

PLUM CREEK RESTORATION WORK

February 2018

Plum Creek is one of the major tributaries to Chatfield Reservoir, and represents not only a source of water supply, but also a riparian zone for diverse ecological benefits. The watershed consists of 321 square miles of rural and urbanized lands extending southward from the reservoir to its headwaters near Castle Rock. A segment of the creek located on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers property is also included for day-use within Chatfield State Park. Environmental mitigation and enhancement of the Plum Creek project area is a key element for the Chatfield Storage Reallocation Project (CSR).

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) completed its final review of the design for Plum Creek restoration in October, and construction began in mid-November of 2017.

The creek is currently suffering from stream erosion and degradation, which has detrimental impacts to wetlands, habitat areas, vegetation health, and stream function. The movement of sediment in a downstream direction is due to a variety of factors, including sandy soils and changes in hydrology. As a result, sedimentation in Chatfield Reservoir is yet another area of concern. All of this had been occurring prior to CSR.

When the CSR was approved by the federal government, it also garnered support from the state and a wide variety of local entities as well as NGOs. Further, the Colorado Department of Natural Resources serves as the non-federal sponsor for CSR. Two of its divisions, the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) and Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), are participating in the project. CWCB is an important funding and policy agency, and CPW has ownership of state park functions as well as the state mitigation planning efforts in accord with Colorado law (C.R.S. 37-60-122.2). The 122.2 plan calls on the participants in the CSR to undertake significant mitigation to compensate for "potential adverse effects to the fluctuation zone." Included in the plan is a commitment for millions of dollars for Plum Creek restoration as discussed above (see map for project area).

PLUM CREEK ENVIRONMENTAL MITIGATION SITE



The creek is well known for the devastating flood event that happened in 1965. More than 12 inches of rain fell on its upper watershed area, causing a "wall of water" to roar through cities, including Castle Rock, Englewood and Denver. Just a decade after the big flood, Chatfield Reservoir was completed and opened as an important flood control facility. Shortly after that, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers leased the land around the reservoir to the State of Colorado for Chatfield State Park.

Throughout the planning phase of the CSR, one goal has surfaced as a top priority: design and build mitigation features on-site to address the impacts due to storage of additional water in the reservoir.

The Plum Creek corridor provides an incredible opportunity to replace, protect and enhance habitat. Because of the importance of this undertaking, the Chatfield Reservoir Mitigation Company has dedicated a substantial part of the overall project budget to focus on Plum Creek environmental work. The work includes channel improvements and the planting of tens of thousands of trees, shrubs and grasses. Monitoring and maintenance will help to ensure the future success of the planted vegetation and adjacent features of the project. Excellent progress is currently being made on the Plum Creek mitigation work, which will continue through the spring of 2018.



The Plum Creek corridor, from the new higher water level of the reservoir, upstream approximately 7,000 feet, will be stabilized by raising the multiple stream bed sections and constructing riffle-pool rock structures to control longitudinal grade and planting of riparian and wetland vegetation to control erosion and provide habitat.

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For a quick overview, watch the [Chatfield Storage Reallocation Project Video](#)

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