

May 7, 1969



Boulder Area Sustainability Information Network

Current Theme: History

Flood of 1969

1969, May 4, 8

NOTE: Be sure to check out streaming video clips of the 1969 flood taken by Tom Mayberry in BASIN Watershed

Both Two Mile Creek and Left Hand Creek experienced major flooding, so it is safe to assume that Four Mile Canyon Creek did as well during this storm. Flood waters from raging Left Hand Canyon Creek swept thru the small mountain community of Jamestown, washing away 8 houses and isolating some 100 inhabitants. US 36 between Boulder and Lyons was closed because of washouts.

Mrs. Reed, who was elderly at the time, told her neighbor Ann McRoberts that though the '69 flood in Four Mile Canyon Creek was big, she had seen much bigger ones previously. She said that the little side canyon (Lion's Point) where Mrs. McRoberts lived had been filled "side to side" with water.

Mrs. McRoberts reports that the 1969 flood cut Wagon Wheel Gap road in several places, cutting the road 10 feet deep in places. Residents could not drive out for 5 - 10 days. Going up canyon from the intersection of Lee Hill and Wagon Wheel Gap Road to the second place that the creek crosses the road, Mrs. McRoberts reports that there was a 10 foot deep trench in the road. Bow Mountain Road was also cut off. (Interview, August 1999, Elizabeth Black)

The May 8th flood was estimated to be a **25 year flood** by Public Works Director Andy Briscoe. The tracks of the Colorado and Southern railway were again washed out in the Boulder area.

Peak discharge at Orodell (located 1 mile upstream from Fourmile Creek and 3 miles southwest of the courthouse in Boulder) : **1150cfs.**
From US Army Corps of engineers, August 1969 Floodplain Mapping of Boulder Creek.

"This was also a flood of long duration general storm. Precipitation was heaviest in the mountains; part of it being snow. In the Boulder and South Boulder Creek basins the rainfall continued at a moderate rate for nearly four days. Total precipitation for the storm amounted to **7.6 inches** at Boulder and **9.34 inches** at the Boulder Hydroelectric Plant located about 3 miles up the canyon from Boulder. Precipitation

amounts totaled **8.11 inches** at Eldorado Springs and **10.05 inches** at Gross Reservoir on South Boulder Creek. Peak flooding occurred on the 7th of May at Boulder and Eldorado Springs. Preliminary estimates based on the gaging records, indicate a peak discharge of **1150 cfs** occurred on Boulder Creek. Flooding extended over large portions of the flood plain starting at the junction of the two streams near Valmont Road and extending downstream through the remainder of the Boulder Creek study reach. Evidence of two bridge failures is illustrated in this report.

"The gaging records show that floods the size of the May 1969 flood occur on an average of about once every 5 years on Boulder Creek and about once every 7 years on South Boulder Creek." **From US Army Corps of Engineers, August 1969 Floodplain Mapping of Boulder Creek.**

Compiled by Elizabeth Black

INVITATION BASIN is a community project actively seeking public participation. We appreciate all feedback and welcome comments, suggestions and contributions. To find out more about how you can be involved, [click here](#). Help BASIN serve your needs, take our "[10 questions in 10 seconds](#)" survey.

BASIN is supported by the [US EPA](#), [the City of Boulder](#), [the Keep it Clean Partnership](#), [BCWI](#) and [BCN](#)

[Home](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Glossary](#) | [Bibliography](#) | [Contributors](#)
[About BASIN](#) | [Attribution](#) | [Feedback](#) | [Search](#)
Last Page Update - Tuesday December 27, 2005