

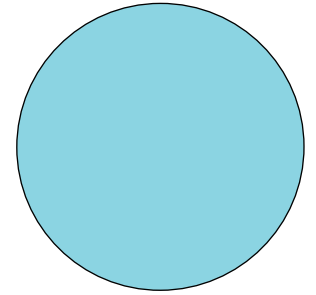


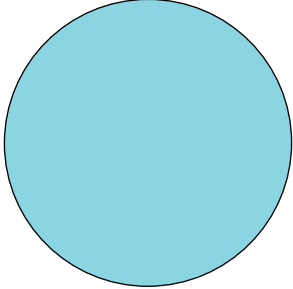
**CONNECT
THE
DOTS**

**MAPPING
THE
HIGHWATER
HAZARDS
AND HISTORY
OF
BOULDER
CREEK**

Mary Miss
2007
Boulder Museum of
Contemporary Art,
**'Weather Report:
Art and Climate
Change'**

The
process of fo-
cusing on an ephemeral
event outside memory or ex-
perience produces an alternative
kind of map of the city. Rather than
claiming property or territory, it uses
the infrastructure of the city—its bridges,
stairs, streets and buildings—to create
a three dimensional map which makes
apparent the ever changing presence
of water. Instead of an abstraction,
it is a mapping that makes ap-
parent the constancy of
change.





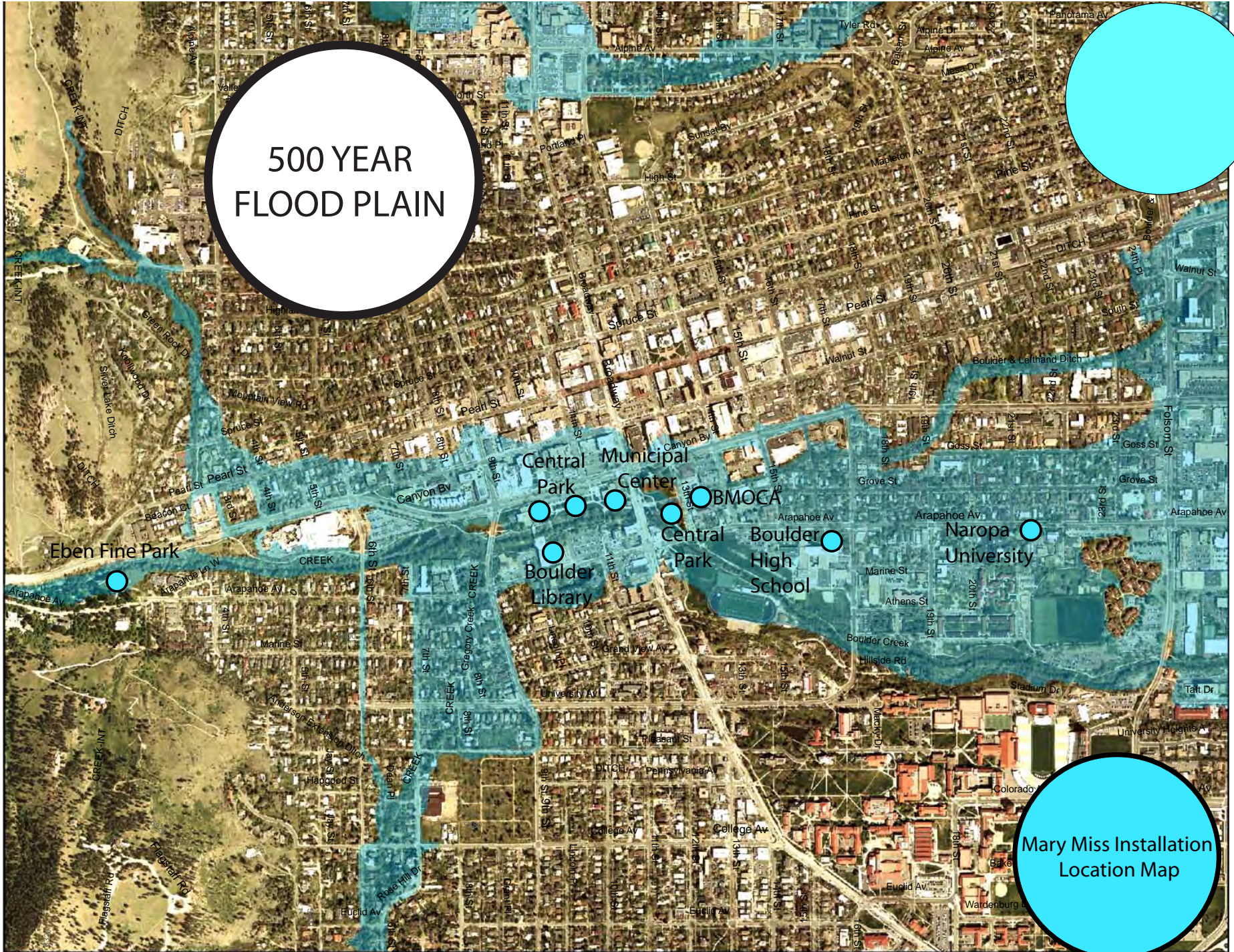
This project is intended to bring attention to the possible flooding of Boulder Creek. It suggests some of the issues to be considered and how this information might be revealed. A fully implemented project would deal with these points and others in detail; it would be an ongoing collection of information involving experts in the field as well as the observations of the residents of Boulder

In the spring of 1894, a 100 year flood event occurred in downtown Boulder. Flash floods in Boulder Creek caused widespread damage as the city was inundated. Smaller floods have occurred in 1914, 1919, 1921, 1938 and 1969.

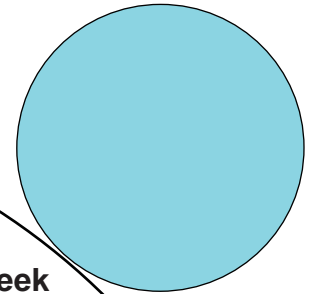
The 100 year flood is used by FEMA to regulate flood plain management. **Many experts believe it would be prudent for communities to be prepared for a 500 year flood event.** A 100 year flood has 1% chance of occurring in any given year, a 500 year flood has a .2% chance of occurring. It is possible for two or more such events to occur in a single year. New weather patterns make the forecasting of such events less predictable: Hurricane Katrina had a .25% chance of occurring.

The city of Boulder is located at the mouth of Boulder Canyon. Because of its location, the nature of the steep slopes and long approach upstream the city is highly susceptible to flooding. The city is considered to be a high hazard zone where the question is not if there will be a flood but when will it happen.

500 YEAR FLOOD PLAIN



Mary Miss Installation Location Map



THE PROJECT

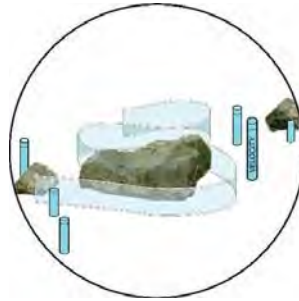
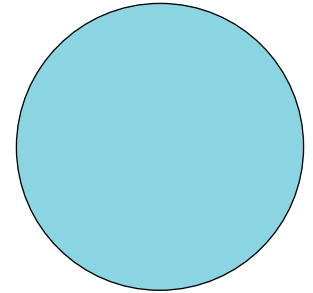
How can the imagination be provoked to envision an event outside our daily experience? How can the predicted flooding of Boulder Creek be made tangible to the residents of this city?

Downtown Boulder, from Eben G. Fine Park to Folsom Street, is the focus of this project. A series of modest scale elements will be integrated into the fabric of the city to help residents better understand the nature of floods. As residents go about their daily lives, they will come across fragments of information which, over time, will give them a clearer sense of their relationship to this aspect of their immediate environment.

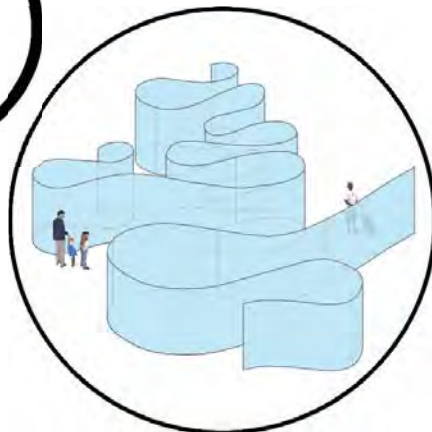
A three-dimensional mapping of the 500 year floodwaters' predicted depth and extent is marked with circular blue discs:

- Along Boulder Creek, blue circular markers are attached to trees and fences to show the height of the water during a 500-year flood.
- Various buildings in the floodplain such as the Library, Boulder High School and Municipal Building also have highwater marks.
- Large boulders that were moved by pre-historic floods are marked with blue dots.
- Blue dots marking the 500 year floodplain limit are painted on the side walks and streets at key intersections.
- GIS (Geographic Information Systems) is used to reveal detailed information about the watershed, Boulder Creek, its potential floods and its history. Data could be updated as needed.

Looking from one point to the next, connecting the dots, the level and extent of a flood is no longer abstract.



These are studies which have not been implemented

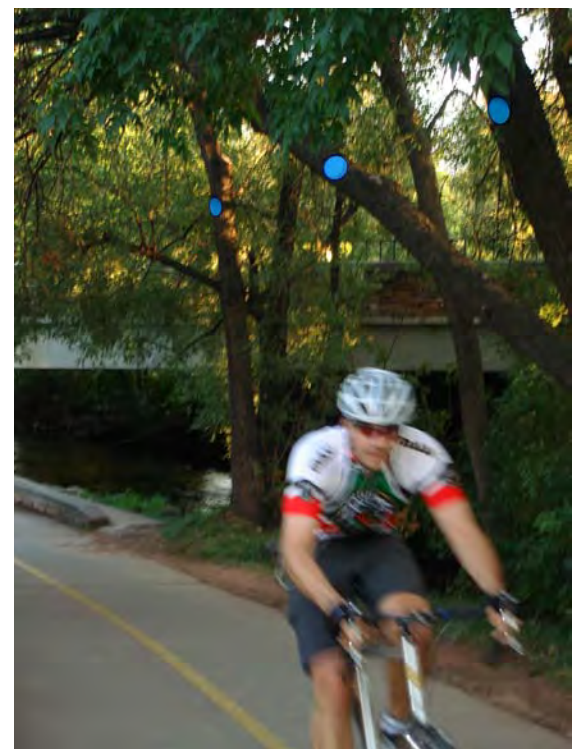
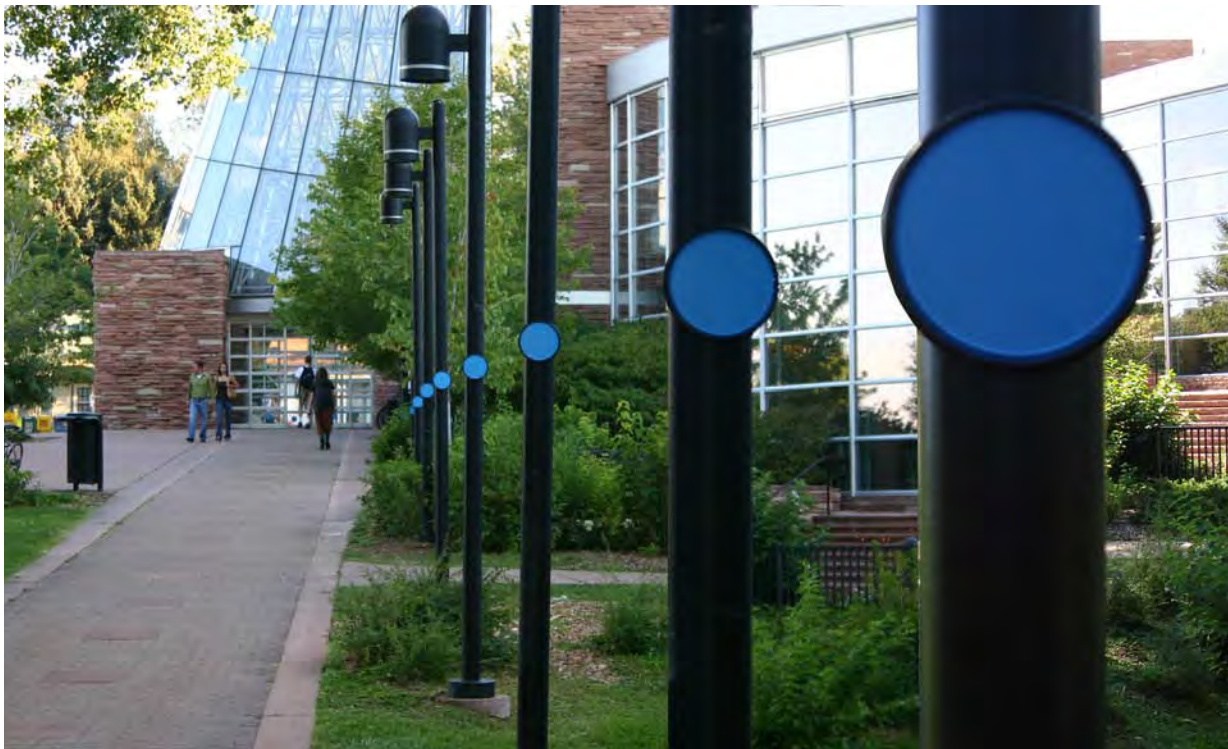
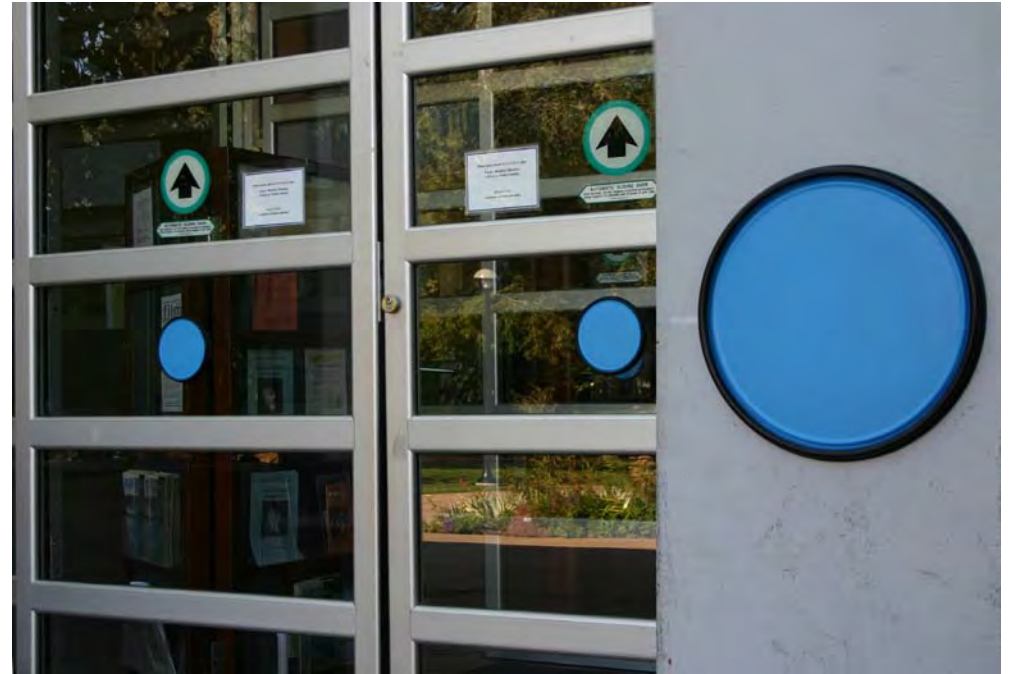


STUDY PROJECT

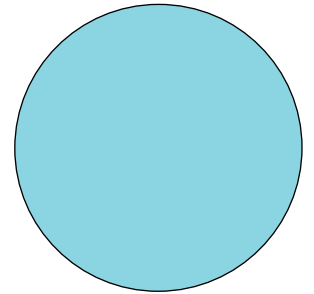
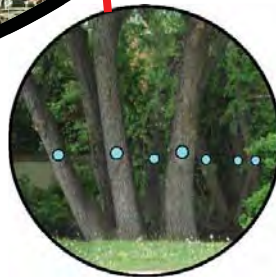
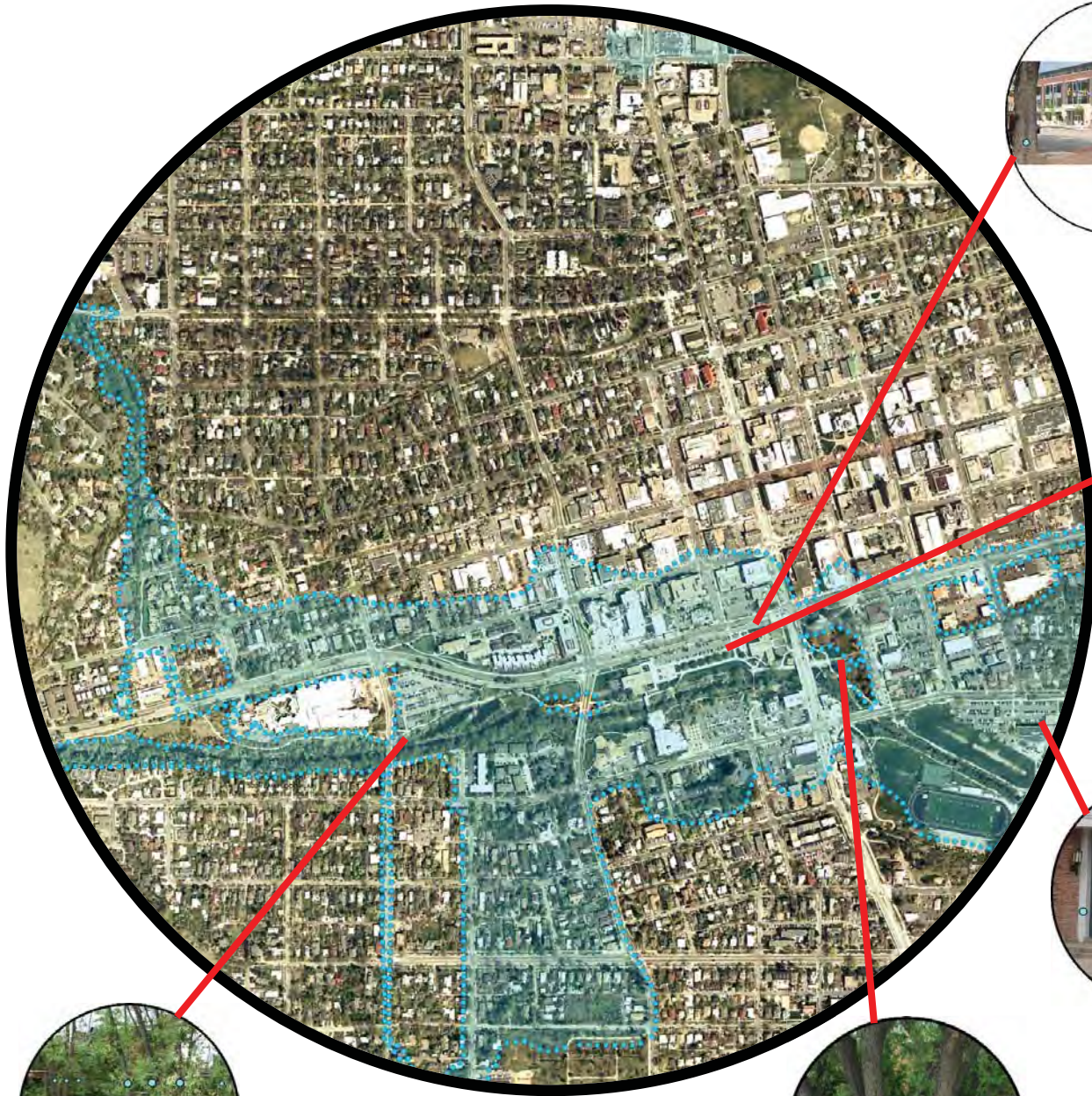
To more fully reveal the nature, characteristics, and history of Boulder Creek's floods, an additional series of elements are proposed:

- A series of seating areas are created adjacent to the creek, each focusing on a single aspect of the creek. Highwater alert signal lights are located at each seating area.
- Water gauges are placed on an abutment of each bridge to show historic flood levels and predicted flood water depths for each location.
- Steps and stairs along the creek are marked to show seasonal changes in the water level.
- GIS might be made accessible to the public at a dedicated computer station in the Boulder Library. Residents, having been made aware of the different aspects of highwater, could come here for more information. Videos of previous floods, photographs, written descriptions, audio recordings about Boulder Creek by a politician, a poet or hydrologist could be made available here.
- Wall of water: a nine foot high undulating wire mesh fence gives a suggestion of the condition created by a "flash flood".



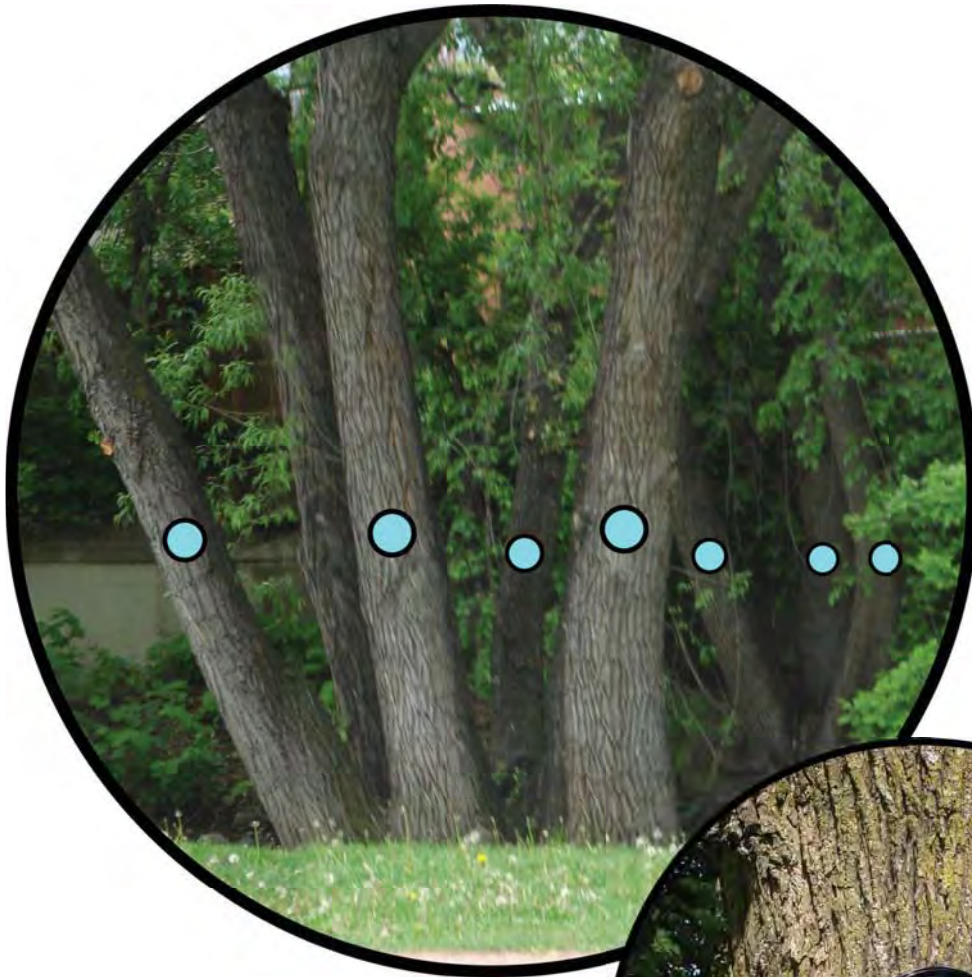
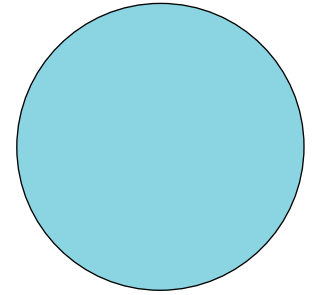






Following are a series of collaged images showing the estimated height and extent of the 500 year flood. Only a few of these have been completed for the exhibition

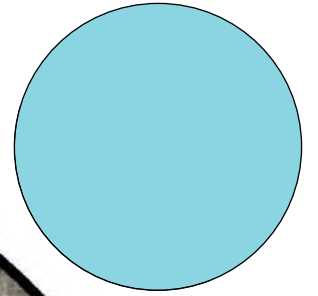
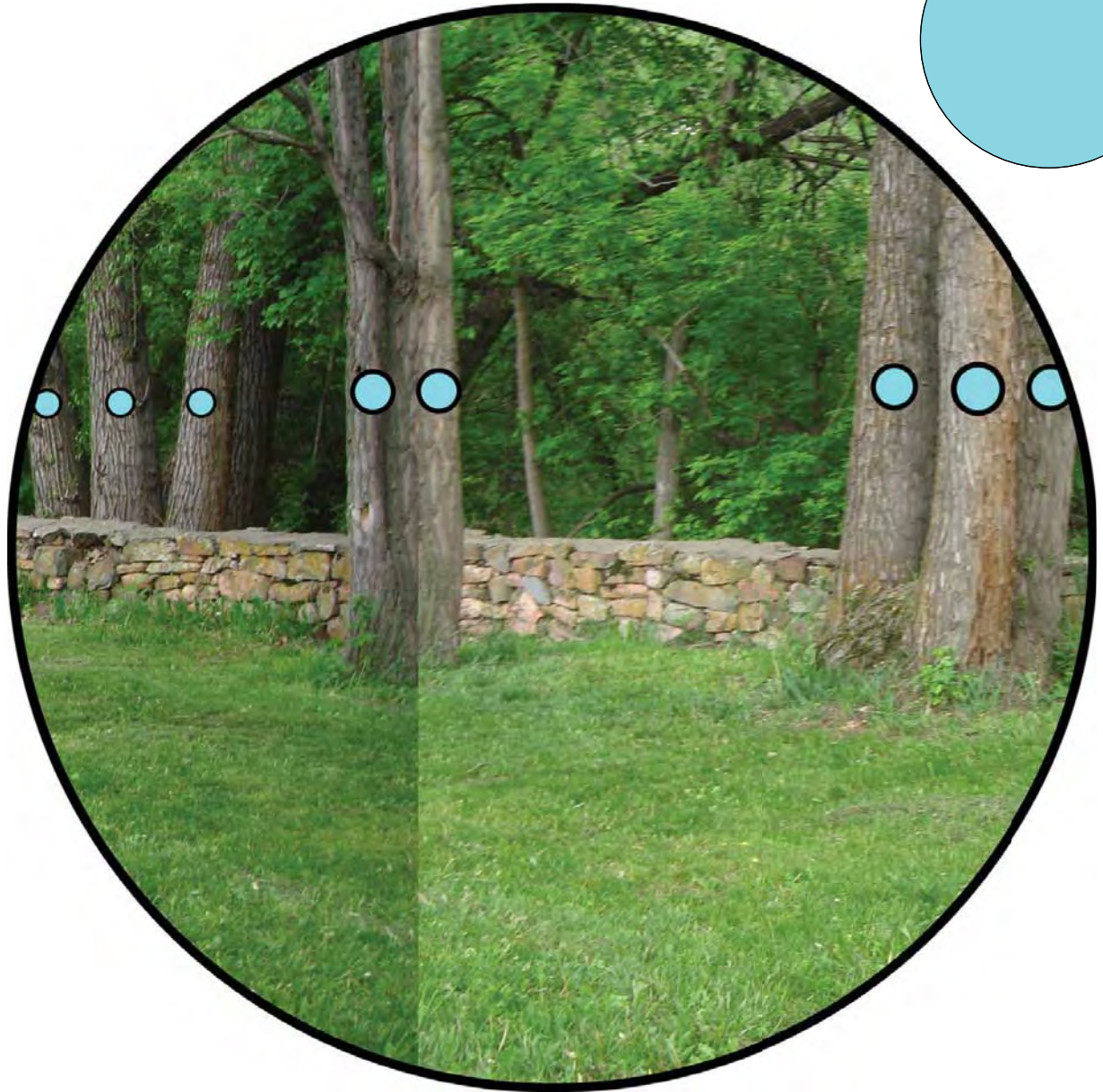
THE PROJECT

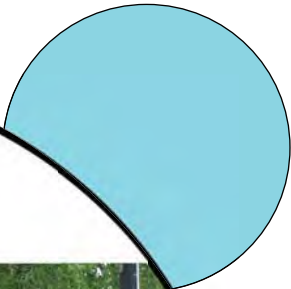


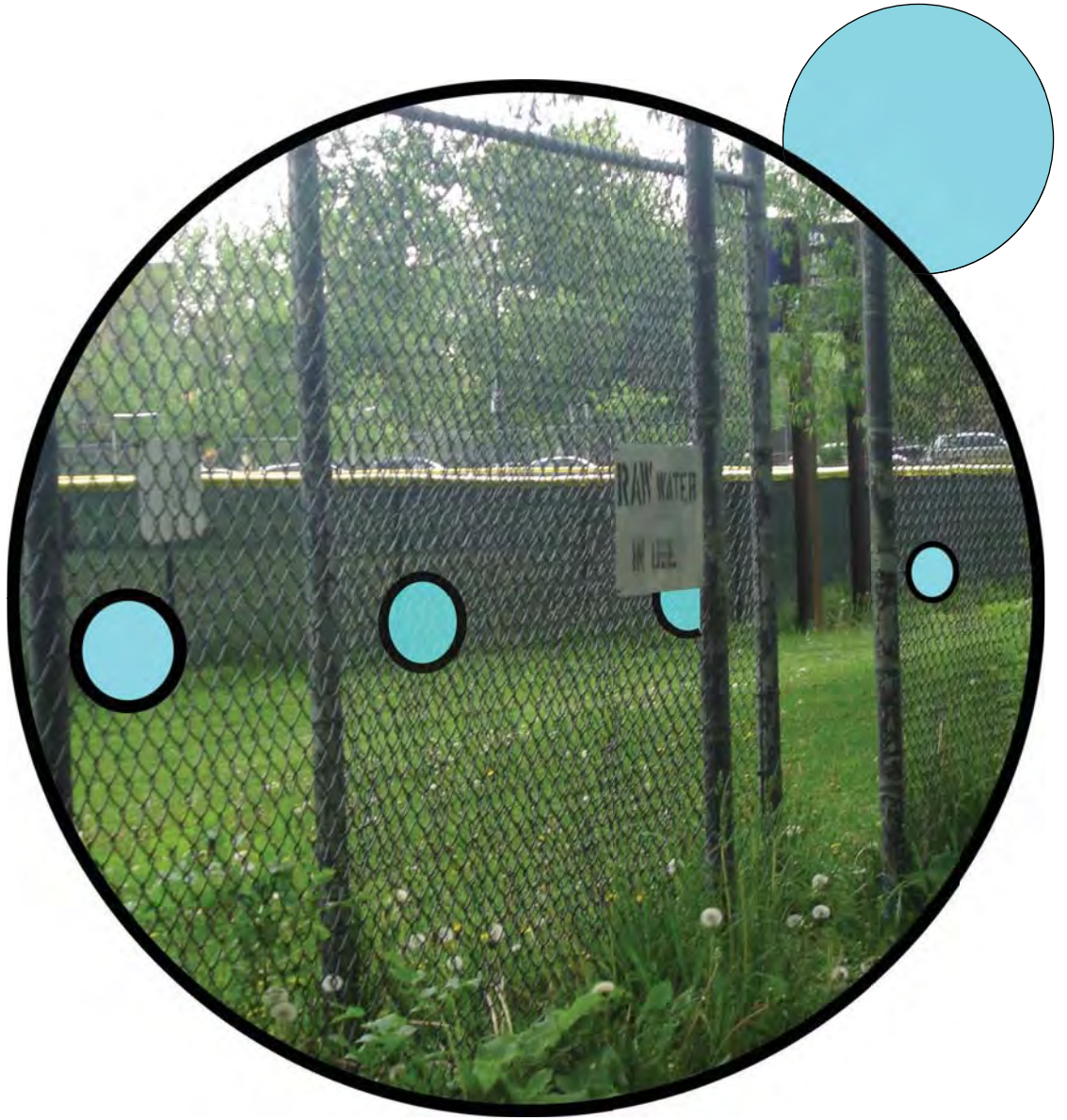
TREES, FENCES,
PARKING LOTS
MARKED TO
SHOW HIGH
WATER LEVEL



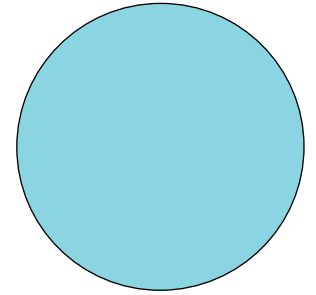
The
positions of the dots
are approximate and
are based on our best in-
terpretation of flood maps
and flood plain profiles
provided by FEMA and
the city of Boulder







MARRIED STUDENT HOUSING



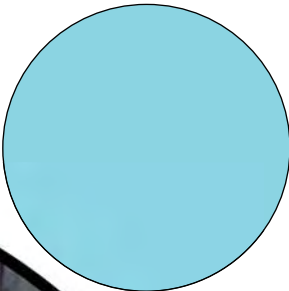
BROADWAY AND CANYON INTERSECTION



Naropa University

The dots shown here are schematic and indicate approximate locations

KEY BUILDINGS
MARKED TO
SHOW 500 YR
FLOOD PLAIN



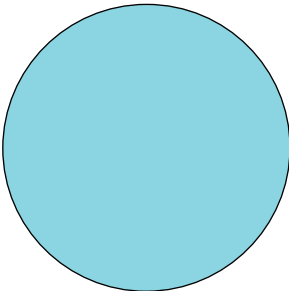
Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art



Boulder High School



Boulder Public Library



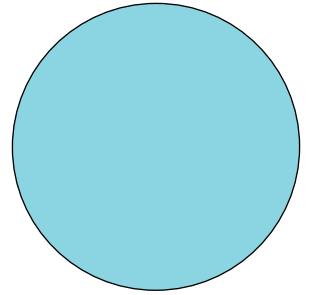
Historic Highland Building



One Boulder Plaza

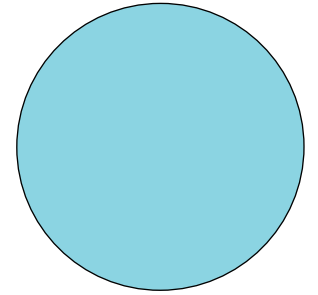


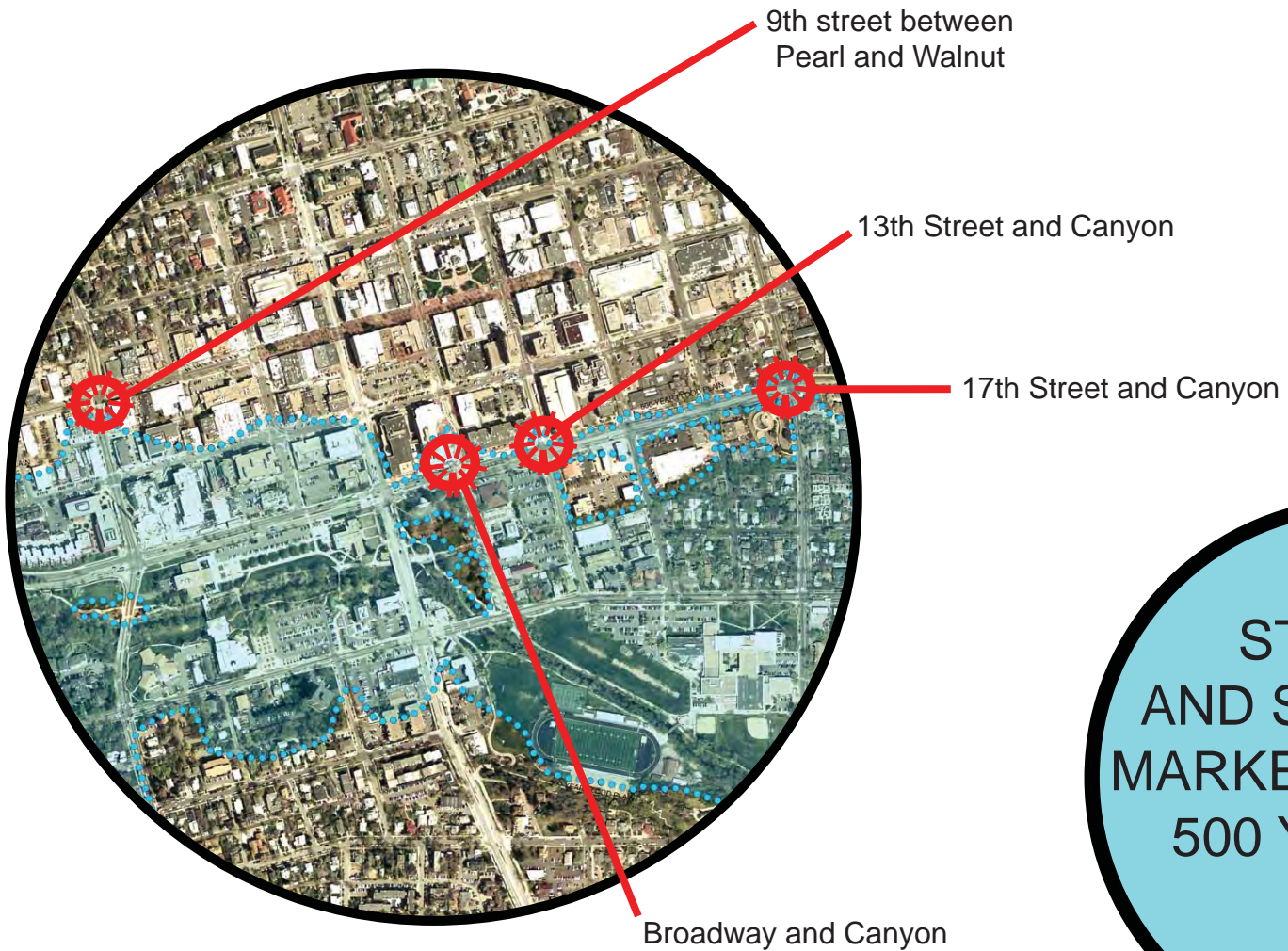
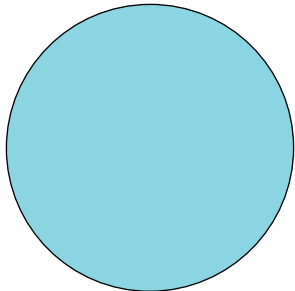
Boulder County Municipal Building

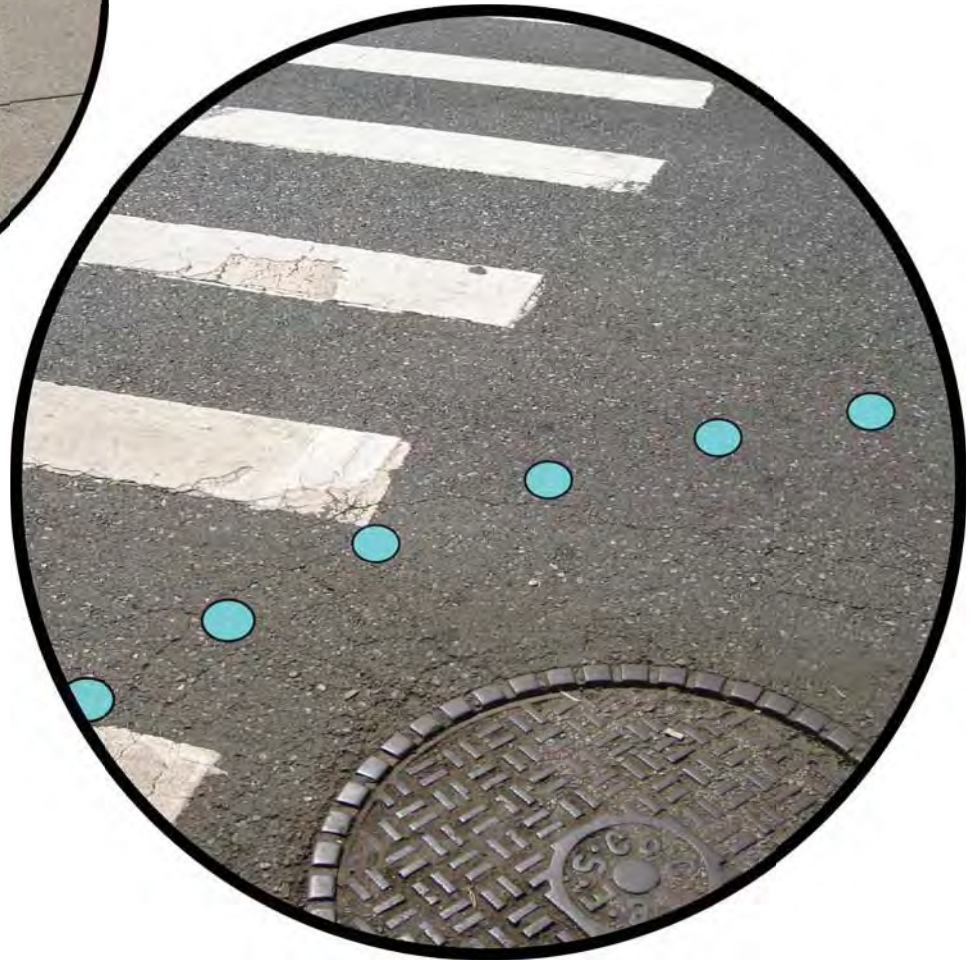
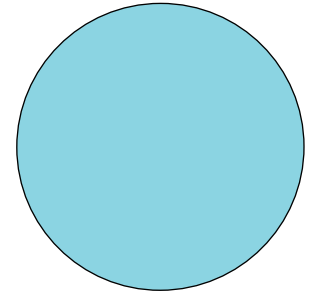
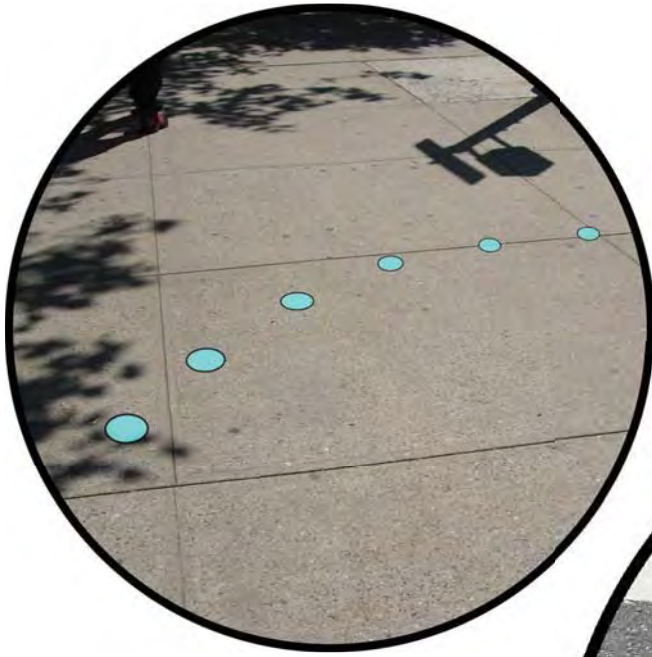


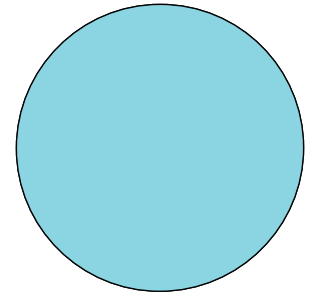


Boulder Municipal Center









Boulders over 6ft across near the Justice Center were used to calculate the floods necessary to move them. University of Colorado geology professor Bill Bradley (ret.) and former graduate student Art Mears calculated that they were moved by discharges and velocities within the estimated range of the 500-year flood

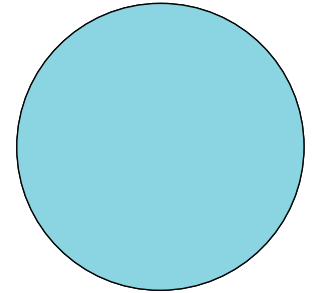


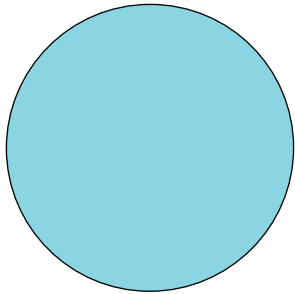
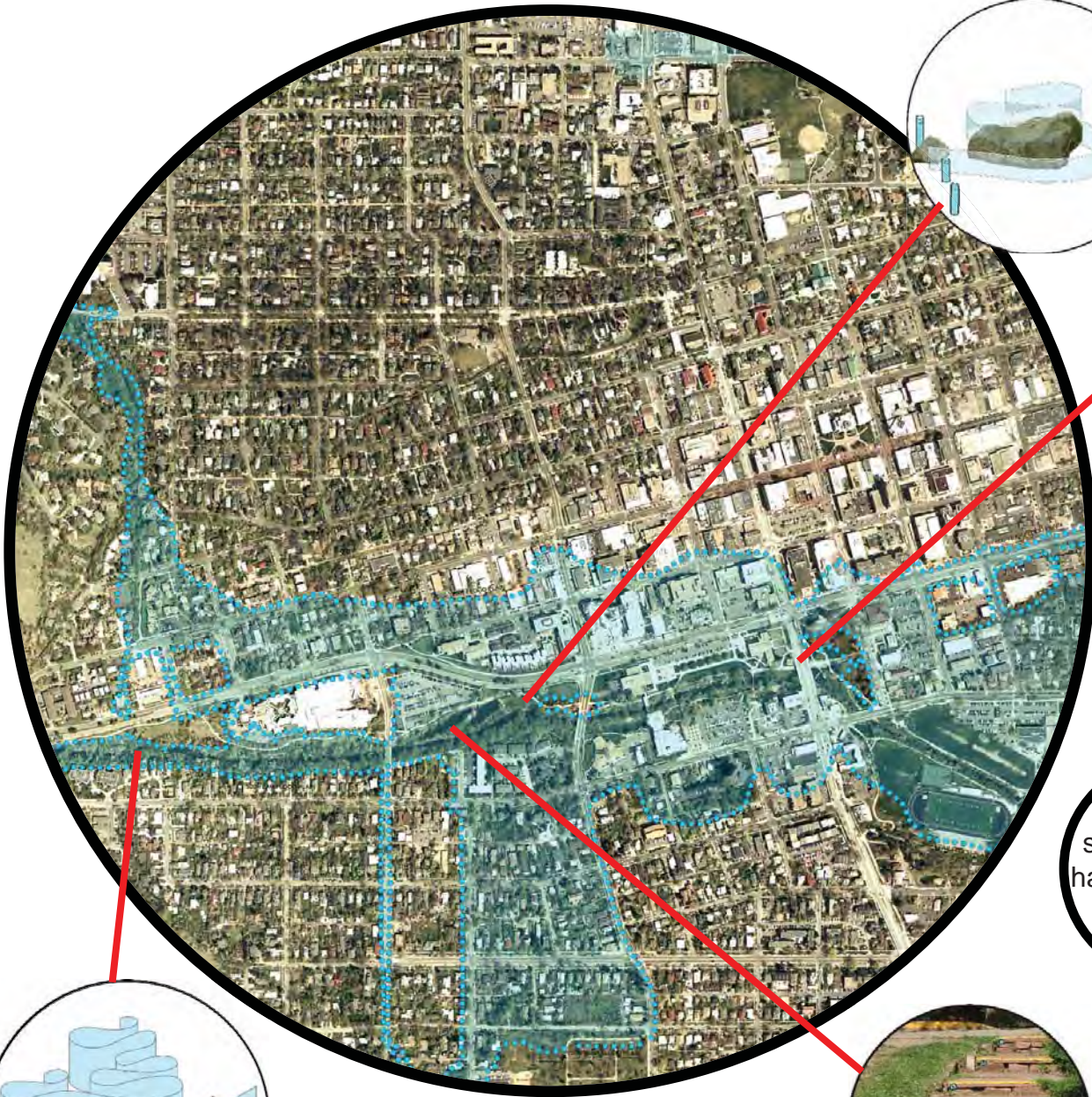
**BOULDERS
MOVED BY
PRE-HISTORIC
FLOODWATERS
MARKED**

GIS
mapping is used
to reveal detailed in-
formation about the
Boulder Creek water-
shed, its potential to
flood, and its history



A preliminary ver-
sion will be available
during the exhibit on
the website
www.marymiss.com
(news)





To more fully reveal the nature, characteristics and history of Boulder Creek floods ideas for an additional series of elements are proposed.

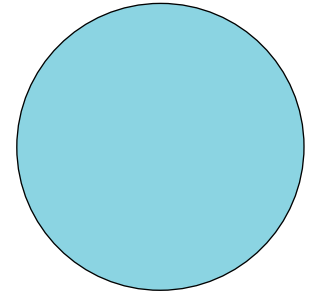
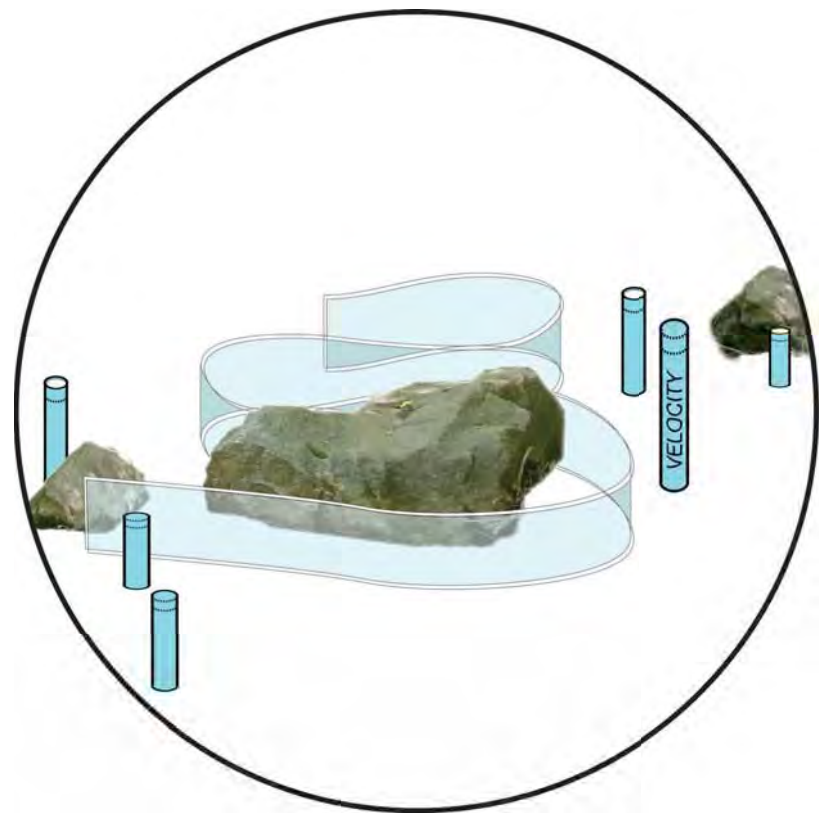
These are studies which have not been implemented

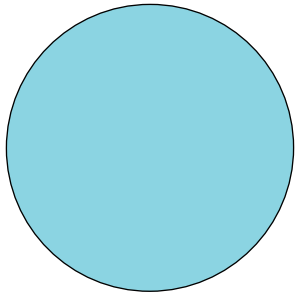
STUDY PROJECTS



A SERIES
OF SEATING
AREAS ADJACENT
TO CREEK, EACH
FOCUSING ON A
SINGLE ASPECT
OF FLOODING

TIME, VELOCITY,
VOLUME, DISCHARGE,
SPACE (WIDE & NARROW),
SURFACE
PERMEABILITY
(HIGH & LOW),
GLOBAL WARMING,
TRIBUTARIES,
WATERSHEDS





Audio
descriptions of
Boulder Creek

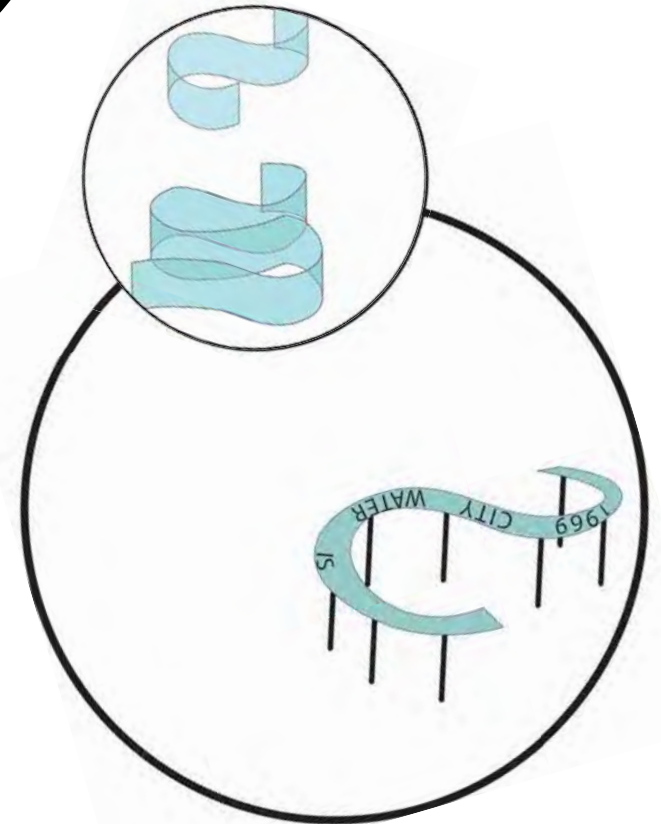
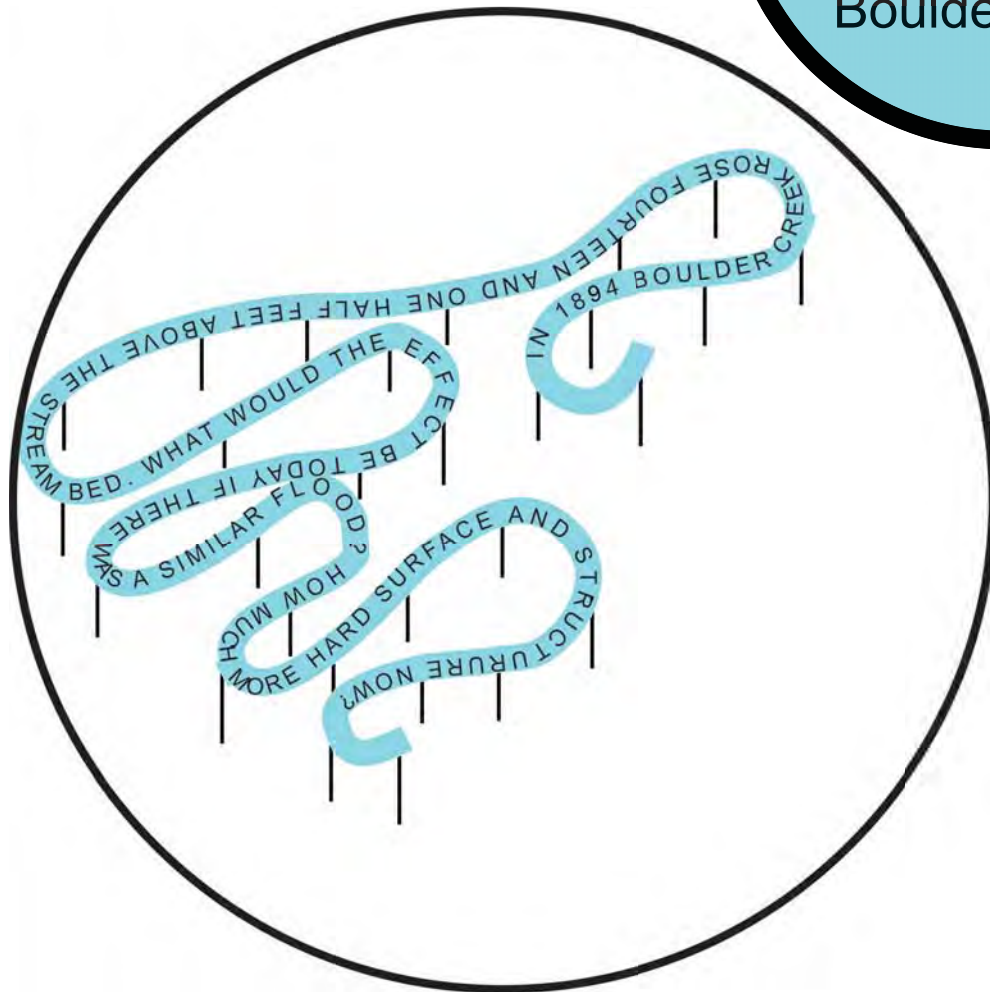
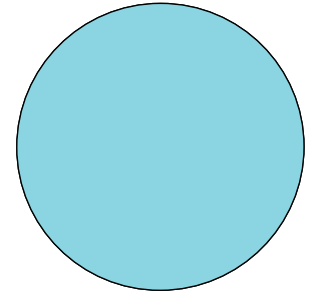


HIGH WATER
ALERT SIGNAL
LIGHTS AT
SEATING AREA
ALONG CREEK



Maps
and
Photographs

Seating areas of curving 12" bands of steel give information about Boulder Creek

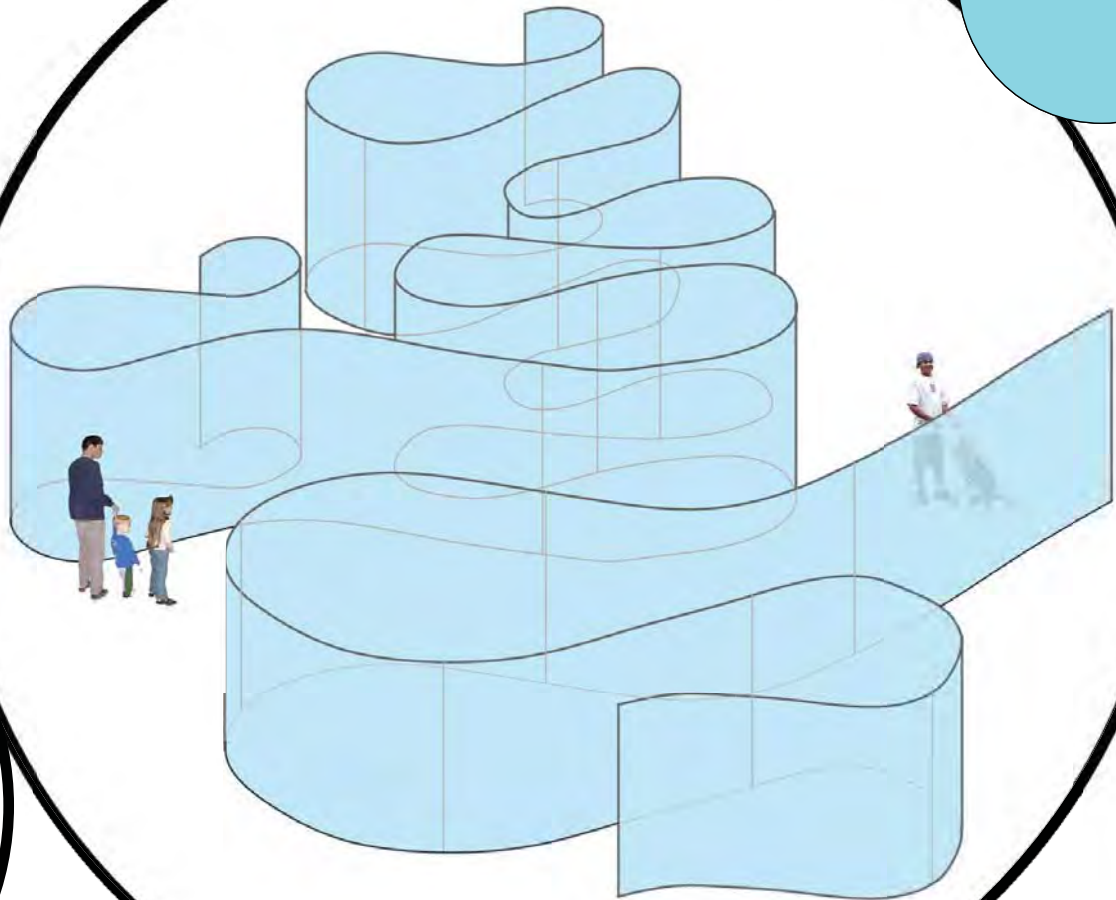


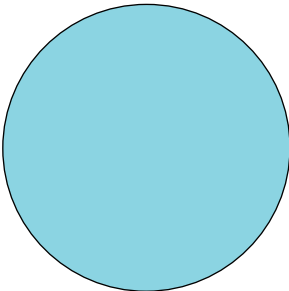
Paved surfaces prevent rain and snow melt from percolating into the ground, causing large volumes of water to enter streams rapidly

Heavy thunderstorms can saturate the soils and cause intense runoff. This will sometimes result in a large volume of water accumulating in a short period of time, creating a wall of water that could range from a few feet high to ten feet or higher.

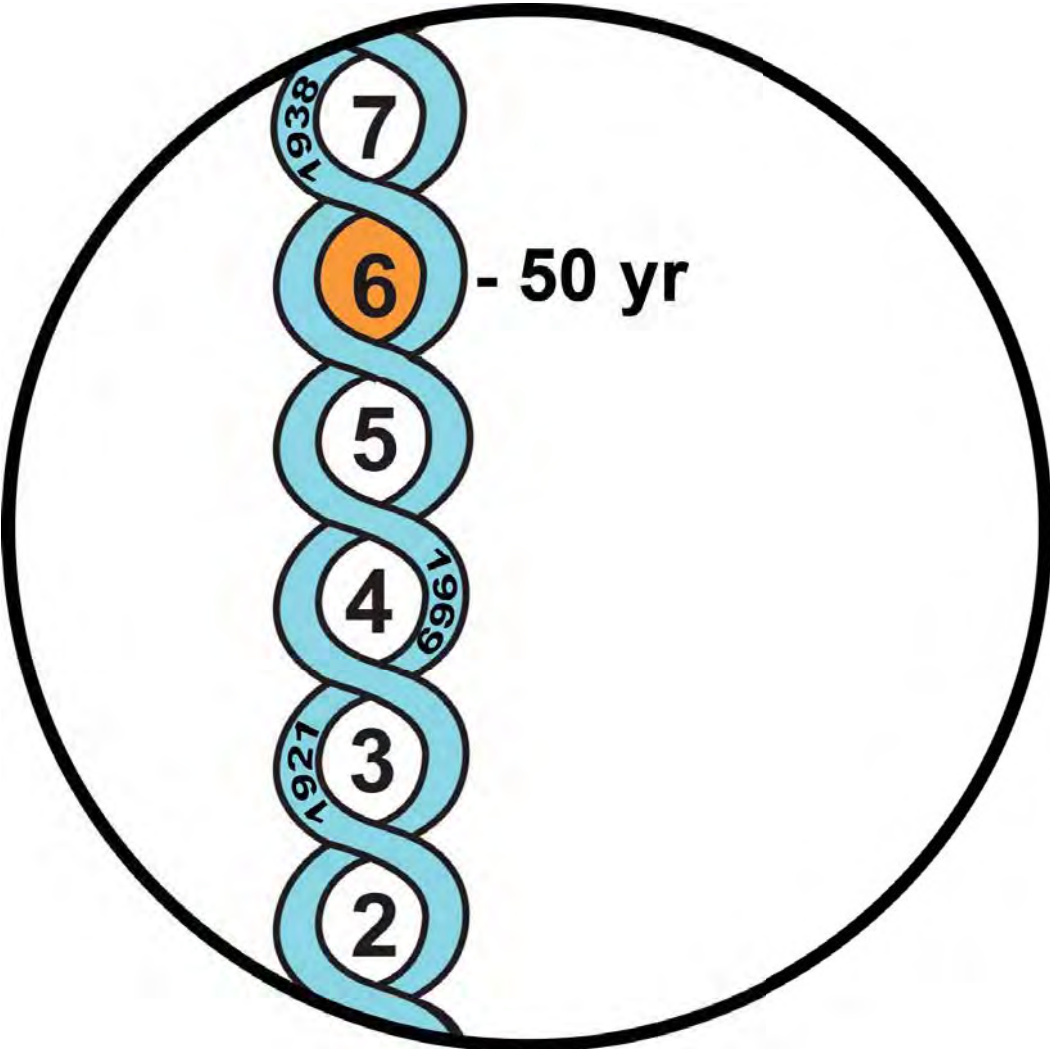
A nine foot high undulating steel mesh fence gives the viewer a sense of the proportion of such an event.

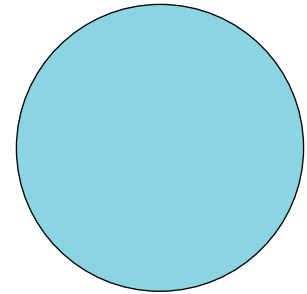
WALL
OF
WATER





BRIDGE
WATER GAUGES
INDICATE
POSSIBLE WATER
DEPTH AND SHOW
HISTORIC FLOOD
LEVELS

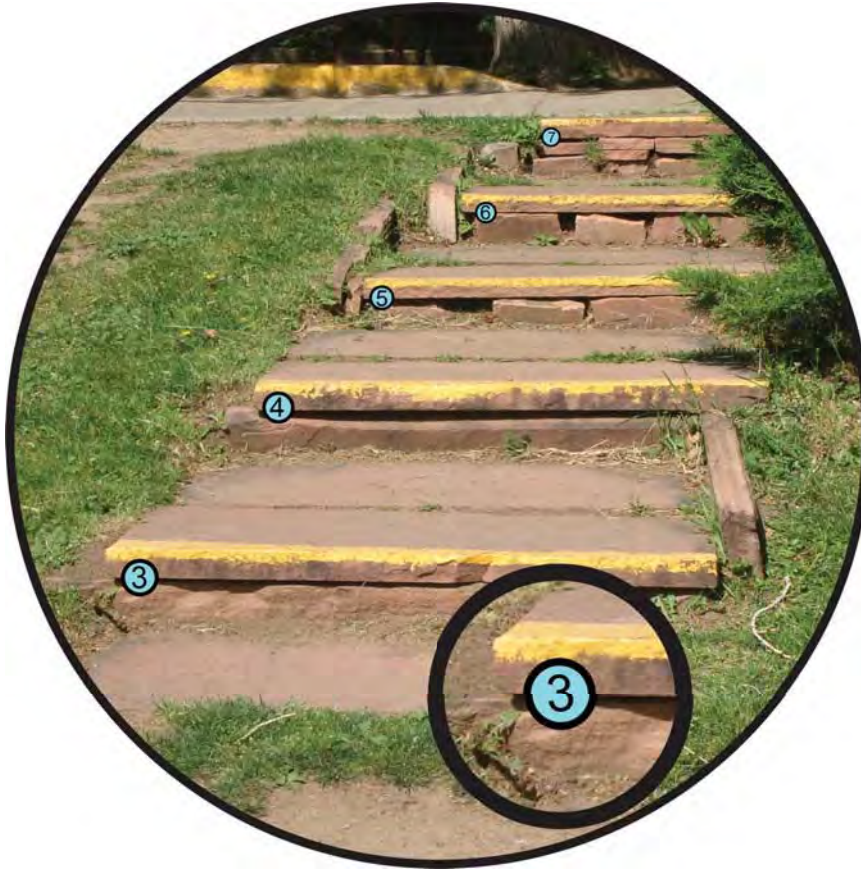




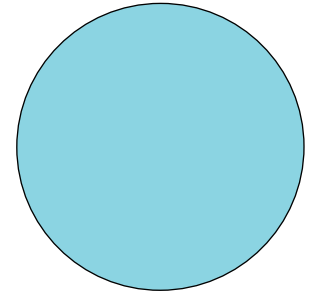
FLOOD WATERS WILL BE AT DIFFERENT LEVELS AT EACH BRIDGE AS THE FLOODWATER SPREADS OUT AS IT MOVES DOWN-STREAM

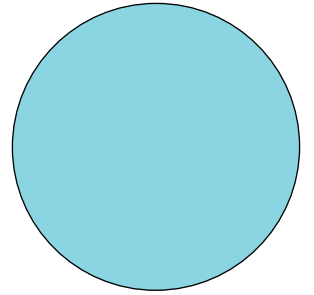
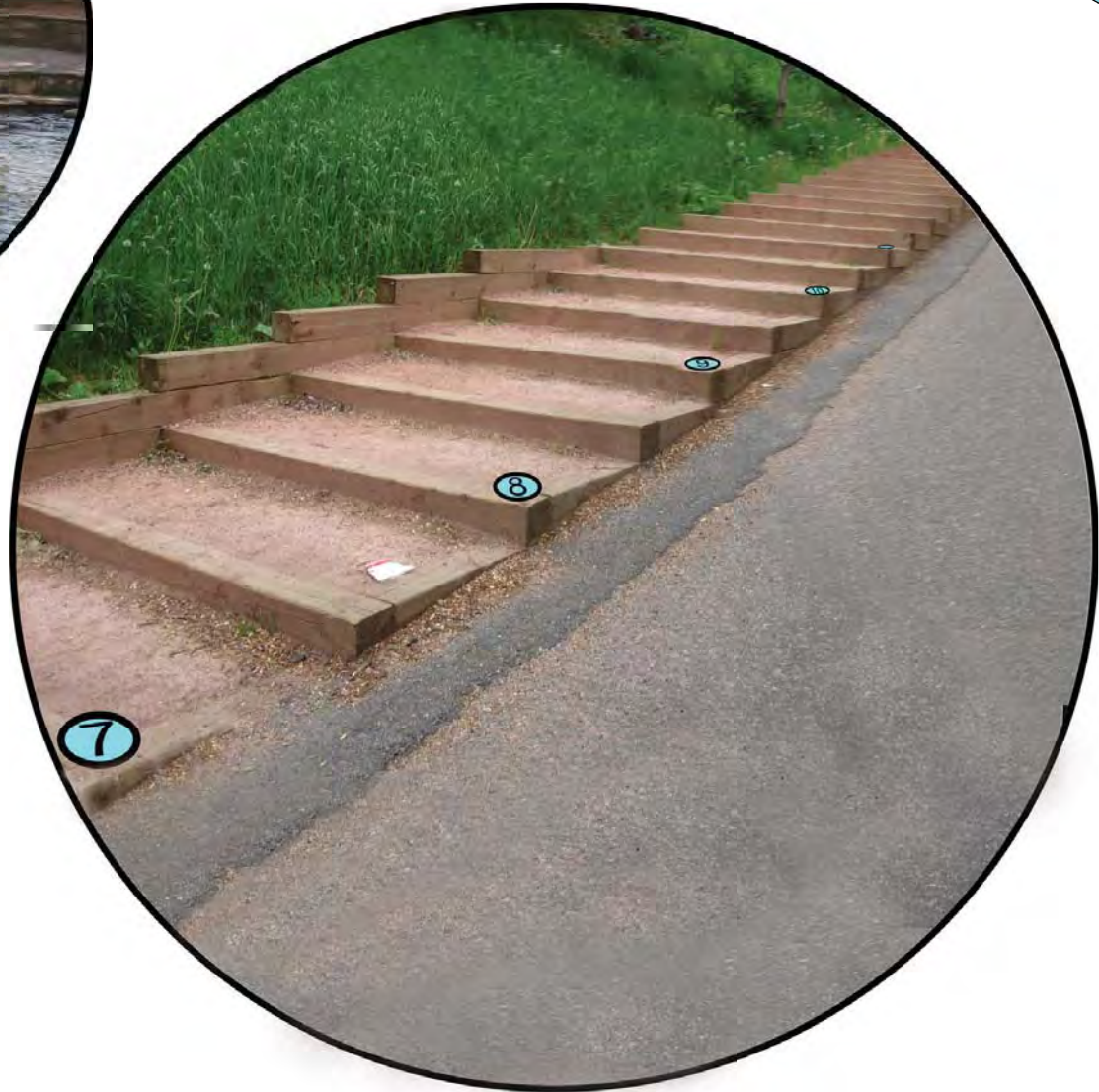


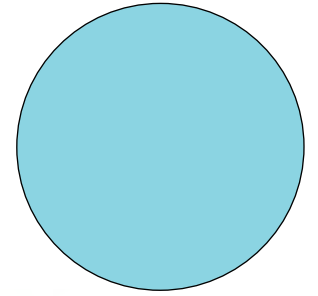
STEPS
AND
STAIRS



STEPS ALONG
CREEK MARKED
TO SHOW RISING
STREAM LEVEL







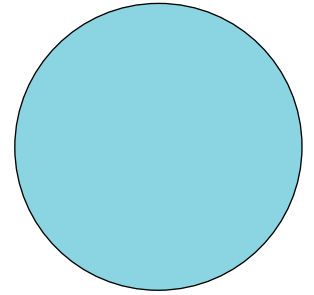
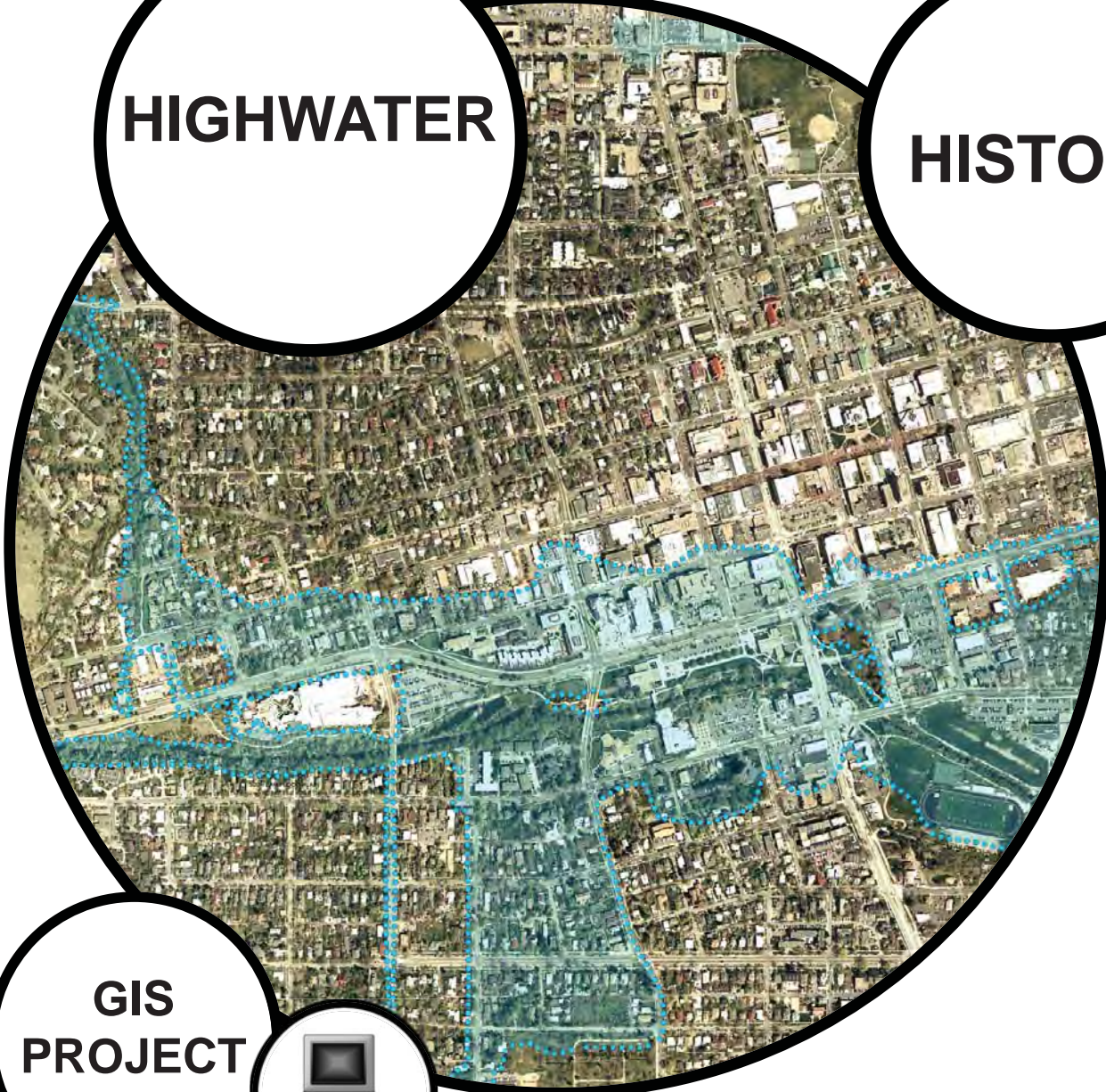
HIGHWATER

HISTORY

HAZARDS

The multiple aspects of Boulder Creek and its flood waters could be made accessible through the mapping capabilities of GIS

GIS PROJECT



ADDITIONAL
STORIES, IMAGES
AND DESCRIPTIONS
ARE ADDED OVER
TIME

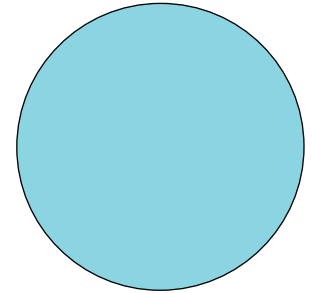


AUDIO TAPES
VOICES DESCRIBING
DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF
BOULDER CREEK:

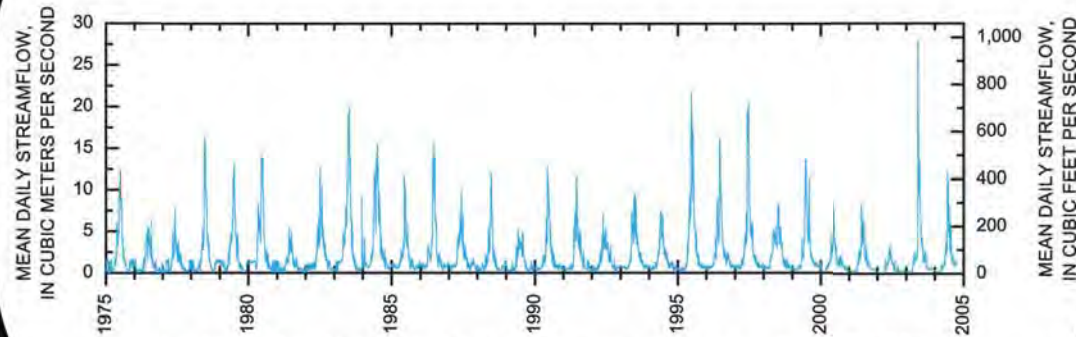
SCIENTISTS
POET
POLITICIAN
RESIDENT

WRITTEN
DESCRIPTIONS
OF PREVIOUS
FLOODS

VIDEO
OF
1969 FLOOD



DETAILED INFORMATION IN THE FORM OF ARTICLES, SCIENTIFIC STUDIES, AND GRAPHS REVEAL ASPECTS OF THE CREEK IN DETAIL.

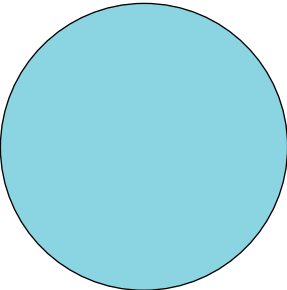


Discharge of Boulder Creek at the Orodell streamflow-gaging station, 1975–2004 (data from USGS, 2004, and Colorado Division of Water Resources, 2005).

BOULDER HAS 13 CREEKS FLOWING WEST TO EAST, NORTH / SOUTH TRAVEL BECOMES DANGEROUS IN FLOODS

FOREST FIRE DAMAGE CAN CHANGE WATERSHED CHARACTERISTICS; LESS ABSORPTION, QUICKER RUNOFF

TIME, VELOCITY, VOLUME, DISCHARGE, SPACE (WIDE & NARROW), SURFACE PERMEABILITY (HIGH & LOW), GLOBAL WARMING, TRIBUTARIES, WATERSHEDS

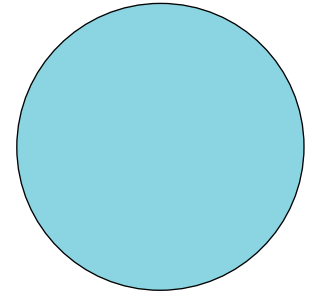


HISTORIC FLOODS	
1894 -	12,000 CFS
1914 -	5,000 CFS
1919	
1921 -	3,000 CFS
1938 -	4,410 CFS
1969 -	3,000 CFS

SMALLER FLOODS	
1876, 1885, 1887, 1897, 1904, 1909, 1941, 1950, 1951, 1955, 1972, 1989, 1990, 1992, 1996	

Flood Heights Above Streambed

FEMA 1990		RECCURENCE INTERVAL			
		10 years	50 years	100 years	500 year
47th Street	Bridges	4.5'	6'	6.5'	8'
30th Street underpass		4'	10'	12'	14'
28th Street		3'	7'	8'	12'
Millenium Footbridge		7'	10	10	13'
Stadium		6	11	12'	13
19th Street Bridge		6'	10'	12	16
17th Street	Underpasses	7'	17'	17'	19'
13th Street		6.5'	12.5'	14'	15.5'
Broadway		6'	8'	10'	12'
9th Street		5'	10'	11'	15'
6th Street		6'	12'	16'	20'
Eben Fine		6'	11'	13'	16'



100 YEAR FLOOD - USED BY FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY TO REGULATE FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT

MEANS 1% CHANCE OF FLOOD BEING EQUALED OR EXCEEDED IN ANY GIVEN YEAR

COULD COME FROM A STORM PRODUCING AS LITTLE AS 2.5-3" OF RAIN IN 1 TO 2 HOURS OR FROM A LONG DURATION STORM OVER SEVERAL DAYS. THESE STORMS HAPPEN 150 TIMES A YEAR IN COLORADO

BECAUSE OF WARMING THERE MAY BE AN INCREASE IN FREQUENCY OF THESE EVENTS

FLOW RATE

CFS - CUBIC FEET PER SECOND OF WATER FLOW

AVERAGE FLOW RATES

DECEMBER - 28 CFS

JUNE - 317 CFS

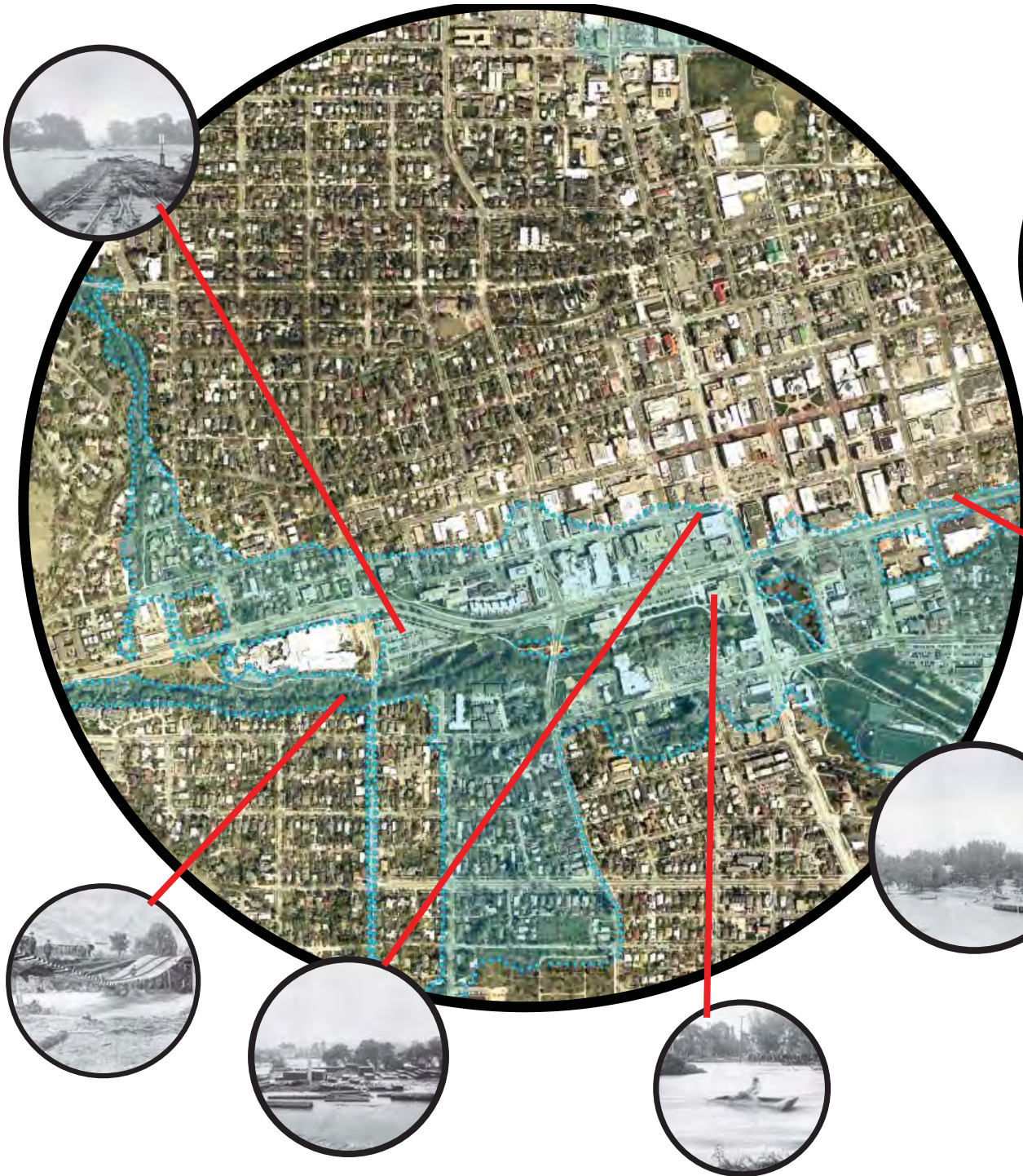
PEAK RAINFALL - 700 CFS (OVER 500 CFS DANGEROUS TO TUBERS)

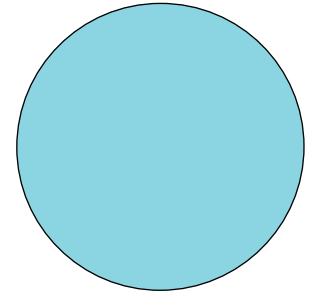
100 YEAR FLOOD - 12,000 CFS AT MOUTH OF CANYON

BURST UPSTREAM DAM - 703,000 CFS AT MOUTH OF CANYON

	FEMA 100 YR	FEMA 500 YR
NUMBER OF PROPERTIES	3,582	5,295
ASSESSED VALUE (1990)	\$988,696,800	\$1,414,277,100

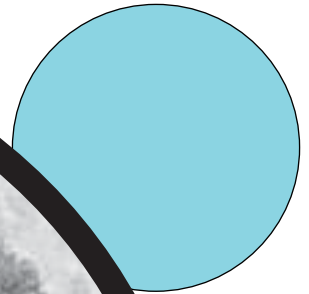
PHOTOS OF 1894 FLOOD



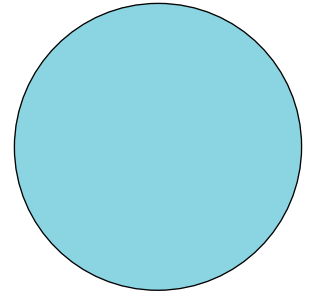


CIRCULAR
ENAMELED
HISTORICAL FLOOD PHOTO-
GRAPHS LOCATED AT THE SITE
EACH WAS TAKEN
1894 PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE
CARNEGIE BRANCH LIBRARY FOR
LOCAL HISTORY





BOULDER CREEK
IS IN THE SOUTH
PLATTE RIVER
WATERSHED AT THE
HEADWATERS OF THE
VAST MISSISSIPPI
DRAINAGE SYSTEM

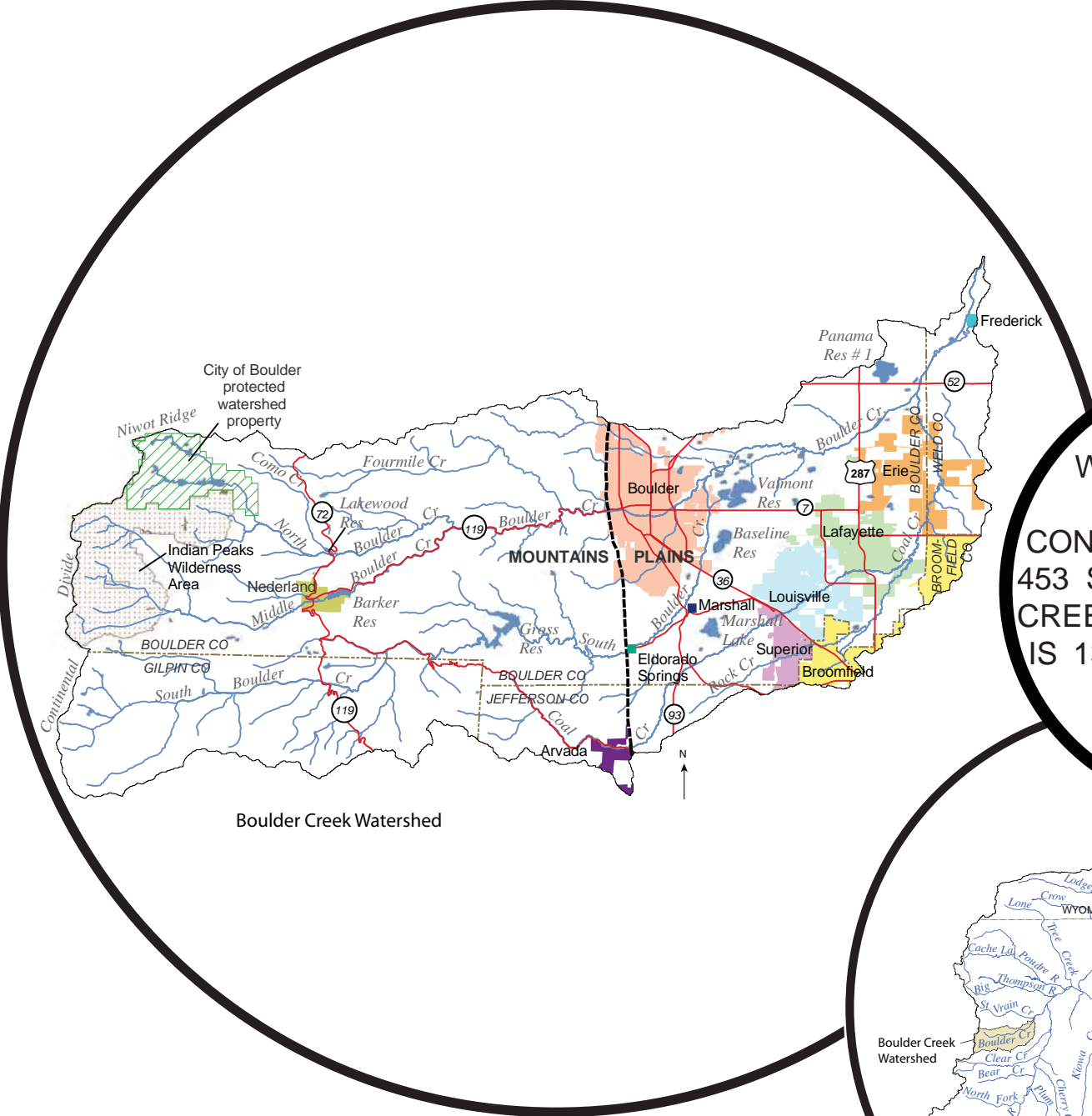
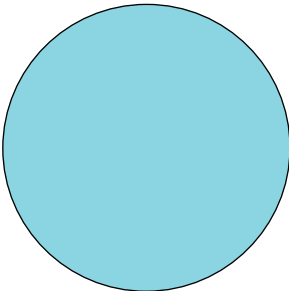


A SERIES
OF MAPS
REVEAL
INFORMATION
ABOUT THE
WATERSHED



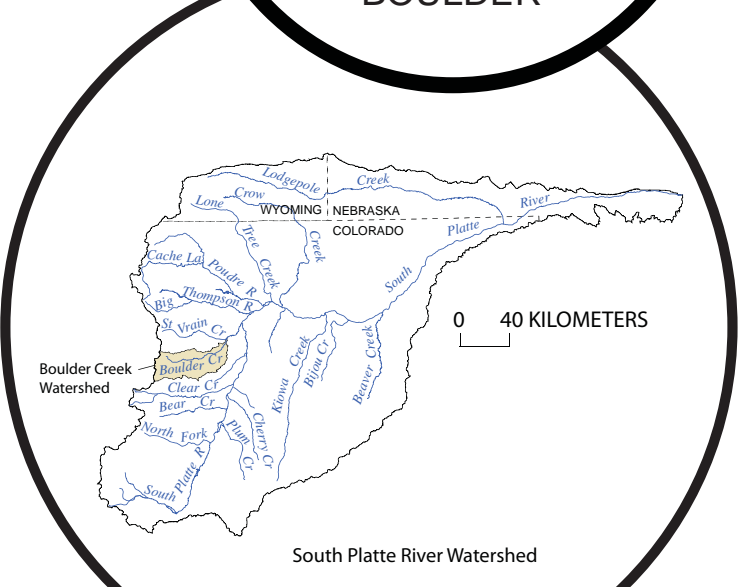
Mississippi River Watershed





Boulder Creek Watershed

WATERSHED-
STARTING AT
CONTINENTAL DIVIDE IS
453 SQ. MILES. BOULDER
CREEK DRAINAGE BASIN
IS 132 SQ MILES ABOVE
THE CITY OF
BOULDER



South Platte River Watershed

GIS mapping is used to reveal detailed information about the Boulder Creek watershed, its potential to flood, and its history

GIS MAP LIST:

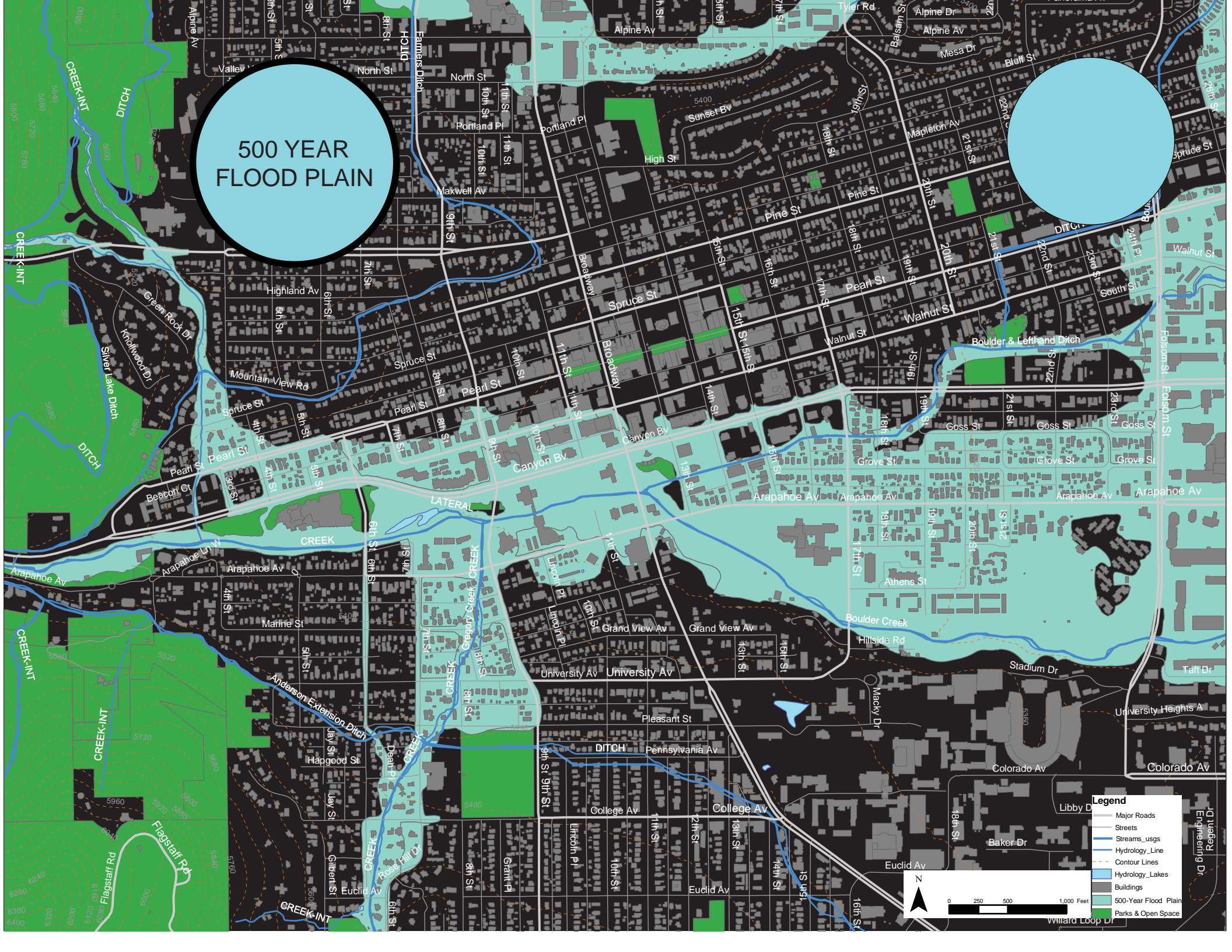
500 year flood zone
Historic Districts
Parks and Open Space
Neighborhoods
Foot and Vehicular Bridge
Project Locations
Historic Photo Locations
Geologic Hazard Zones and Natural Landmarks
Streams
Hydrology



A preliminary version will be available during the exhibit on the website

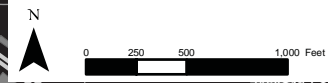
www.marymiss.com
(news)

500 YEAR FLOOD PLAIN

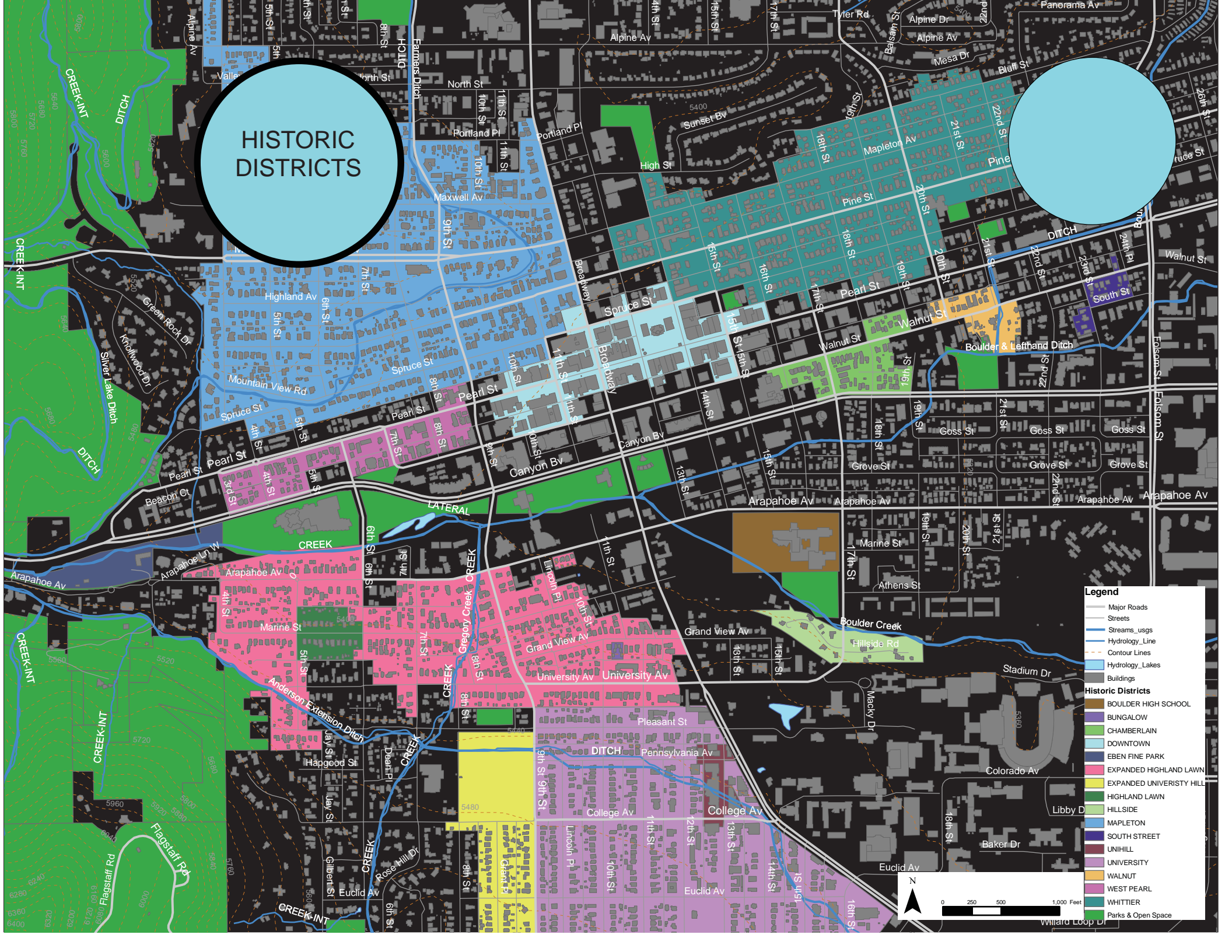
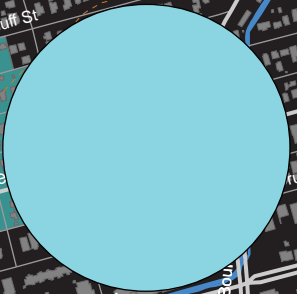


Legend

- Major Roads
- Streets
- Streams_usgs
- Hydrology_Line
- Contour Lines
- Hydrology_Lakes
- Buildings
- 500-Year Flood Plain
- Parks & Open Space



HISTORIC DISTRICTS



Legend

- Major Roads
- Streets
- Streams_usgs
- Hydrology_Line
- Contour Lines
- Hydrology_Lakes
- Buildings

Historic Districts

- BOULDER HIGH SCHOOL
- BUNGALOW
- CHAMBERLAIN
- DOWNTOWN
- EBEN FINE PARK
- EXPANDED HIGHLAND LAWN
- EXPANDED UNIVERSITY HILL
- HIGHLAND LAWN
- HILLSIDE
- MAPLETON
- SOUTH STREET
- UNI HILL
- UNIVERSITY
- WALNUT
- WEST PEARL
- WHITTIER
- Parks & Open Space



PARKS AND OPENSOURCE

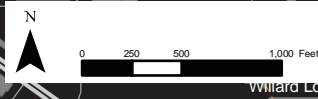


Legend

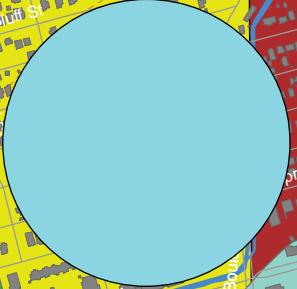
- Major Roads
- Streets
- Streams_usgs
- Hydrology_Line
- Contour Lines
- Lakes_usgs
- Hydrology_Lakes
- Buildings

Parks & Open Space

- Boulder Conservation Easement
- Boulder Restricted
- Boulder Open Space
- Boulder Parks and Recreation
- Other Open Lands



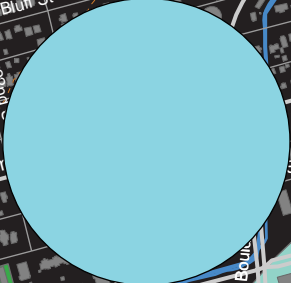
NEIGHBORHOODS



- Legend**
- Streets
 - Streams_usgs
 - Hydrology_Line
 - Contour Lines
 - Lakes_usgs
 - Hydrology_Lakes
 - Buildings
 - 500-Year Flood Plain
 - Parks & Open Space
- Neighborhoods**
- Central Boulder
 - Colorado University
 - Crossroads



FOOT AND VEHICULAR BRIDGES














FOOT AND
VEHICULAR
BRIDGES

Boulder Public Library

City Hall Footbridge

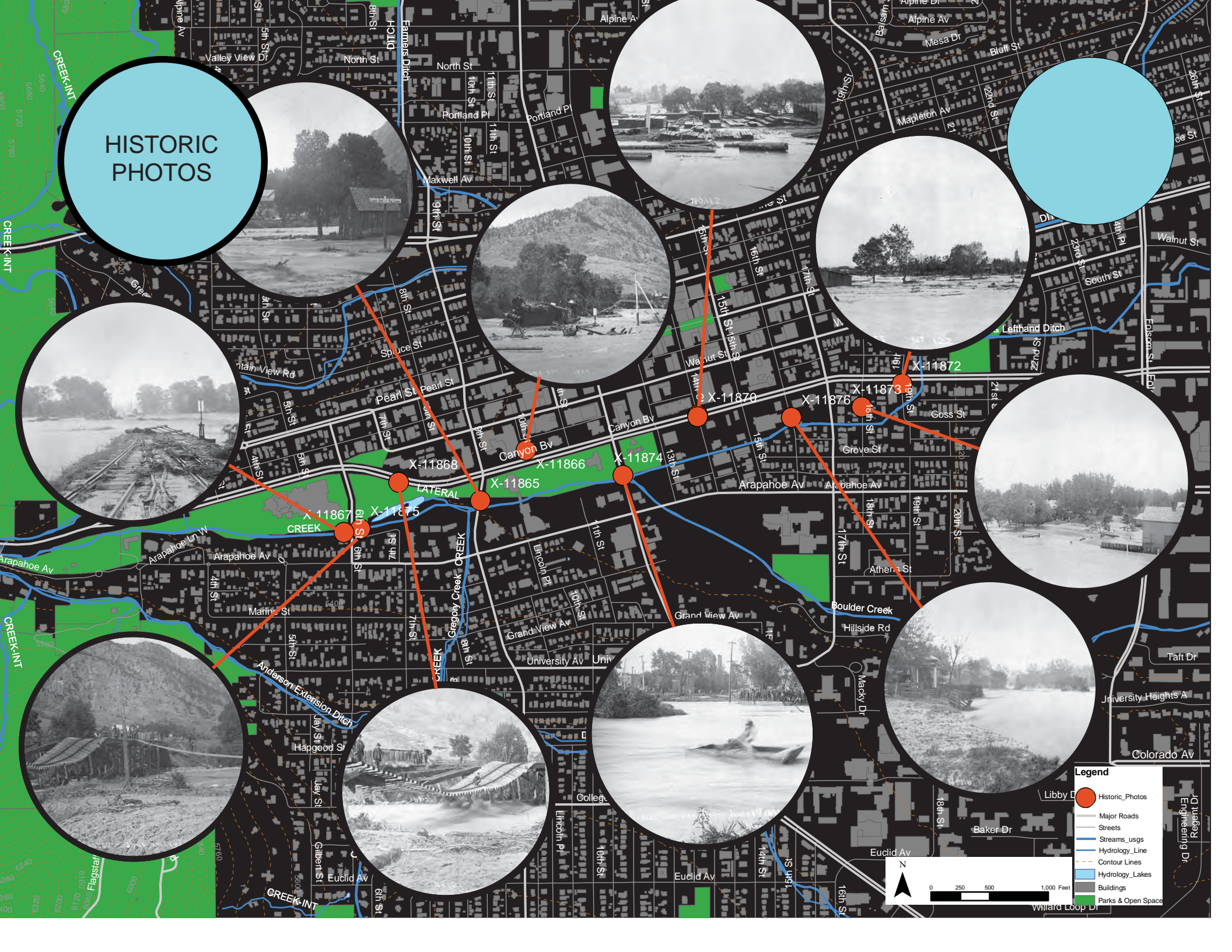
High School Footbridge

Stadium Footbridge

- Legend**
-  Vehicular_Bridges
 -  FootBridge-Location
 -  Major Roads
 -  Streets
 -  Streams_usgs
 -  Hydrology_Line
 -  Contour Lines
 -  Hydrology_Lakes
 -  Buildings
 -  500-Year Flood Plain
 -  Parks & Open Space



HISTORIC PHOTOS

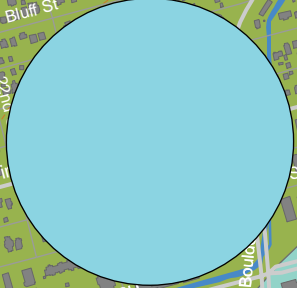


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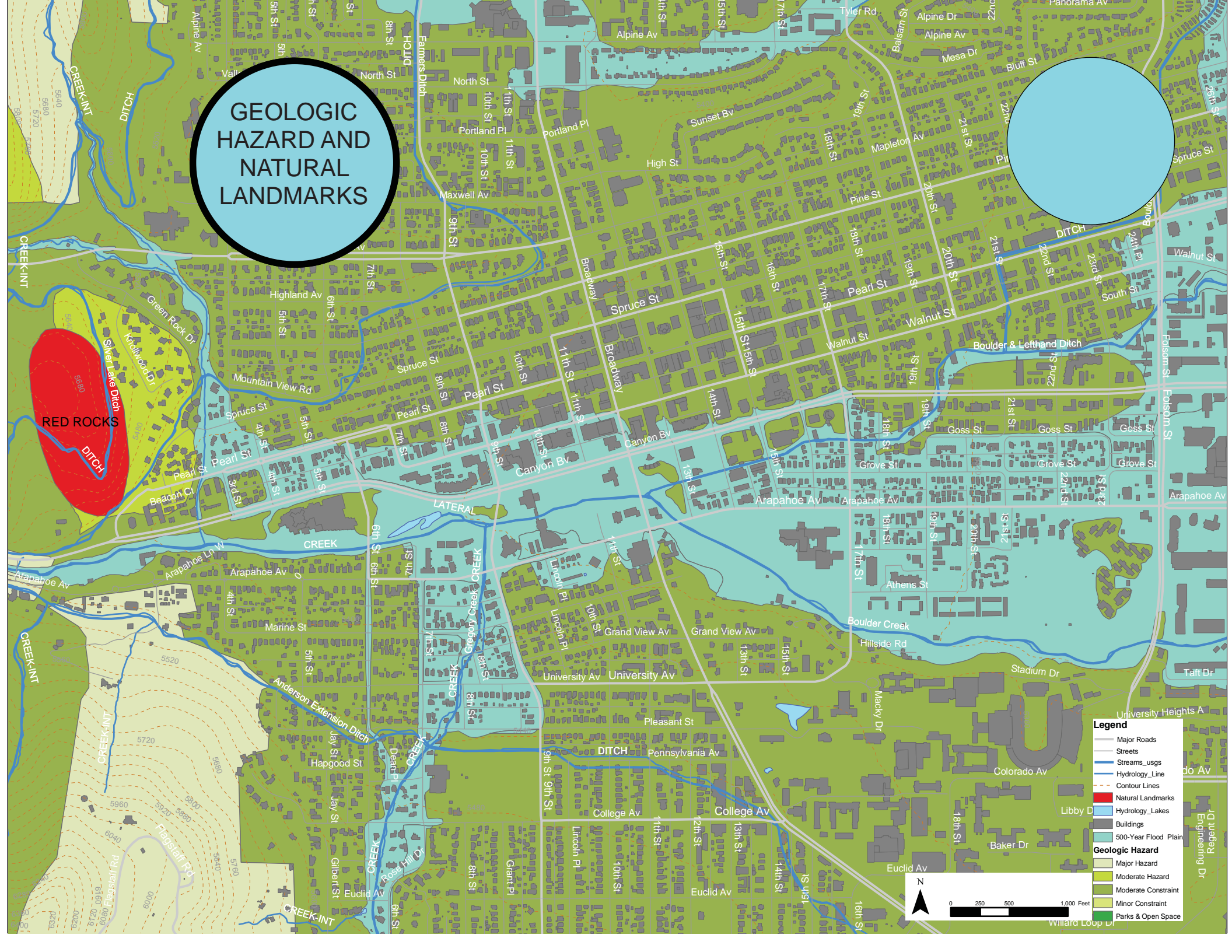
- Historic_Photos
- Major Roads
- Streets
- Streams_usgs
- Hydrology_Line
- Contour Lines
- Hydrology_Lakes
- Buildings
- Parks & Open Spaces



GEOLOGIC HAZARD AND NATURAL LANDMARKS

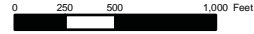


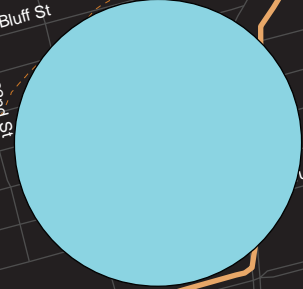
RED ROCKS
DITCH



Legend

- Major Roads
- Streets
- Streams_usgs
- Hydrology_Line
- Contour Lines
- Natural Landmarks
- Hydrology_Lakes
- Buildings
- 500-Year Flood Plain
- Geologic Hazard**
 - Major Hazard
 - Moderate Hazard
 - Moderate Constraint
 - Minor Constraint
 - Parks & Open Space





Legend

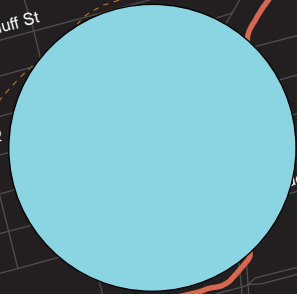
Stream

- Anderson Extension Ditch
- Boulder & Lefthand Ditch
- Boulder & Whiterock Ditch
- Boulder Creek
- Farmers Ditch
- Goose Creek
- Gregory Creek
- Silver Lake Ditch
- Streets
- Contour Lines
- Lakes_usgs
- Hydrology_Lakes

N

0 250 500 1,000 Feet

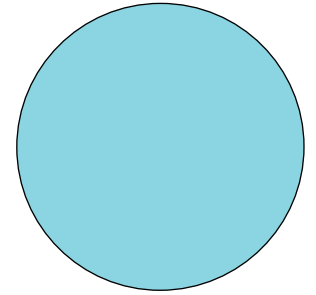
HYDROLOGY



Legend

- CREEK
- CREEK-INT
- DITCH
- LATERAL
- Streets
- Contour Lines
- Lakes_usgs
- Hydrology_Lakes





HAZARDS

Information about
each of the following
floodwater hazards to
be revealed in detail
through GIS

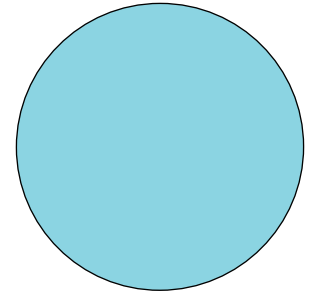


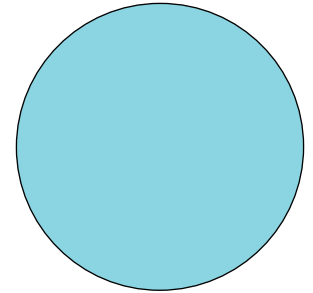
EVENTS THAT CAUSE FLOODS

- HIGH RAINFALL OVER A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME
- FOREST FIRES CHANGE WATER ABSORPTION CHARACTERISTICS IN WATERSHED
- BARKER DAM FAILURE
- COMBINED EVENTS
(SPRING FLOW PLUS THUNDERSTORMS)

BIG THOMPSON FLOOD
20 INCHES OF RAIN FELL IN ONE NIGHT IN THE SUMMER OF 1976 IN THE BIG THOMPSON RIVER CANYON NORTH OF BOULDER. MAXIMUM DEPTH OF THE FLOODWATERS WAS 20 FEET AND DISCHARGE WAS ABOUT 39,000 CFS. 139 PEOPLE DIED DURING THIS FLOOD.

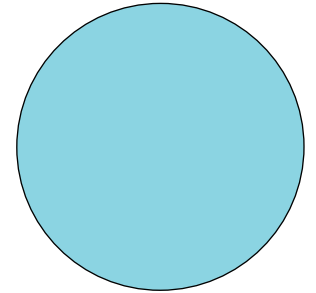
SIGNS AROUND THE COUNTY READ: "CLIMB TO SAFETY IN CASE OF A FLASH FLOOD." THESE WERE INSTALLED AFTER THE BIG THOMPSON FLOOD BECAUSE MANY PEOPLE WERE KILLED DRIVING THEIR CARS TRYING TO DRIVE OUT AHEAD OF THE FLOODWATERS





LIVING IN OR NEAR THE
FOOTHILLS OF THE ROCKY
MOUNTAINS MAKES FLASH
FLOODS AN EXTREMELY
SERIOUS CONCERN. IT IS NOT
A MATTER OF "IF" A MAJOR
FLOOD WILL HAPPEN, BUT
RATHER WHEN

THE TERMS "10 YEAR", "50 YEAR", "100 YEAR", AND
"500 YEAR" FLOODS ARE USED TO DESCRIBE THE
ESTIMATED PROBABILITY OF A FLOOD
HAPPENING IN ANY GIVEN YEAR. THEIR PRIMARY
USE IS FOR DETERMINING FLOOD INSURANCE
RATES IN FLOOD HAZARD AREAS. USING HISTORIC
WEATHER AND HYDROGRAPHIC DATA, EXPERTS
DERIVE THE ESTIMATED RATE OF FLOW OR
DISCHARGE OF A RIVER OR CREEK. A "10 YEAR"
FLOOD HAS A 10% PROBABILITY OF OCCURRING IN
ANY GIVEN YEAR, A "50 YEAR" EVENT A 2%
PROBABILITY, A "100 YEAR" EVENT A 1%
PROBABILITY, AND A "500 YEAR" EVENT A .2%
PROBABILITY. WHILE UNLIKELY, IT IS POSSIBLE TO
HAVE TWO OR 100 OR EVEN 500 YEAR FLOODS
WITHIN YEARS OF EACH OTHER



COLLAPSING ROADS,
RIVERBANKS, BRIDGES

ELECTROCUTION

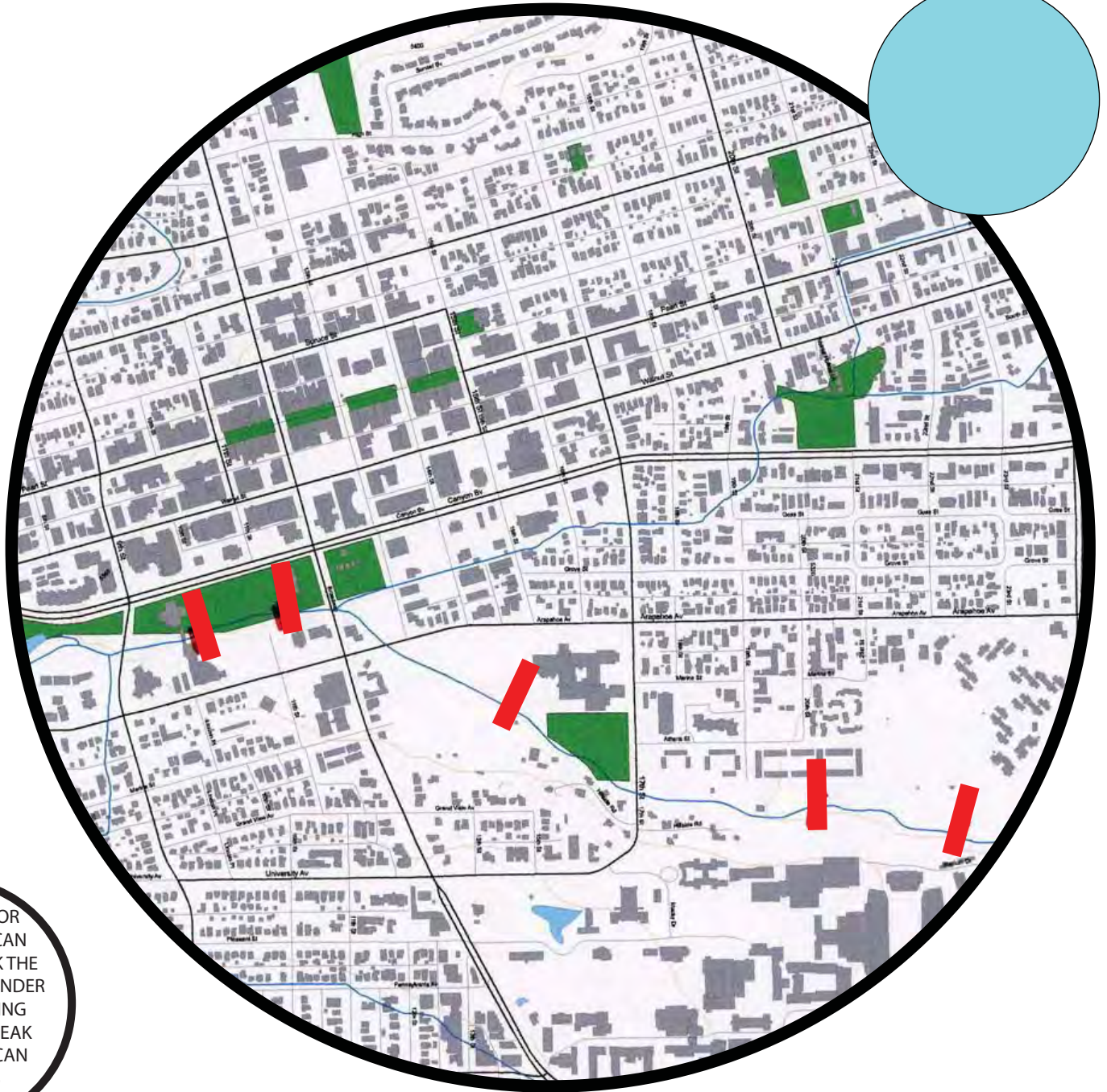
HYPOTHERMIA

EROSION / LANDSLIDES

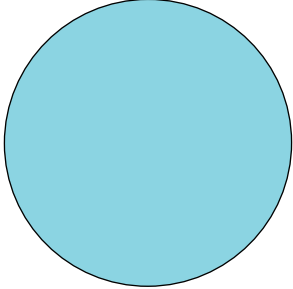
WHY IS
BOULDER PRONE TO
FLOODS? THE CITY IS AT
THE MOUTH OF A
NARROW CANYON. IT IS
SUSCEPTIBLE TO FLASH
FLOODS BECAUSE OF
THUNDERSTORMS, STEEP
SLOPES AND RELATIVELY
IMPERMEABLE SOILS

IN
A 100 YEAR FLOOD
WATER WOULD BE
1/2 MILE WIDE EAST
OF BROADWAY

FOOT
BRIDGES BREAK
AWAY IN HIGH WA-
TER CONDITIONS



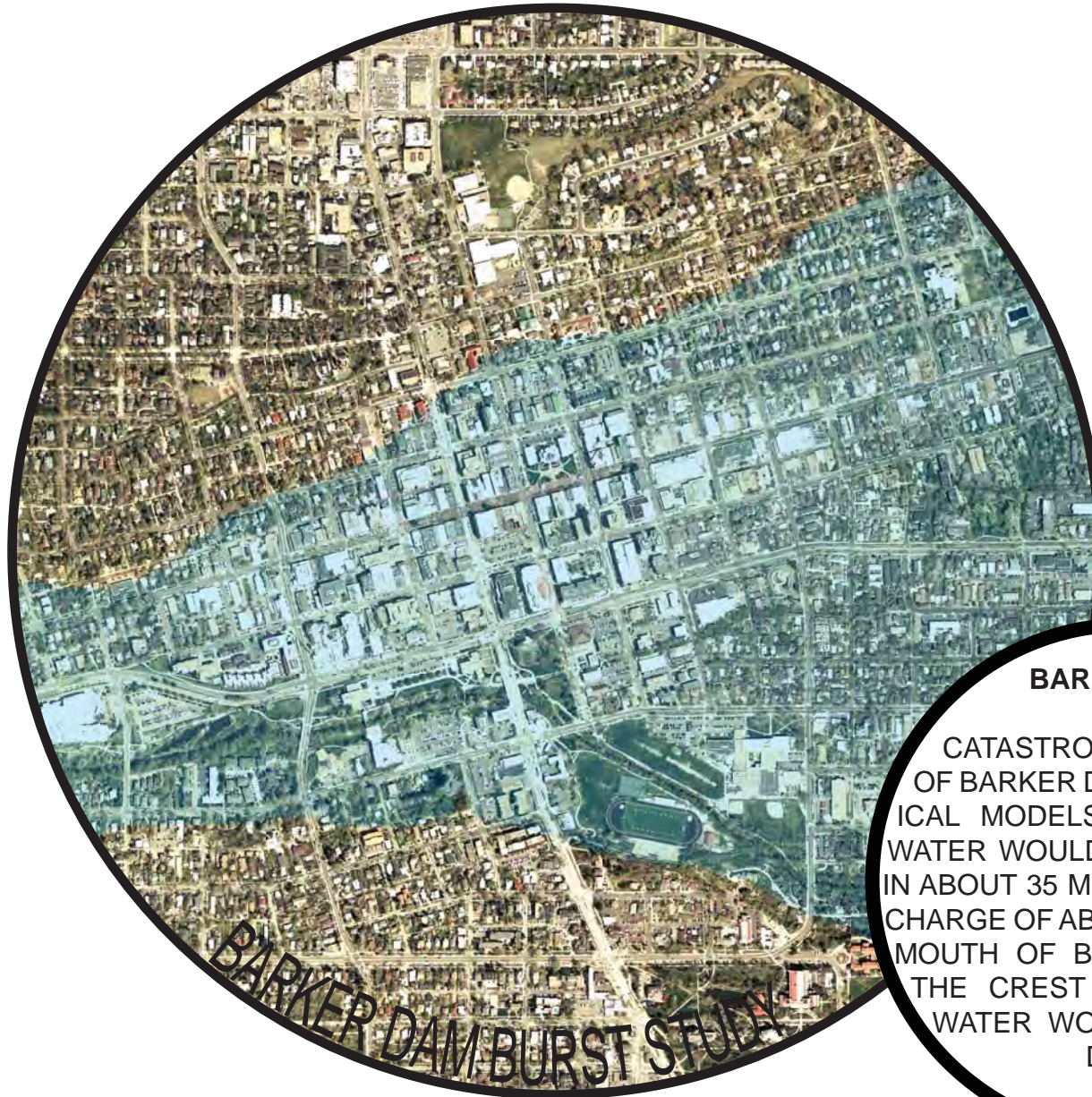
DURING A MAJOR
FLOOD DEBRIS CAN
PARTIALLY BLOCK THE
FLOW OF WATER UNDER
BRIDGES, CREATING
SMALL DAMS. BREAK
AWAY BRIDGES CAN
REDUCE THIS
HAZARD



IN A 100 YEAR FLOOD,
WATER WOULD BE 1/2
MILE WIDE EAST OF
BROADWAY

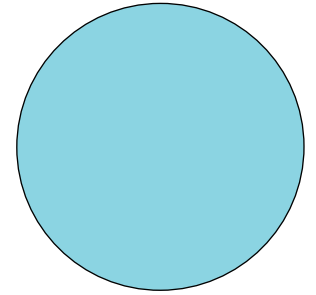
4 - 5 INCHES OF
RAINFALL IN A
THUNDERSTORM CAN CAUSE
WATER TO RISE RAPIDLY TO A 14
FT DEPTH, REFERRED TO AS A
"WALL OF WATER". THIS COULD
REACH THE CITY OF BOULDER IN
45 MINUTES. THE DEPTH OF
WATER DECREASEES AS IT
LEAVES THE MOUTH OF THE
CANYON AND SPREADS
OUT

A CAR
FLOATS IN
18 INCHES
OF WATER



BARKER DAM

CATASTROPHIC COLLAPSE OF BARKER DAM. HYDROLOGICAL MODELS ESTIMATE THAT WATER WOULD REACH BOULDER IN ABOUT 35 MINUTES WITH A DISCHARGE OF ABOUT 703,000 CFS AT MOUTH OF BOULDER CANYON. THE CREST OF THE FLOOD WATER WOULD BE 100 FT DEEP.



**CONNECT THE DOTS:
MAPPING THE HIGH WATER, HAZARDS
AND HISTORY OF BOULDER CREEK**

was done with the collaboration of geologist Peter W. Birke-land, University of Colorado at Boulder and hydrologist Shei-la Murphy, US Geological Survey, assisted by Charles Cross and Phanat Sonemangkhal. The temporary installation for the exhibition was organized by Jonathan Fierer, and helped by volunteers.

The artist would like to recognize the following sources: Boulder Area Sustain-ability Information Network; Boulder Creek Flood Notebook; Boulder County Gov-ernment; Boulder Magazine; Daily Camera; Carnegie Branch of the Boulder Public Library; City of Boulder; Denver Public Library; Denver Regional Council of Govern-ments; Dr. Spenser Havlick; ESRI – Ester Worker, Director of Education Programs; Gilbert F. White Papers on Boulder Creek Floodplain History; South Boulder Creek Mapping Study; University of Colorado at Boulder; and the US Geological Survey.

We would like to thank the following individuals for their assistance: Marda Kirn; Kirsten Gerdes and Joan Markowitz, Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art; Alice Guthrie and Lisa Green, Boulder Parks and Recreation; Cristina Mar-tinez, Boulder Department of City Planning, Jacob Morgan (GIS), Greg Tucker, University of Colorado (surveying)

This project was done for an exhibition curated by Lucy Lip-pard “Weather Report: Art and Climate Change” at the Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art in collabo-ration with EcoArts, Boulder, Colorado, 2007.

This project
can be found on
www.marymiss.com
(news)

