



Fountain Creek Conflict Assessment

August 2006



Overview

- **Goal and Approach for Today**
 - Brief presentation about the Fountain assessment
 - Discussion of Osprey report
 - Reaction to two recommended options
 - Your thoughts about next steps



Our Assessment

What did we do?

- Confidential interviews with 25 individuals
- Elected officials, city and county and COG staff, environmental leaders, community leaders.
- Used semi-structured interview guide
- Goals:
 - Provide insights and perspectives about the nature of the situation
 - Explore potential means to address challenges

What did we explore?

- Major substantive issues
- Major procedural issues
- Status of the Fountain
- Suggested actions
- Adequacy of public involvement
- Role of the media
- Role of the Technical Advisory Committee
- Value of a collaborative effort



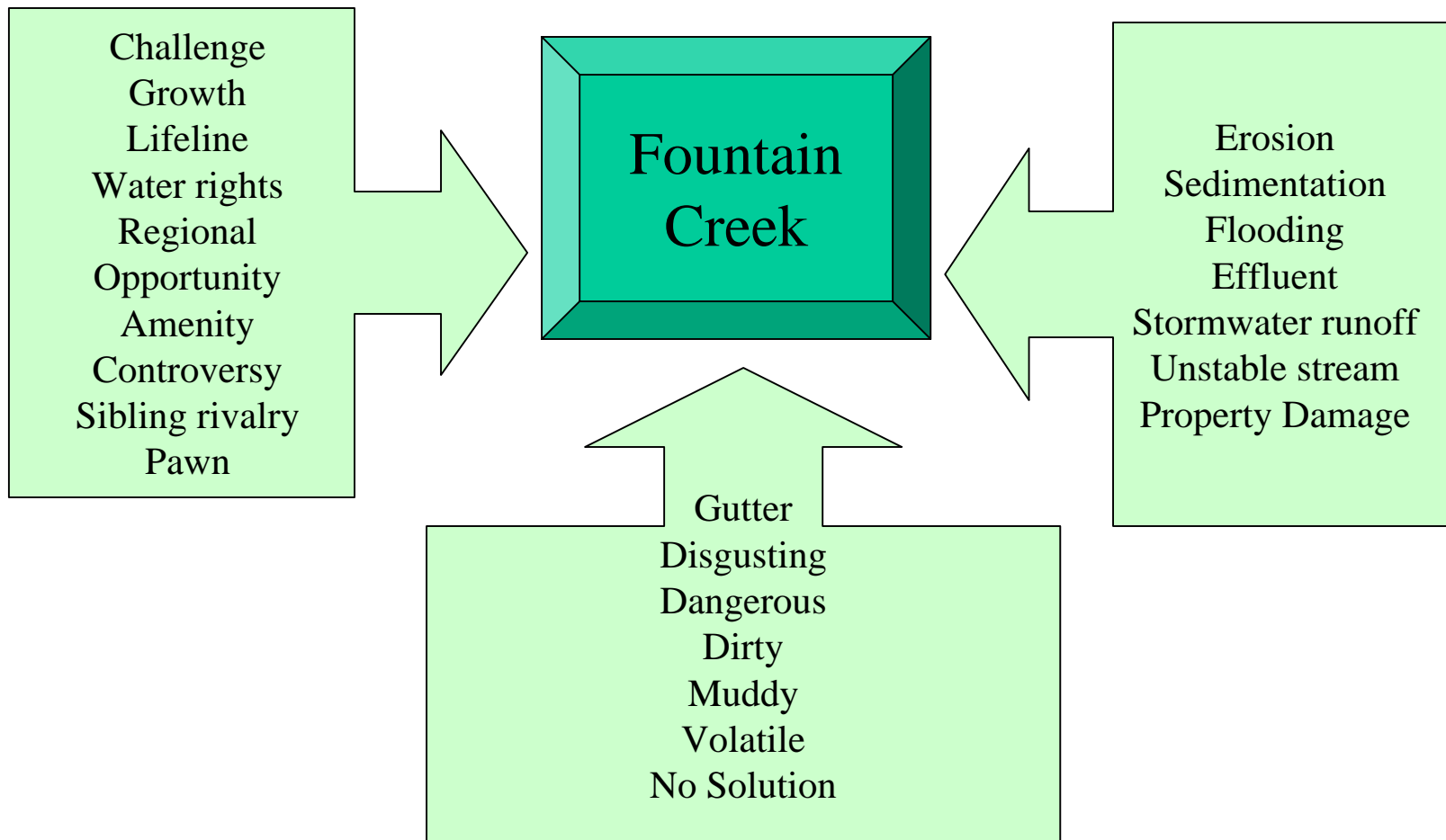
Key Take Away Messages

Most think . . .

- The Fountain is getting worse
- The process is broken
- The Fountain is symptomatic of bigger issues
- There are existing organizations that are or might address some of the problems
- There are limited coordinated policy efforts to address Fountain issues in a comprehensive manner
- Current actions (media exposure, 1041 regulations, lawsuit, SDS) are exacerbating the conflict



Words that Describe Fountain Creek



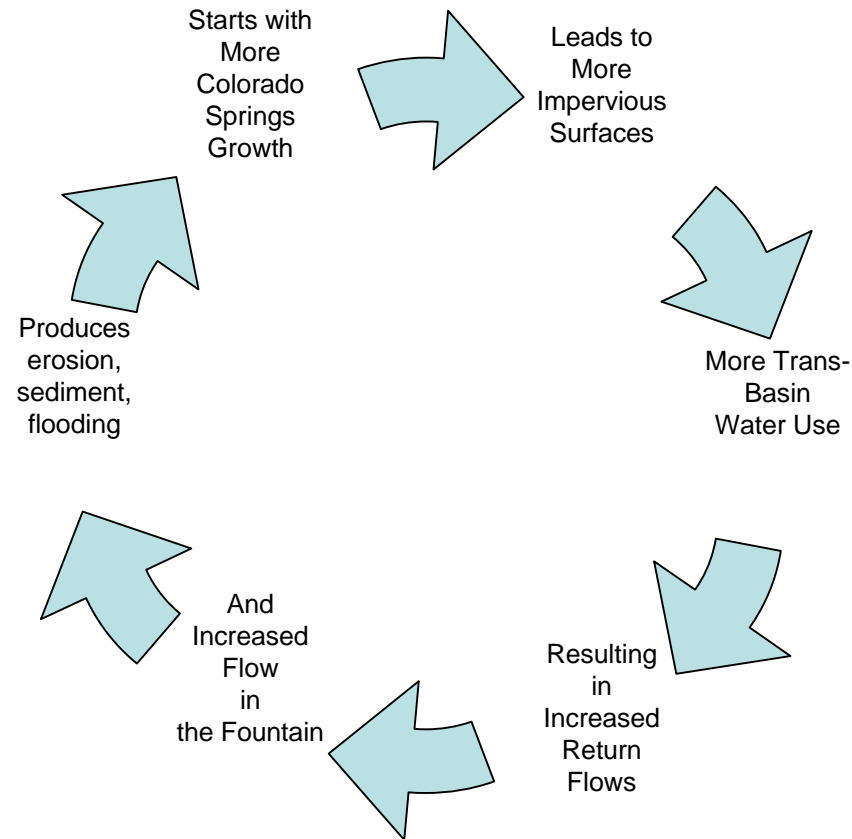


Views on the Nature of the Situation

- Growth, dominated by Colorado Springs, is root cause of problems on the Fountain.
- It's about how Colorado Springs and Pueblo choose to grow and manage growth.
- Stormwater, flooding, erosion, sediment buildup, contamination.
- Colorado Springs' new stormwater utility should help manage stormwater runoff.
- Dispute between two towns: one overshadowed; one a bully.
- Overall, not sure the Fountain is that high of a community priority.



Growth-Water Quantity/ Quality Cycle





General Perceptions

Some General Perceptions:

- Lots of communication within communities; no communication between communities
- Colorado Springs is transient; Pueblo isn't
- These are not “acts of God;” people need to admit responsibility
- Need greater integration of policy with technical analysis
- The Creek has been studied for years; it's hard to get to the action stage
- Everything is being approached piecemeal
- Staffs, if left alone, would make more progress



Views about the Technical Advisory Committee

It's Valuable

- Brings everyone together to talk about concerns
- Focus of watershed plan was erosion and sedimentation
- Three counties, eight cities or towns
- Very informative TAC studies
- Everyone very sincere in their efforts
- Good technical dialogue, no shortage of expertise

Question It's Value

- Its primary concern is in perpetuating itself
- Stalemated
- Only two TAC reps are south of El Paso county line
- “Boring as sin unless you are a real data junkie”
- “Cash cow for the COG”
- “Classic technocrats’ process”
- Little impact on policy – “no attempt to translate into anything meaningful on the ground”



Opinions About What Actions Should be Taken?

- Maintenance of Colorado Springs infrastructure
- We need a work session with a few members of both city councils
- Education to help get some of the emotion out of it
- Integrate flood control, water supply and reuse to end up with a creative win-win solution
- Strengthen city and county policies related to how we deal with water – e.g. streamline ordinances, establish buffers, stimulate low-impact development (fewer impervious surface areas)
- Habitat restoration
- Bank stabilization



Three Kinds of Challenges

Challenge

1. Growth – “Fountain is a poster child for bigger issues”
2. Fountain as an asset – “Think about the ultimate solution”
3. Specific water concerns

Nature of Issues

- Development in the watershed, transbasin water, water quantity, water rights, SDS, return flows, managing growth.
- A vision for the Fountain, making it an amenity for the future, open space, recreation, buffers, habitat restoration, minimum flows on the Arkansas.
- Erosion and stabilization, stormwater and flood control, sedimentation, increased runoff, water quality.



Challenge 1. Growth

- **Description of the problem:**
 - Colorado Springs ongoing rapid growth
 - More water required; comes from outside the basin
 - Thus, flows down the Fountain are continually increasing
- **State of play:**
 - Colorado Springs developing additional trans-basin water supply
 - This water will likely increase flows into the Fountain
 - Pueblo's 1041 regulations might impact the development of the SDS
- **Recommendation:**
 - Given the history and controversy surrounding growth and water development in Colorado, this challenge is not susceptible to a productive collaborative effort in the near term.



Challenge 2. Fountain as Asset

- **Description of the problem:**
 - Widely viewed as a liability,
 - But has potential to become an asset.
- **State of play:**
 - Nascent efforts to develop the Fountain as an amenity.
- **Recommendation:**
 - A collaborative community effort should be created to develop means to convert the Fountain into an amenity throughout the watershed.



Challenge 3.

Specific Water Concerns

- **Description of the problem:**
 - Increased water flow produces sedimentation, erosion, water quality challenges and flooding risks.
- **State of play:**
 - The existing Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) includes technical representatives from the affected jurisdictions.
 - Conducted analysis related to erosion and sedimentation.
 - Technical analysis alone is insufficient.
 - To date, the TAC has had limited impact on policy or “on the ground” actions.
- **Recommendation:**
 - There needs to be a parallel policy effort to complement the technical analysis of the TAC.



In Your Words . . .

“We cannot unring the bell. We have to move forward.”

“Both counties have a similar interest in solving the problem to get the Fountain off their radar screen.”

“People want to get beyond ‘this is what happened to us’ to ‘this is what we’re going to do.’”