



**FEMA**

February 3, 2014  
FEMA DR-4145-CO  
BG—003

# BACKGROUND

## **The Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse and Infrastructure Repair and Mitigation Projects**

- The Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse is a threatened species on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Endangered Species list.
- The mouse's status as a federally threatened species means that actions taken by government agencies (federal, state or local), commercial enterprises or private citizens that may adversely affect the mouse or its habitat must comply with the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA).
- Preble's mice are small (two can fit in the palm of your hand), with long tails. They live in heavily vegetated areas next to streams along the Front Range from Colorado Springs to southern Wyoming.
- As part of the federal- and state-funded public works recovery program following the fall flooding in Colorado, there are many projects with the potential of harming the Preble's mouse and/or its habitat.
- At this time, federal, state and local officials are working closely together to figure out the best way to make repairs, mitigate future flood damage and at the same time preserve the mouse's habitat.
- The legally required reviews may cause some delay in projects undertaken in the Preble's mouse habitat.
- The time and expense involved in meeting this challenge varies depending on the specific location.
  - In some cases, the solutions – like covering erosion control measures (such as rip-rap) with soil and native vegetation – can be quick and inexpensive.
  - In other cases, particularly in critical habitat areas, more consultation and more careful approaches are required.

- There is a high-level of public awareness in this area about protection of endangered species and conservation of natural habitat. Colorado rivers are popular for kayakers, hunters, anglers, hikers and many others. Improved aesthetics and recreational opportunities can contribute a large amount of economic benefits to Front Range communities.
- Local officials who proceed with projects without adhering to environmental laws risk fines and could lose federal funding for their project.
- Everyone involved is working to expedite recovery projects while also adhering to all federal and state laws and environmental concerns.
- FEMA is coordinating with FWS to develop a programmatic agreement that will allow us to review and approve projects for Endangered Species Act compliance without individual review for most projects, provided applicants agree to implement minimization measures.

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