

FOUNTAIN CREEK

Healing the cuts

District wants more proactive approach to erosion woes

By CHRIS WOODKA

THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

FOUNTAIN — Jane Green, who owns property on Fountain Creek south of Fountain, has become a regular at meetings of a district designed to fix the troubled waterway. She's spoken to the board several times since a flood washed out a levee protecting her home in September 2011, without many clear-cut suggestions about how to go about fortifying the bank before the next wave of water hits.

But Friday, the Fountain Creek was moved to begin taking action to help her and other landowners who experience erosion or flooding from sudden storms on the creek.

"I think we can move forward on this," said Richard Skorman, a Colorado Springs businessman who sits on the board of the Fountain Creek Watershed Flood Control and Greenway District.

Ferris Frost, another woman who owns land in the creek channel and a member of the district's citizens advisory committee, showed the board slides of her own property. A logjam 100 feet wide by a quarter-mile long clogged an irrigation headgate last year. The creek has cut away 50-foot cliffs over the last three decades. "Jane Green has been to the district three times this year, and found no one to help," Frost said. "It should be one of our functions."

The district did tell her to contact the Corps of Engineers and Natural Resources Conservation Service for help in repairing the levee, and got a permit to do work in the stream, but she had to line up her own materials. The concrete chunks thrown in the creek as a stop-gap measure go against the plans, which were developed during years of meetings leading up to the formation of the district in 2009.

Jay Winner, manager of the Lower Arkansas Valley Water Conservancy District, said state funds for stream stabilization projects went unused last year. The funds are available for public entities like the Fountain Creek district, but not landowners. Board chairman Jeff Chostner set up a special committee to look into options for grants and programs the district can use to help landowners.

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COURTESY PHOTO/FERRIS FROST

More than 30 years of erosion have cut 50-foot cliffs along the banks of Fountain Creek on the Frost Ranch south of Fountain.