

also affected the water quality of streams and wetland, and the highway has affected adjacent wildlife habitat and animal movement corridors that cross the highway.”

“Both FHWA and CDOT are committed to identifying programs to enhance and potentially improve existing aquatic and terrestrial habitats. A Stream and Wetland Ecosystem Enhancement Program (SWEEP), and A Landscape Level Inventory of Valued Ecosystem Components (ALIVE) program will be established by CDOT. The role of SWEEP is to develop a plan for the management practices and enhancement of the ecosystems (including fisheries) associated with the streams, wetlands, riparian areas, and watersheds in the corridor. The ALIVE program will target management strategies for high value conservation sites to wildlife, including federally endangered and candidate species, and develop cooperative agreements with regulatory and resource agencies. In addition, resource agencies have defined high priority wildlife crossing needed in the corridor. The Record Of Decision (ROD) will develop a plan for the implementation of these programs.”

Furthermore, the federal Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) commits FHWA to “protecting and enhancing communities and the natural environment” as federal transportation programs are developed. The I-70 Mountain Corridor project falls under the purview of this Act.

In following the spirit and intent of the PEIS Summary Purpose and Need Statement and TEA-21 commitments, FHWA and CDOT have established SWEEP to help ensure the early inclusion of water-related needs in any future design or construction processes. Typically, wetland and stream-related enhancements have been addressed when roadway design is underway, which can greatly limited options. Early agency and public input through the SWEEP process is intended to identify issues and potential solutions in advance of potential design, resulting in the streamlining of project clearances and design plans and increasing the opportunities for wetland and stream-related enhancements.

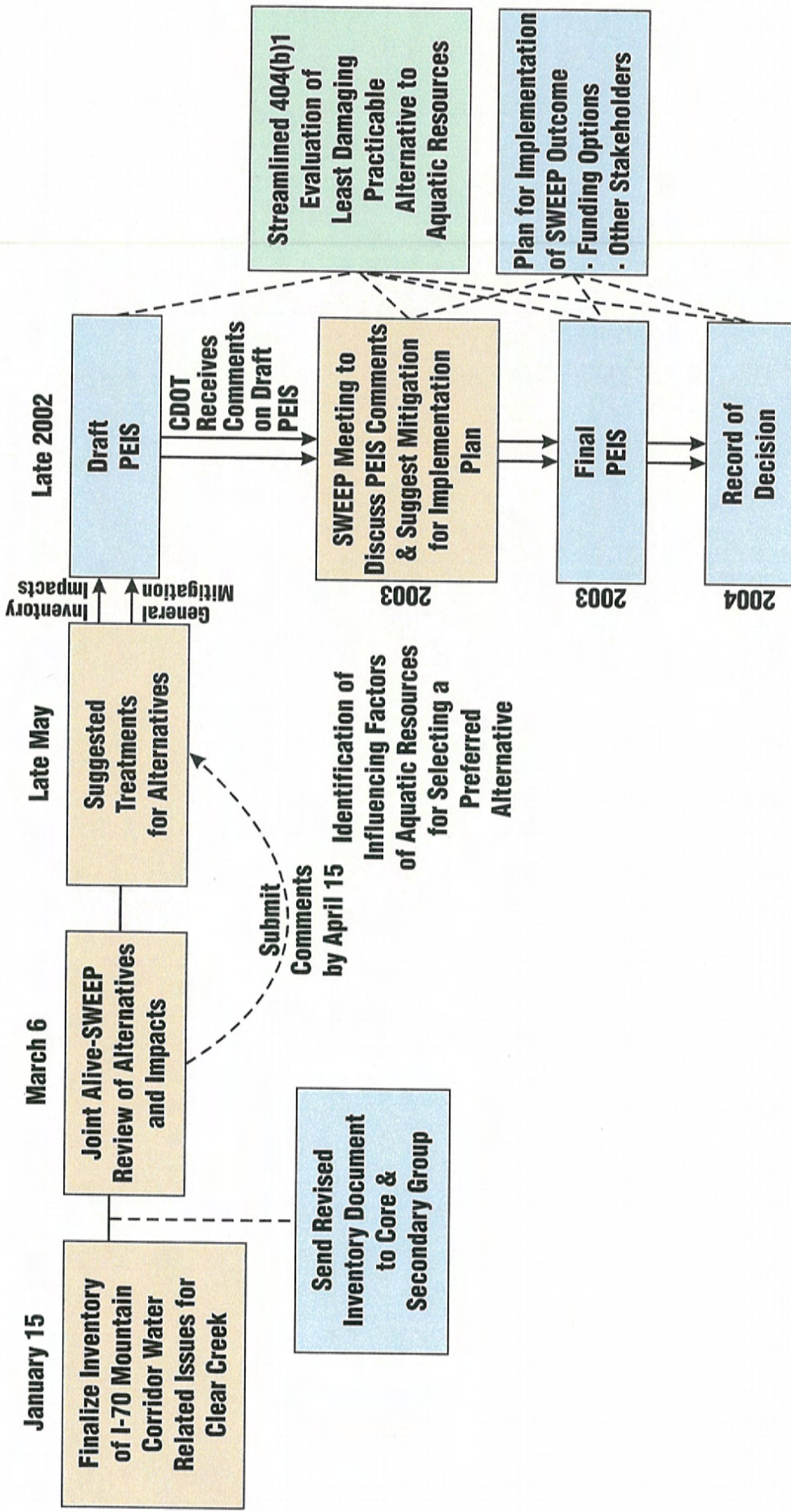
Additionally, the SWEEP process will facilitate the 404(b) 1 process and the application of enhancement and mitigation opportunities as described in the recent guidance provided by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Regulatory Guidance Letter dated October 31, 2001, pertaining to General Condition 19; Section 404 of the Clean Water Act). The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is taking a more holistic approach to the mitigation of wetlands. This approach includes the concept that mitigation of wetlands extends beyond the one-for-one acreage replacement of wetlands. Instead, a more ecosystem-based approach considering the resource needs of immediate and nearby watersheds is viewed to be more beneficial for preservation of water-related resources.

This document presents the SWEEP team’s efforts in identifying issues related to degradation of water-related resources within and adjacent to I-70 Mountain Corridor of the Clear Creek watershed. Identification of these issues and their potential solutions will

allow for the identification of mitigation measures and other design elements to minimize further effects. The issues will be prioritized in the PEIS and ROD. Prioritizing the mitigation measures for incorporation into the ROD and eventual implementation is premature at this time. The suggested mitigation/enhancement measures may be implemented as independent utility projects or as components of new transportation alternatives. Once issues and appropriate mitigation opportunities are identified, CDOT will work with the appropriate federal, state, and local agencies and interested groups within the Mountain Corridor to design, fund, and implement the prioritized elements.

1.4 Organization of Document

For purposes of this effort, Clear Creek has been divided into eight stream segments (Figure 1-2) of varying lengths (referred to in both singular and plural as "SS" in the remainder of this document). It should be noted that these segments were selected to represent lengths of Clear Creek that had common issues. It is important to remember that subsequent environmental clearances will be required upon completion of the PEIS. These subsequent clearances and permit applications (e.g., EAs, EISs, SB 40, and Sections 401, 402, 404 permits) will further refine the outcomes of the SWEEP effort. It should be noted that some issues apply to more than one category. Many of the future clearances or permits will require public review.



Integration of SWEEP in the I-70 PEIS Planning & Decision Process
 - Role of SWEEP Team in PEIS
 - Role of Section 404(b)1 of the Clean Water Act in Decision Process