

# The Pueblo Chieftain

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## **Pueblo wants to test collector on Fountain Creek**

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**The technology removes sediment as water flows and could be an alternative to dredging the channel.**

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THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN**

TRINIDAD - The City of Pueblo wants to find out if a streamside collection system would be a realistic alternative to dredging the sediment-clogged channel of Fountain Creek.

On Wednesday, Pueblo Planner Scott Hobson asked the Arkansas Basin Roundtable to support a \$225,000 grant from the Statewide Water Supply Account that would go toward a \$383,000 demonstration project. The roundtable passed the project along to the Colorado Water Conservation Board, which will look at funding it in March. The project would use a technology developed by Streamside Systems to remove "bed-load" sediment from the Fountain Creek Channel, Hobson said.

"As the sediment is removed and the water goes downstream, will it create a more consistent channel? That's what we're trying to find out," Hobson said.

If sedimentation is reduced, it could improve the capacity of the channel to carry floodwater to the Arkansas River and might reduce the tamarisk infestation through the city, Hobson said.

Streamside Systems has a patented system - a pre-cast concrete block with tubes and screens - that removes sediment as water flows over. Last year, the company demonstrated its system for one week with a 2-foot-wide collector. The city is proposing a 20-foot-wide collector that would be located at the old railroad bridge about 2,000 feet above the confluence of Fountain Creek at the Arkansas River. "It would remove the bed-load sediments, not the suspended sediments that help seal ditches downstream," Hobson noted.

The city would use the sediments, ranging from fines to sand to gravel, but would not sell it. Based on the experience with the 2-foot collector, there could be a large amount of material to deal with, Hobson added.

The project has support from the Fountain Creek Vision Task Force and the Lower Arkansas Valley Water Conservancy District, which sponsored last year's demonstration. The city has also consulted with state and federal agencies, including the Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Geological Survey and a Colorado State University-Pueblo team doing a water quality study of Fountain Creek.

Roundtable members wanted to know if it would be applicable in other situations and whether Pueblo's upstream neighbors were contributing to the project.

Pat Edelmann, head of the Pueblo USGS office, stepped in to explain that part of the reason for the project is to find out how well the collectors, which are used in other parts of the country, will

work on Fountain Creek.

Hobson said Pueblo has asked communities upstream to help fund other Fountain Creek improvements, such as side detention ponds, but not the collector project.

“We want to see if this is something that would be feasible to implement along Fountain Creek,” Hobson said.

The roundtable also agreed to move an application for \$110,000 as part of a \$131,000 study of groundwater flows in Upper Black Squirrel Creek in El Paso County. The area is a designated groundwater basin and not tributary to the Arkansas River.

The study would look at how water flows through the aquifer in an area that is putting increasing stress on its groundwater supply, said engineer Cristy Radabaugh. It would incorporate the results of an earlier study that looked at artificial recharge of the aquifer.

The CWCB will look at both applications at its March 2009 meeting, the next cycle for applications from a statewide fund available to all nine roundtables.