

November 15, 2018

Natural Resources Conservation Board issues approval of the Cougar Creek debris and flood retention structure

A review by the Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB) has found the Town of Canmore's proposed Cougar Creek debris and flood retention structure to be in the public interest. The Board concluded that the structure will protect public safety, property, and infrastructure with no unacceptable impacts on the environment or wildlife.

The approval is based on the NRCB's consideration of the social, economic, and environmental effects of the project. The approval requires the Town of Canmore to implement its proposed commitments and the Board's conditions. These requirements include reclamation and revegetation, management of construction-related issues, ongoing water monitoring, and continued access to back country recreation areas during the construction and operation of the structure.

The nearly 30 metre high debris flood retention structure will be located on Cougar Creek, approximately two kilometres northeast of the Trans-Canada Highway. During high rainfall events, water and large woody and rock debris will be temporarily held back behind the structure in an inundation area. Water from this inundation area will be released back to Cougar Creek downstream of the structure in a controlled manner.

The Board agreed with the Town of Canmore's assessment that without appropriate flood mitigation, future Cougar Creek debris flood events present an unacceptable risk to human life and private and public infrastructure. The 2013 debris flood event at Cougar Creek caused devastating destruction of homes, businesses, and infrastructure. Lives were put at risk, highways and the railway were severed, and losses amounted to tens of millions of dollars.

The project's construction costs alone are estimated at \$38 million. The provincial and federal governments are contributing \$44.87 million for project construction and ancillary activities such as the environmental impact assessment, structure design and dam safety review. The Town of Canmore will be responsible for ongoing costs associated with maintenance and operation of the structure.

The Natural Resources Conservation Board is an independent, quasi-judicial board of the Government of Alberta, established by the *Natural Resources Conservation Board Act*.

Related information:

Structure issued NRCB approval—background (pdf)

- Summary of key findings, conditions, and Board review process

Board decision report (pdf)

[Cougar Creek Debris Flood Retention Structure](#)

Media inquiries:

Jean Olynyk

403-679-9879

Senior Communications Specialist