operations plan. They must also look outside of El Paso County and get in contact with Teller County.
- ◆ Identification of what information requirements are for the media needs to be established. A single voice for release of information also needs to be established.
- ◆ **Figure out the best way to disseminate information to the deaf community, visually impaired, and special needs. They need to form a plan for this.**
- ◆ Having multiple information centers that are community based is important and they should begin setting these up as soon as possible.
- ◆ **The need to establish volunteer support plans and MOUs with non-profits is critical.**
- ◆ Pre-disaster responder inoculations need to be organized in advance.
- ◆ **Continued development of strategic communications plan by PIOs through Crisis Communication Network (CCN) needs to be improved.**

Survey regarding Communications with the Public

Communication channels used to communicate with the public

◆ Which communications channels would your organization use to communicate information to the public during an emergency event (e.g. a flood)?

- 78% TV – Local News
- 76% Social Media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter)
- 74% Internet – Organization's own website
- 72% Radio
- 60% Email distribution list
- 33% TV – National News
- 33% Internet – Other

◆ Which of the following communications channels do you believe are the most effective at getting information to the public during an emergency event (e.g. a flood)?

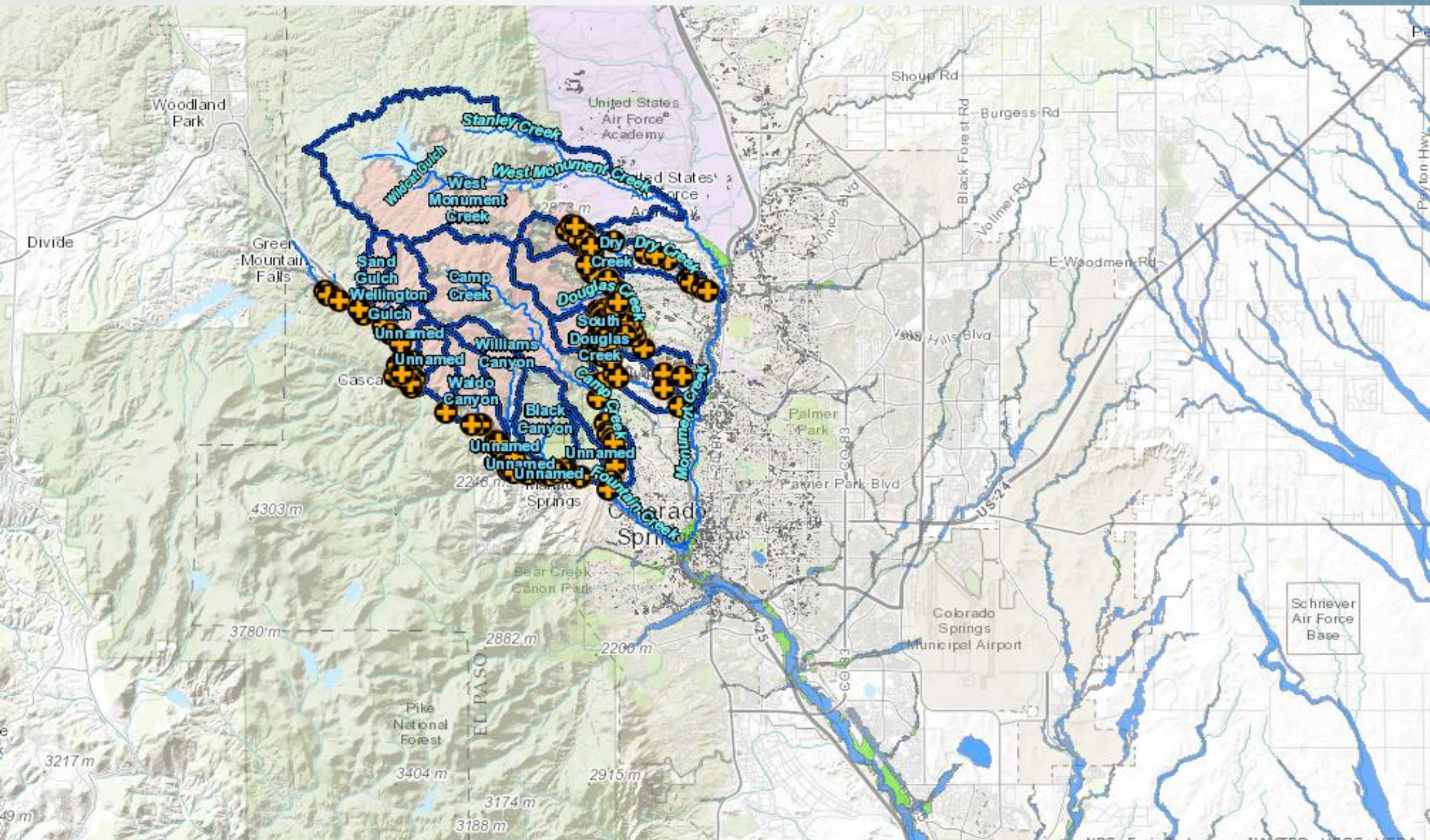
- 97% TV – Local News
- 82% Social Media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter)
- 77% Radio
- 53% Internet – Organization's own website
- 31% Internet – Other
- 29% Email distribution list
- 28% TV – National News

So What Can You Do To Be ready in Crystal Park

- ◆ Pay Attention to WX reports; this is serious now that the water shed is impacted
- ◆ Electrical power can be a real problem if lost and can/will impact us even if we are not in a flood area
 - Impacts those on well systems, O2 generation systems, egress, hospitals, etc...
- ◆ Water and Sewage can be a real problem depending on where you live...may be an a order from health department to boil water
 - Water main breaks will take a while to repair
- ◆ Resources (emergency services, propane, medical supplies, oil, roads, etc..) cannot get to us possibly and we cannot get out
 - Even if you do get out, local businesses can be impacted and not available to you ... so then what?
- ◆ Do you have enough supplies to shelter-in-place for an extended period?
- ◆ Do you have enough money, clothes etc.. for an extended evacuation if you were evacuated
 - Did you build an evacuation plan?
- ◆ Emergency services will be delayed most likely...and they have limited capability since floods are NOT a normal event they train for (night ops, swift water rescue, technical rescue) ... don't put yourself in a position that requires this kind of effort



<http://www.springsgov.com/Page.aspx?NavID=4498>



Other useful sites

- ◆ <http://shr.elpasoco.com/Waldo+Canyon+Fire+Information>
- ◆ http://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/Flood_After_Fire_Fact_Sheet.pdf
- ◆ http://shr.elpasoco.com/NR/rdonlyres/E9320CA3-C293-43C4-A1E8-B6F87451767F/0/2012_Waldo_Canyon_Fire_Flood_Brochure.pdf
- ◆ <http://www.elpasoteller911.org/>

