

FOUNTAIN CREEK

District mulling mill levy question

Report next month could help clear up improvement district funding picture

By CHRIS WOODKA

THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

FOUNTAIN — A report from the Trust for Public Lands next month could help solidify plans by a Fountain Creek improvement district to ask voters for a mill levy.

“Our current funding runs out at the end of this year,” said El Paso County Commissioner Dennis Hisey. “We may be passing the hat next year.”

The Fountain Creek Watershed Flood Control and Greenway District last year signed an agreement to work with the trust to poll voters about what kind of ballot issue would likely be supported to provide more sustainable funding for the district.

“When we get to the big question, we have to find out what the will of the people is,” said Pueblo County Commissioner Terry Hart.

Under state law, the district can ask voters in Pueblo and El Paso counties for up to 5 mills. Apparently, the majority of voters in both counties would decide the issue. In other words, a mill could not be passed in one county and rejected in another.

Hisey said the size of the mill levy could depend on whether the district intends to fund its basic operations, leverage grant money or tackle larger problems.

The distribution of funding could be arranged in such a way that El Paso County could pay more than Pueblo County and use money to address its nearly \$1 billion in backlogged stormwater projects, the board agreed during discussion.

“But Pueblo money cannot go north,” Hisey said.

Hart agreed.

“The formula has to make sure the money is being spent in the county being taxed,” he said.

The district so far has survived largely on funding from Colorado Springs Utilities and the Lower Arkansas Valley Water Conservancy District.

Under its 1041 permit with Pueblo County, the district would receive the remainder of \$50 million promised from Colorado Springs over five years after the Southern Delivery System is completed in 2016.

cwoodka@chieftain.com

Powered by [TECNAVIA](#)

Copyright © 2013 The Pueblo Chieftain, Pueblo, CO. 01/30/2013