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1.0 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This document represents the results of a cooperative effort among the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), various federal, state, county and local agencies, and local interest groups in identifying water-related issues associated with development along Clear Creek from the Eisenhower Johnson Memorial Tunnel (hereinafter referred to as the Eisenhower Tunnel) to Floyd Hill. This cooperative effort, entitled the Stream and Wetland Ecological Enhancement Program (SWEEP), was conceived during the early stages of the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) for the I-70 Mountain Corridor. The SWEEP provides an opportunity to minimize water resource related impacts and improve the aquatic environment adjacent to the I-70 Mountain Corridor in conjunction with any potential future transportation actions. The results of this SWEEP can be utilized to develop impacts and mitigation associated with the I-70 PEIS alternatives, and as design aids to address these issues.

Clear Creek is the focus of this inventory document because of the wide range of issues that have impacted this resource adjacent to I-70 (e.g., historic mining, the construction and operation of U.S. 40, U.S. 6, and I-70, urban and industrial operations, etc.). CDOT has also initiated the development of Sediment Control Action Plans (SCAP). The SCAPs identify sediment control measures to be implemented along I-70 adjacent to Black Gore Creek and Straight Creek. These plans will be implemented regardless of the transportation alternative selected.

1.1 Relationship of SWEEP to the PEIS

The SWEEP process facilitates the collection and analysis of existing information related to water resources within the Corridor for incorporation into the PEIS. The SWEEP process also identifies valued water-related resources within the Corridor for addressing the requirements of Section 404(b) 1 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344). The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is the permitting agency for compliance with 404(b) 1 and will be considering the least damaging practical alternatives for transportation improvement within the I-70 Mountain Corridor. Figure 1-1 presents the interface between SWEEP and the overall PEIS process and the various agencies involved in the process. The SWEEP inventory of issues will be instrumental in the identification of issues, impacts, and treatments. In addition to the abovementioned purposes of SWEEP, this program also facilitates the identification of water-related cumulative impacts to be described and included in the PEIS. Other activities are ongoing throughout the I-70 Mountain Corridor and associated with the PEIS. Currently the other resources (e.g., biological, physical, and cultural) are being inventoried and documented. Once transportation alternatives are identified, these alternatives will be compared with the existing resources and impacts associated with each alternative will be evaluated.

1.2 SWEEP Participants

The primary SWEEP team assembled for the Clear Creek inventory is comprised of technical (water resource) experts from the following federal, state and county agencies and local interest groups:

- Federal Highway Administration
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (Natural Resource Conservation Service)
- USDA Forest Service (Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests)
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Colorado Department of Transportation
- Colorado Division of Wildlife
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
- Clear Creek County
- Upper Clear Creek Watershed Association
- Trout Unlimited

A secondary team, which participates in the process on a review basis, includes representatives from the Colorado Northwest Council of Governments, Trout Unlimited, and Summit County.

Other informational resources utilized during the development of this document include:

- Upper Clear Creek Watershed Advisory Group
- Clear Creek Watershed Forum

1.3 Background

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) have identified the need to increase capacity, decrease congestion, and improve accessibility and mobility for Interstate 70 (I-70) Mountain Corridor (Corridor) users. The Corridor extends from Mile Post (MP) 116 (Glenwood Springs) to MP 262 (C-470 interchange near Golden, Colorado). To understand the potential affects of such a project, FHWA and CDOT have initiated the preparation of a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for the Corridor. A PEIS Summary Purpose and Need Statement issued by CDOT. The Purpose and Need discussed the role of SWEEP in the PEIS. References to SWEEP include:

“While I-70 provides the major east west travel across the Colorado Rocky Mountains, over the initial 30 years of operation, the presence of the road and increasing highway congestion have affected adjacent environment and communities in a variety of ways, both beneficial and detrimental.... Roadside erosion, and winter maintenance practices have