

**M E M O R A N D U M**

**TO:** Honorable Chairman and Members of the Board of County Commissioners

**FROM:** Joe Kerby, County Manager

**RE:** Emergency Watershed Protection Assistance – Award of Assistance  
Acceptance – Open Space

**Date:** 10/15/2024

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**Staff Recommendation:**

Resolved, that the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) approves of and authorizes the Chair of the BCC to execute the financial assistance award and all related documents for the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Assistance funding application from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for up to \$300,000 to offset the cost of post-fire erosion mitigation on the Quarry Fire burn.

**Resolution No: CC24-316**

**Background:**

The U. S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) works to realize the vision of a world of clean and abundant water, healthy soils and resilient landscapes. The NRCS manages the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program which offers technical and financial assistance to help local communities relieve imminent threats to life and property caused by floods, fires, windstorms and other natural disasters that impair a watershed. EWP does not require a disaster declaration by federal or state government officials for program assistance to begin. Open Space staff is working with the Colorado EWP State Program Manager, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, to complete Damage Survey Report necessary to declare a local watershed emergency and initiate EWP program assistance.

The Quarry Fire burned 580 acres of Open Space land at Deer Creek Canyon Park between July 30 and August 7, 2024. Wildfires destabilize soils and increase available nutrient loads, particularly in high burn-severity patches. Heavy rainfall and/or snowmelt could transport significant sediment and nutrient loads from the burn scar to Chatfield

Reservoir; this could negatively impact drinking water supply and recreation. Post-fire erosion mitigation in the form of helicopter-applied mulch in areas most vulnerable to significantly increased erosion would mitigate the risk of damage to the water supply.

**Fiscal Impact:** A cash match of 25% (up to \$75,000) is required and will be provided through the Jefferson County Open Space (JCOS) operating budget. There is no TABOR impact and no impact to other County departments/divisions.

**BCC Briefing Presented on:** 9/24/2024

**Originator:** Julie Liggett, Grants and Special Projects Coordinator

**Distribution:** Clerk to the Board, Anthony Chambers, Hillary Merritt, Lori Foster, Karey Baker, Leticia Lamprecht, Becky Gehrig and Steve Murdock