

# ANNUAL REPORT | 2019

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



**MHFD**  
MILE HIGH FLOOD DISTRICT



# MHFD

MILE HIGH FLOOD DISTRICT

## 2019: NEW NAME, SAME GREAT MISSION



In 2019, the District underwent a major rebranding effort which resulted in a new name, logo, and messaging that better reflects our vision for the District. From here on, we are doing business as the Mile High Flood District (MHFD). For decades, people (including our own Board of Directors) have struggled with our long and cumbersome name, which not only lacked a geographical locator, but also employed the word “control,” which is a misnomer—we don’t control floods, we rather mitigate the risk of flooding through thoughtful planning, expert design and construction, and meticulous maintenance of our streams and infrastructure.

In four words, the new name describes where we are geographically (the “Mile High City”), and also who we are and what we do (a Flood District). It also complements our mission, vision, and core values to give us a laser-sharp sense of purpose—we exist to protect people, property, and our environment through preservation, mitigation, and education.

As a result of District taxpayers voting to restore our statutory taxing authority in 2018, the District’s statutory millage rate increased from 0.557 in 2018 to 0.820 in 2019, with future annual increases scheduled until the full statutory millage rate of 1.000 is restored in 2021. This, along with a small increase in assessed valuation districtwide, increased our revenue by 50%, from \$35 million to \$49 million. To support the management of this additional revenue, and also to administer the ever-growing portfolio of fee-in-lieu improvement (FILI) projects through which we ensure high quality drainage improvements are constructed when necessitated by land development projects, we

hired seven new employees, increasing our staff to 36—an impressively small number considering the number of projects completed each year.

At our annual symposium in April, I had the privilege of awarding Jeff Shoemaker with the “Friend of the District” award for his leadership in the community as the executive director of the Greenway Foundation, his dedication to the rivers and streams of the region, his loyalty to our organization, and for leading the election campaign to a resounding victory in 2018.

2019 marked the 50th anniversary of the creation of the Flood District with a gala at the Shoemaker Plaza at Confluence Park; this being the namesake of Joe Shoemaker, our founding legislator. It was a swelteringly hot day but a fun event with music, speeches, and special recognition for several employees having 20 or more years of service to the district. A special lifetime achievement award was presented to Joe Busto for his dedication to stream restoration through his work as a scientist and researcher at the Colorado Water Conservation Board. I’m sad to say that Joe has since passed away after a heroic battle with cancer—he will be deeply missed.

In closing, 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 UDFC...(darn it!) I mean MHFD. 2019 was an exceptional year of unprecedented growth for the Flood District, and I am immensely grateful to all who supported and contributed to our achievements.

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**LIBBY SZABO**  
Commissioner,  
Jefferson County  
Chair



**ADAM PAUL**  
Mayor,  
City of Lakewood  
Secretary & Treasurer



**STACIE GILMORE**  
Council Member,  
City and County of Denver  
Chair Pro Tem



**DAVE SELLARDS**  
Engineer,  
Retired  
Member-at-Large

# BOARD MEMBERS

## GOVERNING BODY

19 Locally-Appointed  
Elected Officials

2 Licensed  
Professional Engineers

**Mayor Randy Ahrens**  
City/County of Broomfield

**Mayor Herb Atchison**  
City of Westminster

**Mayor Debbie Brinkman**  
City of Littleton

**Council Member Jolon Clark**  
City/County of Denver

**Mark Hunter**  
Engineer-Retired

**Commissioner Matt Jones**  
Boulder County

**Council Member Paul Kashmann**  
City/County of Denver

**Mayor Pro Tem John Marriot**  
City of Arvada

**Mayor Stephanie Piko**  
City of Centennial

**Deputy Mayor Murphy Robinson**  
City/County of Denver

**Mayor Pro Tem Bob Roth**  
City of Aurora

**Commissioner Nancy Sharpe**  
Arapahoe County

**Mayor Bud Starker**  
City of Wheat Ridge

**Commissioner Charles Tedesco**  
Adams County

**Commissioner Lora Thomas**  
Douglas County

**Mayor Pro Tem Sam Weaver**  
City of Boulder

**Mayor Heidi Williams**  
City of Thornton



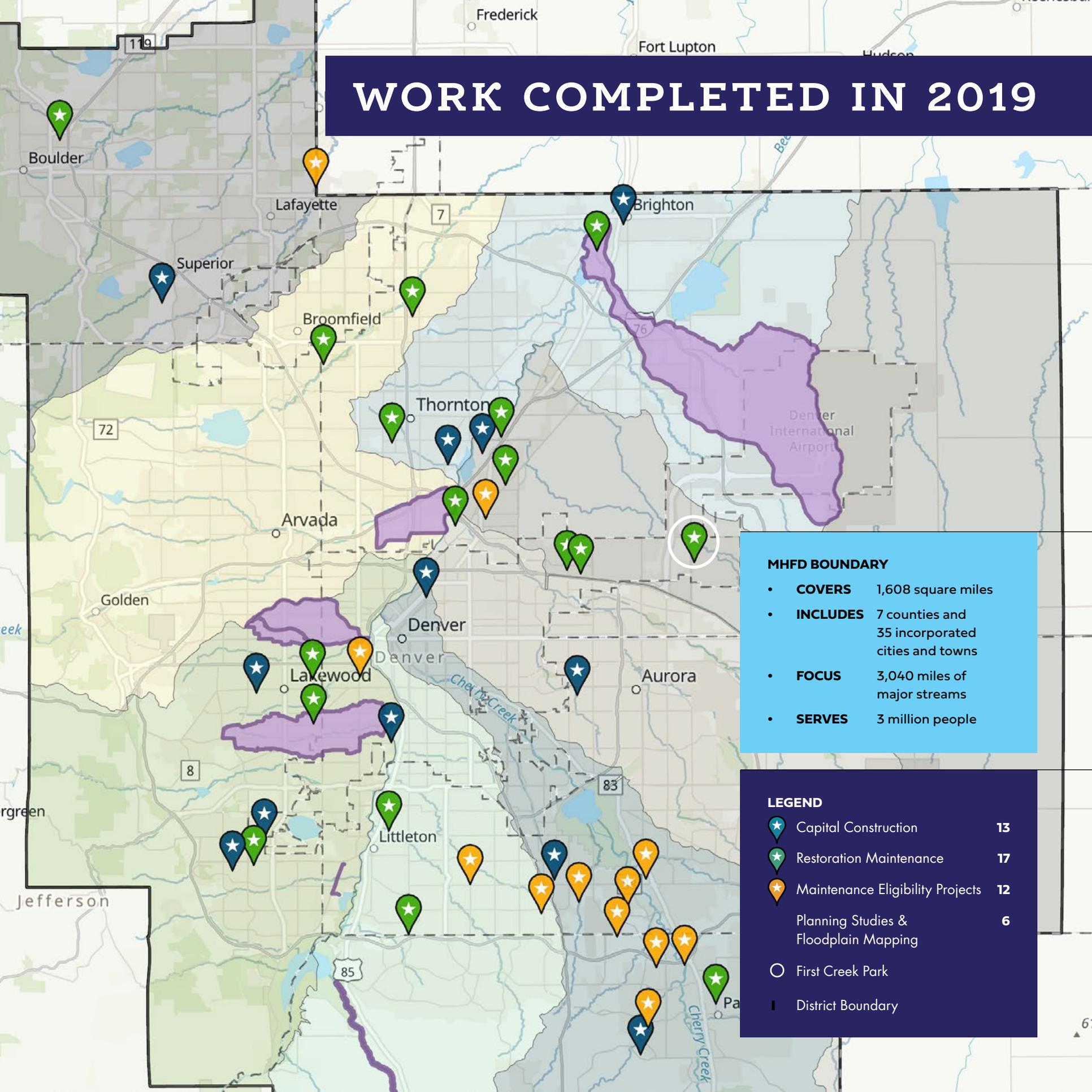


# HIGHLIGHT PROJECT: FIRST CREEK PARK

- Holistic Project that integrated 3 original detached project elements (stream stabilization, trail, and neighborhood park) into a First Creek Corridor Enhancement Project
- Cost approximately \$2,200,000
- Built the final 0.7 miles of the First Creek Regional Trail that was 10 years in the making, connecting the Highline Canal Trail to the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge
- Restored 900 lineal feet of First Creek to stabilize and promote access to the creek
- Roughly 6 acre park and the first to be fully dedicated to nature play
- Nature play components are integrated throughout the site with a strong emphasis on the elements of unstructured, explorative play
- Trees that had to be removed were repurposed as nature play elements
- Designed to engage visitors with nature and highlight all five senses
- Included one regional trail creek crossing and two boulder stepper creek crossings
- Incorporated 5 acres of native vegetation including pollinator species, 88 new trees, and 160 shrubs
- City and County of Denver was a partner in the project



# WORK COMPLETED IN 2019



## 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

## LEGEND

- Capital Construction **13**
- Restoration Maintenance **17**
- Maintenance Eligibility Projects **12**
- Planning Studies & Floodplain Mapping **6**
- First Creek Park
- District Boundary



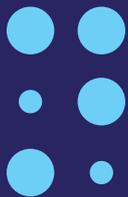
# 25,900

Total number of audience members reached by MHFD presenters



# 2,236

Total number of hours MHFD staff spent on education and training



# 88

Total number of organizations with which MHFD staff have engaged

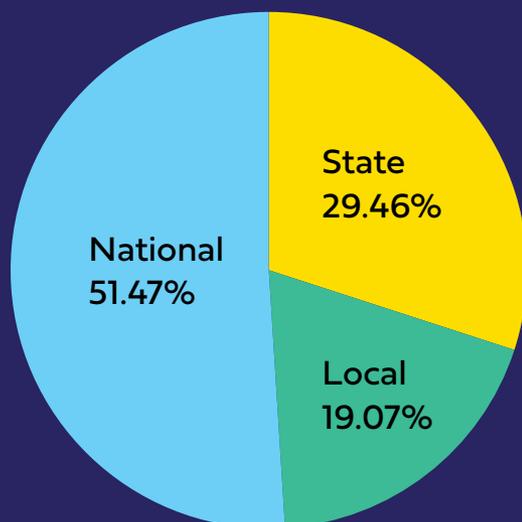


## OUTREACH & EDUCATION

We were excited to unveil our new name and logo at the 50th Anniversary celebration on the South Platte River in July. The rebranding effort has given the District a fresh look, which we have put to good use in developing our new website. Work on the new website began early in 2019, and after a year of development was released in April of 2020. The objective for the site was to improve on-line resources and tools to meet the evolving needs of our partners.

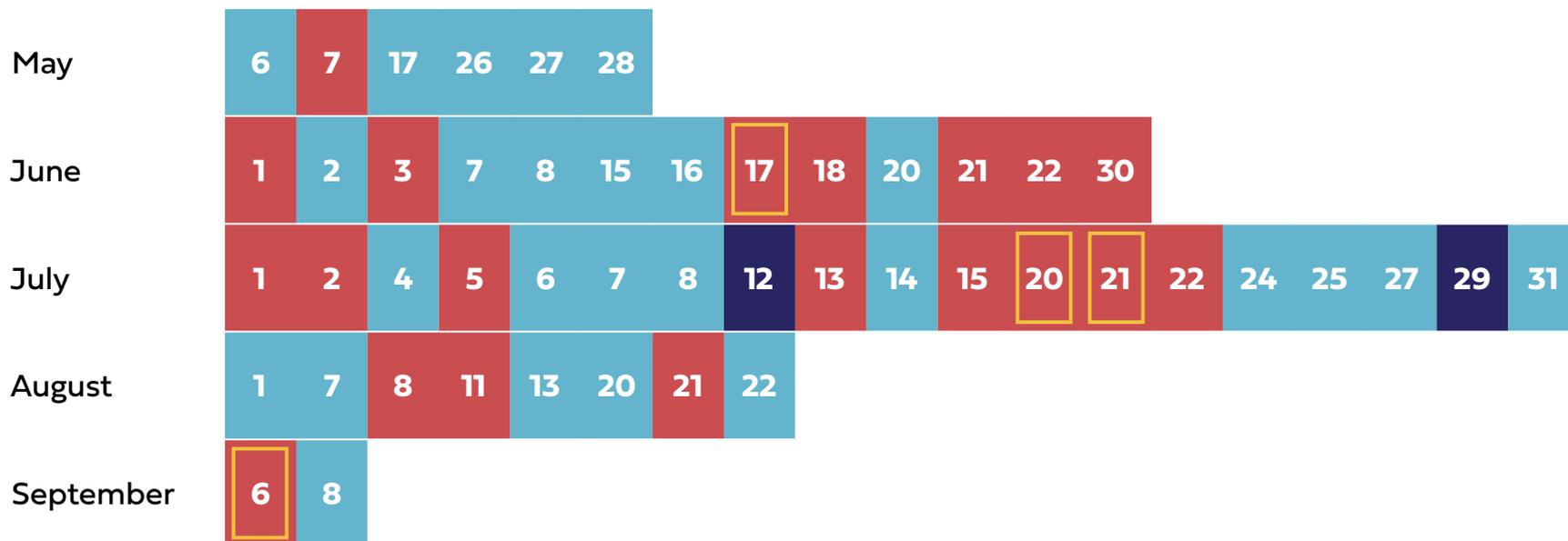
Besides the addition of the wave and new color schemes, the website is easier to navigate for the variety of people who visit it. As public servants, keeping our communities aware of their flood risks is a primary focus. In addition, we want to provide educational materials and resources around healthy streams and open spaces. All of the tools and resources previously provided to local governments, consultants, and contractors are still on the website, but organized in a more intuitive way. The District will continue to make enhancements based on feedback and analytics to improve the services provided.

### ORGANIZATIONS BROKEN DOWN BY GEOGRAPHY





## 40 DAYS WITH FLOOD POTENTIAL IN 2019



- Indicates that rain alarms occurred.
- Indicates that rain alarms occurred only in areas outside MHFD's main area of concern such as northern Boulder County or the Hayman Burn Area in southwestern Douglas County.
- Designates a NWS flash flood watch (none in 2019).
- Designates a NWS flash flood warning.

The traditional Flood Hazard News (FHN) annual newsletter has been replaced by the MHFD Annual Report. Future FHN publications will focus primarily on MHFD's flood warning services and the respective year's most significant storms and flooding events. A biennial issue covering the 2018 & 2019 flood seasons will be released later this year.

# WELCOME NEW STAFF



**Kurt Bauer** started with the District in February. He is the Watershed Manager for Cherry Creek and has over 25 years of experience in the water resources industry including 10 years with the City of Boulder. Kurt is a licensed professional engineer with a Bachelor's degree from Colorado State University and a Master's degree from the University of Oregon.



**Katie Evers** started with the District in November. She has over 10 years of experience as a GIS professional, including the flood control district in Houston. She is a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin.



**Dan Hill** started with the District in January as an Engineering Technologist. A graduate from Case Western Reserve University, Dan has a Masters in Civil Engineering and is a Licensed Professional Engineer. He has seven years of experience as a consulting engineer, both at both CH2M and RESPEC.



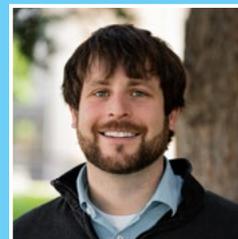
**Ellie Paulsen** started at the District in January as an Administrative Assistant supporting Watershed Services. She recently moved to Denver from Cincinnati, Ohio where she worked as a Marketing/Business Coordinator. Ellie earned her BA in Political Science at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio.



**Mark Schutte** started working for the District in January. He is an Engineering Technologist for the North, Northeast, and Sand Creek Watersheds. Mark moved to Colorado for graduate school at CU-Boulder and liked it so much he stayed. Mark started his career with Olsson, but is excited to continue it with MHFD as a freshly-licensed Professional Engineer.



**Jon Villines** joined MHFD as a Project Manager in January. Prior to joining the District, Jon worked for Aurora Water where he gained experience in stormwater master planning, capital project management, and asset management. He has a Bachelor's in Urban Planning from Brown University and a Master's in Biosystems Engineering from the University of Kentucky with a Graduate Certificate in Stream and Watershed Science.



**Brik Zivkovich** returned to the District in July. He started as a graduate student intern while attending the University of Colorado Denver. Brik spent multiple semesters working as a teaching assistant and research assistant for the Department of Civil Engineering at the University of Colorado Denver, then worked as a project engineer for 2 ½ years with Wright Water Engineers, Inc.



## CORE VALUES

- **Advocate for public safety** by reducing flood damage, by increasing awareness of flood risk, and through responsible design and community development.
- **Support for Local Governments** by building partnerships, influencing responsible practices, and promoting community welfare.
- **Care for people and culture** by fostering an environment that cares for, supports, inspires, and empowers employees.
- **Use public funds responsibly** through flexible and efficient processes and by leveraging resources to maximize community and environmental benefit.
- **Be stewards of watersheds and streams** by promoting natural and beneficial functions of floodplains and responsible watershed management.
- **Advance the practice** of science, engineering, and management of watersheds and streams through research, innovation, and education.



# FINANCIALS

COUNTY	REVENUE	EXPENDITURES	
Adams	\$5.2m	Construction Projects	\$14.3M
Arapahoe	\$8.4m	Maintenance Services	\$14.1M
Boulder	\$4.2m	Payroll and Benefits	\$5.3M
Broomfield	\$1.0m	South Platte River	\$3.9M
Denver	\$13.7m	Operating Costs	\$2.5M
Douglas	\$4.0m	Flood Warning	\$1.0M
Jefferson	\$6.9m	Operations and Development	\$0.9M
Misc Revenue	\$4.0M	Watershed Planning Studies	\$0.8M
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$47.4M</b>	Floodplain Management	\$0.5M
		Contract Services	\$0.1M
		<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$43.4M</b>

MILL LEVY 0.82  
 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT EXPENDITURES 1974 - 2019 \$277 M



**Marston Lake North  
Drainageway**

Before  
After



**McIntyre Gulch at  
Holland Street**

Before  
After



**Niver Creek Upstream  
of Huron**

Before  
After



**Sterling Ranch**

Before  
After



MILE HIGH FLOOD DISTRICT

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