

The 2012 Fires and 2013 Floods: A knockout combination for the main stem of the Poudre River or business as usual?

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Abstract. The summer 2012 fires burned over 10% of the Poudre River watershed and the September 2013 rains then flooded the river to a 50-yr return level. The combination of these events caused widespread alterations to the local uplands and channels in the watershed. Starting after the 2012 fires, scientists and students from CSU began semi-annual monitoring at 7 sites along the main stem of the Poudre River starting above the fires and running down through I-25 with special focus on the reach through the City of Fort Collins. Sediment conditions, channel geometry, and aquatic insect populations are monitored at each site. This presentation will provide an overview of the trajectory of change to the river system in the context of the data being collected. Additionally, the implications for enhancing resiliency in the river system to future disturbance events will be discussed.

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