



Augusta Flood Update



In recent history, Elk Creek flooded Augusta in 1975, 2018, and 2019, posing problems for both the town and area ranchers. The creek has now caused extensive damage to public infrastructure, including a portion of Elk Creek Road.

The Lewis and Clark Conservation District is now the lead on a committee comprised of a variety of government agencies, stakeholders and landowners. The Conservation District, along with Lewis and Clark County, have begun researching and identifying funding sources for mitigation projects.

Challenges

- The creek has not had a stream gauge since 1924.
- Due to the irregularity of flood events on Elk Creek, no Hydrologic and Hydraulic studies have been done.
- A stream assessment done in 2012 for the Conservation District was not done with the technology now available, meaning we don't have the best information for determining true mitigation projects.
- Obtaining information from business and home owners to help in applying for grants.

Lewis and Clark Conservation District Work

Stream Assessment

- Confluence Consulting out of Bozeman will start a stream assessment on Elk Creek in late September.
- It will be paid for with money from the Conservation District and Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC).
- Landowners that have agreed to participate will be contacted as they begin the assessment.
- The assessment report should be complete in December.
- A participant meeting will be held, then a public meeting to discuss the details.

Stream Projects

- Using the results of the assessment, landowners may identify projects they wish to complete, although they are under no obligation to do so.
- The Conservation District will look for project funding, although it is likely the full cost will not be covered.
- The Assessment will also help the Conservation District in permitting these projects.

Future Plans

- The Conservation District will continue to seek funding to help with processing existing Montana Department of Transportation Lidar flight data. This data could help with Channel Migration Zone mapping to give an idea of creek changes in the near future. This could assist landowners in developing plans for land use.

- The Conservation District is looking into the potential installation of stream gauges on the Elk Creek stream system. It may also be helpful to install weather stations at the homes of interested landowners on the upper part of the drainages. These two things could provide advance warning for future flood events.

FEMA Grants

Lewis and Clark County is seeking to apply for a Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant (PDM) to help with future flood mitigation efforts. PDM grants are competitive state and nationwide. Due to Augusta's population, it will be very difficult to achieve a good benefit cost ratio to compete for this grant.

What is a Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR)? A BCR is calculated by FEMA. A project is considered cost effective when the BCR is 1.0 or greater. Many factors are considered to achieve this score. For Augusta, its historic buildings and homes affected by and/or threatened by flooding will have the greatest effect on the score. **The following information from home and business owners will help achieve the best data to effect the BCA:**

- **Tax or other documentation from businesses to prove the structure is historic.**
- **Tax or other documentation from homeowners to prove their home is over fifty years old and has historic value.**
- **Insurance claims or other documentation of repairs to damages caused by the floods in 1975, 2018, and 2019.**
- **Information from the business and homeowners as to whether or not their property has a basement and if it is furnished or unfurnished.**

This information can be submitted to Reese Martin, Lewis and Clark County Disaster and Emergency Services Coordinator at rmartin@lccountymt.gov or mailed to 3425 Skyway Drive, Helena, MT 59601.

These grants depend greatly on the community's support and ability to provide the information needed. There is no guarantee Augusta would qualify for these grants, but it is vital we try. We can also use this data to provide information for future mitigation grants as well.

Contact Information

Chris Evans, Lewis and Clark Conservation District
406-449-5000 ext. 5
lccd@mt.net

Reese Martin, Lewis and Clark County
406-447-8285
rmartin@lccountymt.gov