

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



Protecting people, property, and our environment through preservation, mitigation, and education.



PIVOTING FOR SUCCESS DURING THE PANDEMIC

As the COVID-19 pandemic rocked the world in mid-March 2020, the District went into full remote-working mode. We were very fortunate that our Network Administrator had the foresight in 2019 to transition our entire workforce from desktop computers to laptops, allowing every employee to quickly transition to working effectively from the safety of their homes, while also allowing MHFD to remain open for business throughout the year.

Due to the nature of our organization as an essential government agency and the critical need for flood mitigation planning, design, construction, and maintenance; a great number of consultants, suppliers, and contractors were able to continue working with us throughout the year, preventing layoffs among their staff while also continuing to make communities within MHFD's jurisdiction safer.

As a result of District taxpayers voting to restore our statutory taxing authority in 2018, along with a 17.6% increase in the 2019 assessed value of real property within the District, our tax revenues increased from \$46.8 million in 2019 to \$65.8 million in 2020—a 41 percent increase over the previous year.

To efficiently return these tax dollars to the local economy in the form of flood mapping studies, watershed planning studies, research, and the design, construction, and maintenance of an ever-growing portfolio of infrastructure, an additional six employees were hired. This brings our staff to 42—still an impressively small number considering the magnitude of work completed each year.

The District's Development Services Enterprise was created in 2017 to allow land developers to partner directly with the District to implement the drainage and flood mitigation infrastructure necessitated by their development. Developer fees and expenditures in that enterprise totaled \$14.6 million in 2020, up from \$1.8 million in 2019. We expect to see continued significant increases in this enterprise in 2021 and beyond.

Operations during the pandemic meant that our annual symposium was cancelled, along with several pot-luck lunches, our summer employee appreciation picnic, the year-end holiday party, and a number of other events designed to celebrate the individual and group efforts of our amazing staff and also to maintain the social fabric that has long been a part of our culture.

These events were replaced by virtual happy hours, virtual all-staff meetings, and lots and lots of other virtual meetings. I'm sure I speak for all when I say we can't wait to be together in person again. At the same time, we now know that we can maintain an effective operation without adhering to the traditional eight-hour, five-day workweek, meaning we can maintain a scaled-back partial weekly remote working environment and potentially reduce our future need for office space.

Looking back on a year where so many suffered and in some cases lost family members, friends, jobs, and even homes, I am forever grateful that MHFD was able to keep our employees safe while remaining open for business and continuing to make the region safer while keeping a great number of people in the construction industry employed. I want to express my deepest thanks to our Board of Directors, our local government and project partners, and especially to the talented and dedicated staff at MHFD.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



STACIE GILMORE
COUNCIL PRESIDENT
City and County of Denver
Chair



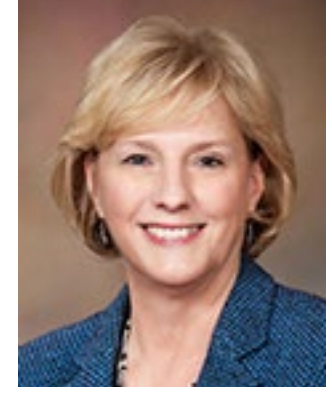
ADAM PAUL
MAYOR
City of Lakewood
Chair Pro Tem



STEPHANIE PIKO
MAYOR
City of Centennial
Secretary



BUD STARKER
MAYOR
City of Wheat Ridge
Treasurer



NANCY SHARPE
COMMISSIONER
Arapahoe County
Member-At-Large



BOARD MEMBERS

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Commissioner Charles Tedesco
Adams County

Commissioner Lora Thomas
Douglas County

Mayor Jerry Valdes
City of Littleton

Mayor Marc Williams
City of Arvada

Mayor Pro Tem Bob Yates
City of Boulder

GOVERNING BODY

21 Locally-Appointed
Elected Officials

2 Licensed
Professional Engineers

HIGHLIGHTED PROJECT: SANDERSON GULCH



PROJECT COST

\$20.3M

(Including a \$7.5M FEMA grant)

DESIGN TEAM

ICON Engineering, Valerian Landscape Architecture, and Great Ecology

CONSTRUCTION TEAM

Wadsworth Construction, BT Construction, Habitat Management

The Sanderson Gulch project, stretching 1200 feet from Lipan Street to the South Platte River in Denver, removed the regulatory 100-year floodplain from 102 structures and contained floodwaters to Sanderson Gulch. The project employs an innovative solution that optimizes a narrow Sanderson Gulch corridor to maintain initial or "environmental" flows on the surface in an open channel while safely conveying floodwaters to the South Platte River using a pipe system. The project restored 2.5 acres of native seeded land and planted 32 trees, 472 shrubs, and 162 ornamental grasses.

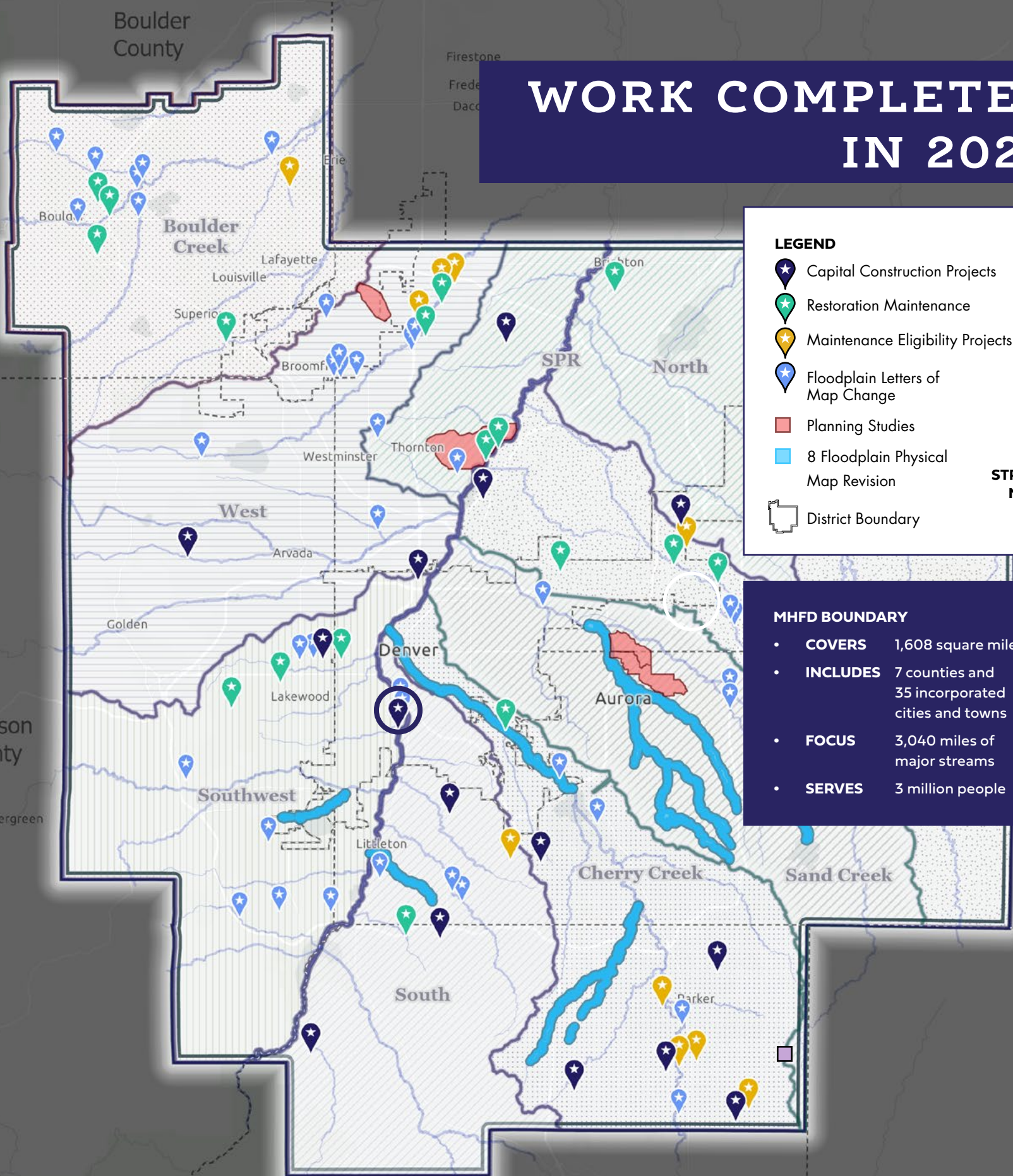
WORK COMPLETED IN 2020

LEGEND

	Capital Construction Projects	15
	Restoration Maintenance	17
	Maintenance Eligibility Projects	10
	Floodplain Letters of Map Change	42
	Planning Studies	3
	8 Floodplain Physical Map Revision	75
	District Boundary	STREAM MILES

MHFD BOUNDARY

- **COVERS** 1,608 square miles
- **INCLUDES** 7 counties and 35 incorporated cities and towns
- **FOCUS** 3,040 miles of major streams
- **SERVES** 3 million people





1,296

Professional Development Hours granted through MHFD programming

1,056

Additional Professional Development Hours granted through MHFD partnerships

56,450

Flood Hazard Brochures delivered to residents in higher-risk areas.



18

New Watershed Ambassadors graduated from the Stream Management Academy



OUTREACH & EDUCATION

The pandemic hit shortly after we opened registration for our annual symposium. It disrupted plans for several trainings for both MHFD and our partners. While the Symposium didn't happen in 2020, many other classes took place in a modified format and we explored other ways to share with the industry.

The Stream Management Academy held a combination of remote and also in-the-field classes. The Colorado Stormwater Center and Urban Watersheds Research Institute held a reduced number of classes at our offices with a reduced number of attendees, requirements for masks, and social distancing. We also co-instructed classes with the Public Works Institute classes prior to the pandemic restrictions in mid-March.

In 2020, we expanded on-demand offerings on our YouTube channel with educational content, TED-style talks, lessons learned, and beautiful imagery from featured projects. As a result, we saw a 41% increase in subscribers and a 130% increase in views.

Development of a strategic plan for MHFD education and outreach also started in 2020 with a survey of our stakeholders. We view the number of survey respondents (161) as a good indication of how much our stakeholders value the education and outreach we provide. More to come on this plan in 2021...



8,700 PLUS MHFD YOUTUBE VIDEO WATCHES
513 HOURS OF MHFD CONTENT WATCHED

WELCOME NEW STAFF

One of the District's Silver Linings for 2020 was being able to recruit talented staff to help strengthen our service lines. In 2020, we successfully on-boarded six full-time staff and we've asked each of those employees to identify their own 2020 Silver Linings captured below.



Mary Powell joined the District in January as the **Environmental Manager**, leading the effort to develop stream vegetation management plans, coordinate USACE permits, and help ensure District projects are equipped to provide sustainable ecological functions in the future. Mary has over 30 years of experience as a biologist, and has assisted the District in the past with vegetation management and environmental compliance. **Mary's 2020 Silver Lining:** Putting hardly any mileage on my car during 2020!



Laura Hinds joined the District in February as a **Staff Engineer**, working in the Cherry Creek Watershed Service Area. Laura holds a BS in Civil Engineering from CSU and brings with her experience in stormwater and utility design and has experience in land development working on large scale drainage design for residential developments. Laura is a registered PE in Colorado. **Laura's 2020 Silver Lining:** Landed my dream job and bought a house!



Hung-Teng Ho joined the District in February as our first ever in-house **Hydraulic Modeler**. Hung-Teng received his undergrad at the National Chiao Tung University in Taiwan and his masters at UC Denver. His role at the District includes producing/reviewing FHAD studies, LOMCs, and serving as the District's technical modeling expert. He is a registered PE in both Colorado and California. **Hung-Teng's 2020 Silver Lining:** Repaired my sprinkler system which included digging 48 holes!



Drew Roberts joined the District in February as a **Staff Engineer**, working in the North Watershed Service Area. Drew holds a BS in Civil Engineering from the Michigan Technology University. Drew's previous experience includes stream restoration, detention pond design, and hydraulic modeling. Drew also worked in a variety of disciplines outside of water resources, as part of a graduate rotation program. **Drew's 2020 Silver Lining:** Increased access to coffee, food, and bikes!



Melanie Poole joined the District in July as a **Project Engineer**, working in the Northeast Watershed Service Area. Melanie moved to Colorado in January of 2020 from South Carolina. Melanie holds a BS in Civil Engineering from Clemson University and brings over 5 years of experience as a water resources engineer. Melanie is a registered PE in Colorado. **Melanie's 2020 Silver Lining:** More time spent with my dog and my husband!



Keiko Ohtake-Gordon joined the District in November as a full-time **GIS Technician**, but began her career at the District as a GIS Intern back in May of 2019. Keiko is a graduate of the University of Denver with a BS in Environmental Science. Keiko is part of the District's newly developed GIS Team. **Keiko's 2020 Silver Lining:** Never having to pack a lunch!

CORE VALUES



ADVOCATE FOR PUBLIC SAFETY



SUPPORT LOCAL GOVERNMENTS



CARE FOR PEOPLE AND CULTURE



USE PUBLIC FUNDS RESPONSIBLY



BE STEWARDS OF WATERSHEDS AND STREAMS



ADVANCE THE PRACTICE



FINANCIALS

COUNTY	REVENUE	EXPENDITURES	
Adams	\$8.3 M	Construction Projects	\$21.2 M
Arapahoe	\$12.5 M	Maintenance Services	\$16.6 M
Boulder	\$6.1 M	Payroll and Benefits	\$5.9 M
Broomfield	\$1.4 M	South Platte River	\$5.2 M
Denver	\$21.7 M	Operating Costs	\$2.1 M
Douglas	\$5.7 M	Operations and Development	\$2.1 M
Jefferson	\$10.0 M	Floodplain Preservation	\$0.4 M
Misc.	\$0.4 M	Flood Warning	\$1.1 M
TOTAL REVENUE	\$66.2 M	Watershed Planning Studies	\$1.1 M
		Floodplain Management	\$0.9 M
		Contract Services	\$0.1 M
		TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$56.7 M
MILL LEVY	0.997 mills		
Development Services Enterprise			
Land Development Projects	\$14.6 M		



MHFD

MILE HIGH FLOOD DISTRICT

MHFD.ORG
303.455.6277

2480 W 26TH AVE SUITE 156-B
DENVER, CO 80211



@MHFloodDistrict



Mile High Flood District



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FloodControlDistrict