



THE LOST CREEK FLOOD OF FEBRUARY 10 ,1980 WELD COUNTY, COLORADO

By

William P. Stanton,P.E.

May 1981



Colorado Water Conservation Board

1313 Sherman Street

Denver , Colorado 80203

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Cover: Oblique aerial view of the south end of Prospect Valley Reservoir at 3:40 p.m., Monday, February 11, 1980, looking southwest.

PREFACE

The Colorado Water Conservation Board is the agency of State government that has the power and duty to:

"...devise and formulate methods, means, and plans for bringing about the greater utilization of the waters of the state and the prevention of flood damages therefrom..."

as stated in Section 37-60-106(1)(c) of the Colorado Revised Statutes 1973. Toward this end, the Board staff is vitally interested in the careful documentation of major flood events so that the citizens of this state may learn and ultimately benefit from the sad experience of a few.

Under the State's emergency disaster plan, the Board is responsible for providing aerial photography of large floods to assist interested parties in assessing the damage and to assist public officials and private citizens in planning for future wise use of the land in the flooded area.

Proper timing is essential to obtain the maximum information possible after a flood event. The State must be able to react quickly, even while a flood is progressing.

The aerial photographs presented in this report were flown by Kucera and Associates, Inc., Denver, Colorado, under an agreement with the Board. The firm of Hydro-Triad, Ltd., of Lakewood, Colorado, was engaged to perform the hydrologic analysis of the basin, review the breach hydrographs and perform final drafting of the report. Reproductions of newspaper articles, which appear in the appendices, are used with permission of the Denver Post, Rocky Mountain News, Greeley Tribune and the Keene Valley Sun.

In preparing this report, the Colorado Water Conservation Board acknowledges the assistance and cooperation of other organizations, listed below:

Division of Water Resources (State Engineer)
Colorado Historical Society
Denver Public Library
Weld County Planning Department
Henrylyn Irrigation District
Kucera and Associates, Inc.
Hydro-Triad, Ltd.
Federal Insurance Administration
U.S. Soil Conservation Service
Denver Post
Rocky Mountain News
Greeley Tribune
Keene Valley Sun

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Colorado Water Conservation Board
823 State Centennial Building
1313 Sherman Street
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This stream, which drains the area below Prospect Valley Reservoir, has an average streambed slope of 37 feet per mile. Several small, intermittent stock ponds are located along this tributary. Figure 2 illustrates the drainage basins, while Figure 3 indicates the profile of the channel downstream of Prospect Valley Reservoir.

PROSPECT VALLEY RESERVOIR

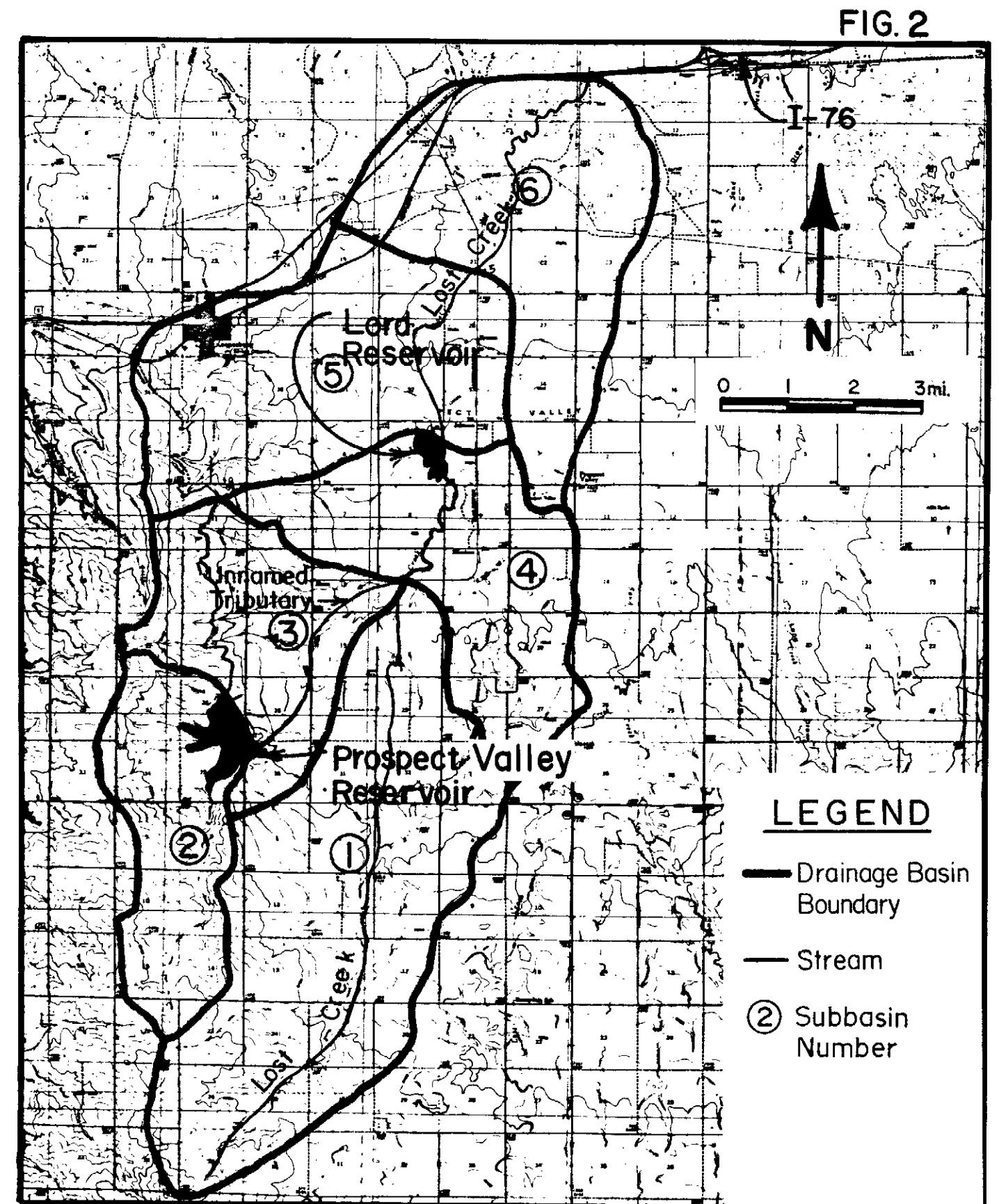
Prospect Valley Reservoir, located on the small left-bank tributary to Lost Creek, is formed by a concrete-lined earthen embankment approximately 1 mile long. The original dam was constructed about 1910 using horse teams and fresnos. In 1965, the upstream face of the dam was lined with concrete primarily for wave protection. In 1975, several additional improvements were completed, including work on an emergency spillway and installation of a seepage drain in the toe of the dam.

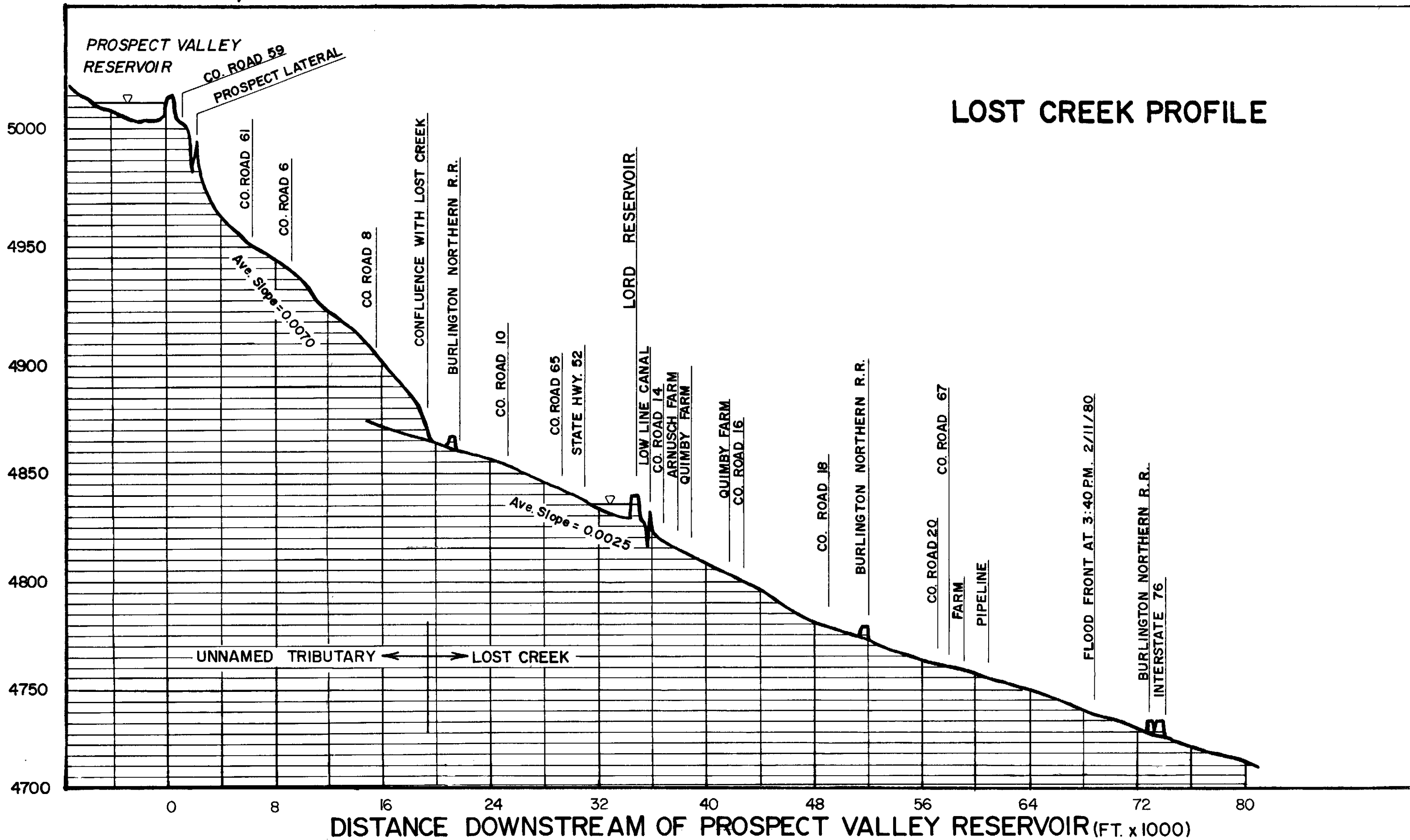
The reservoir is fed by several small tributaries which drain an area of 9.4 square miles, and by the Denver Hudson Canal. This canal draws from Horse Creek Reservoir located in the adjacent basin to the west. Horse Creek Reservoir is fed by water diverted from the South Platte River for use by the Henrylyn Irrigation District. The maximum operating capacity of the Prospect Valley Reservoir is 6,300 acre-feet, with a corresponding surface area of 480 acres and a depth of 37 feet. It is classified by the State Engineer as a moderate hazard dam.

The dam is owned and managed by the Henrylyn Irrigation District. The reservoir feeds the Prospect Lateral for irrigation in the upper Prospect Valley.

LORD RESERVOIR

Lord Reservoir, also owned and managed by the Henrylyn Irrigation District, is located in the Channel of Lost Creek approximately 6 miles downstream of Prospect Valley Reservoir.





It too is formed by a concrete-lined earthen dam which is approximately 0.5 mile long. Work on this reservoir was initiated in 1906.

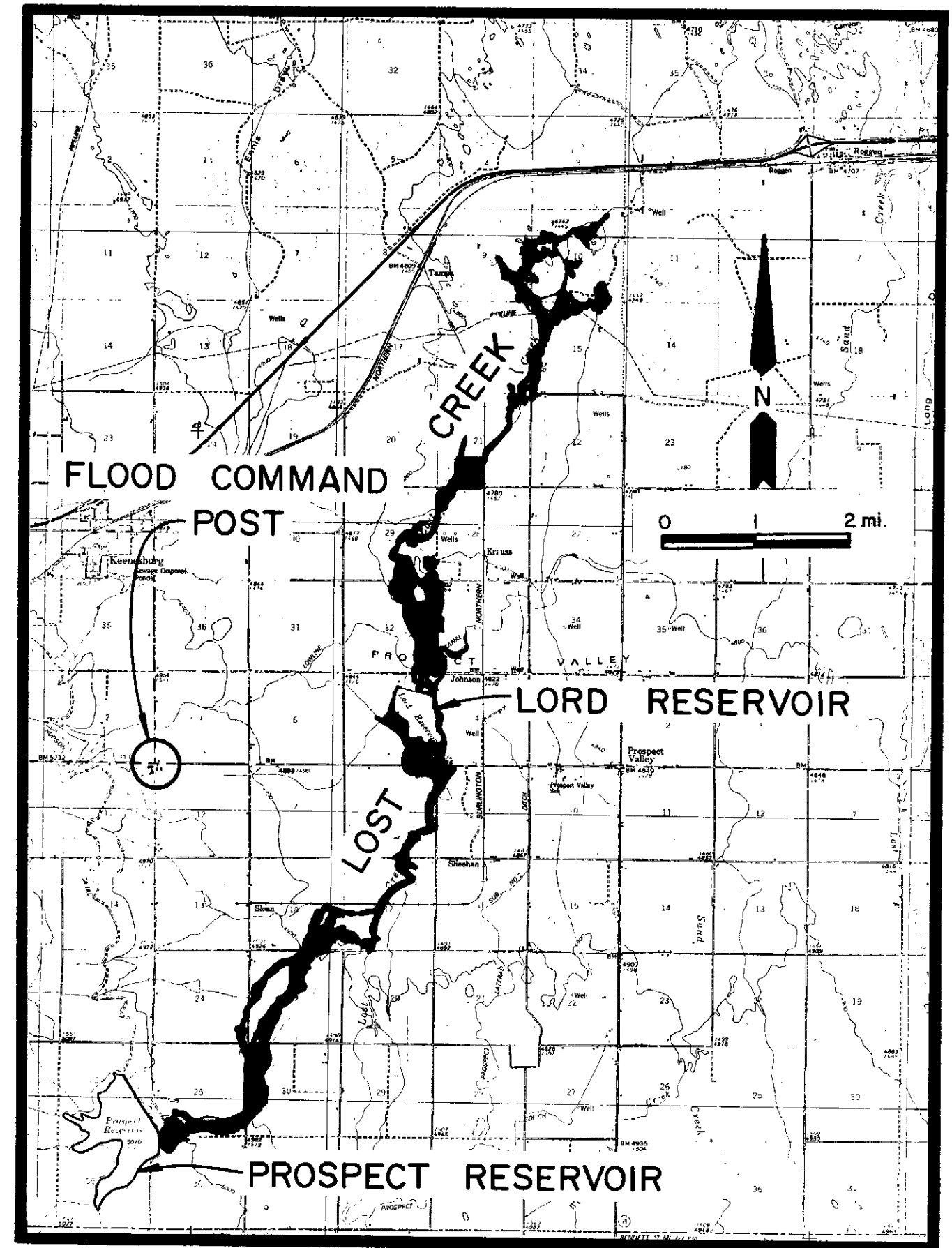
Lord Reservoir is fed by Lost Creek and its tributaries. The total tributary drainage area is 59 square miles. It is also supplied water by a feeder ditch from the Denver Hudson Canal out of Horse Creek Reservoir. The maximum unrestricted operating capacity of Lord Reservoir is 1,450 acre-feet with a water surface area of 270 acres and a gage height of 11.0 feet to the concrete service spillway. In 1976, the State Engineer imposed a hold order on Lord Reservoir which restricted the maximum water level at 2.0 feet below the emergency spillway. At this level, the water surface area is about 230 acres and the storage capacity is approximately 960 acre-feet. The outlet works feed the Lowline Canal for irrigation in the Lower Prospect Valley.

The State Engineer has classified Lord Reservoir as a moderate hazard dam. On June 14, 1949, the Lord Reservoir Dam failed due to heavy rains in the Lost Creek Basin. The resulting flood caused considerable damage to farms and to the town of Roggen, Colorado. Newspaper accounts of this event are presented in Appendix C.

THE FLOOD

In the early morning of Sunday, February 10, 1980, Prospect Valley Reservoir contained 5,850 acre-feet of water, 93 percent of its capacity. The depth of water was 36 feet.

About 9:00 a.m., the Prospect Reservoir Dam began to fail at a point approximately 800 feet from the southern end of the embankment. The cause of the break is attributed to piping. A 10-foot diameter tunnel in the embankment was observed by a local farmer at about 9:30 a.m. Erosion of the embankment progressed rapidly. By 9:55 a.m., the breach was estimated by an observer to be approximately 30 feet wide. As erosion continued, the gap spread at an average rate of 2.3 feet per hour to a final breach



VICINITY MAP

FIG. 5

width of 83 feet. Approximately 6,500 cubic yards of earth were eroded from the embankment section during the event.

The first attempts to close the gap were made about 3:30 p.m. on Sunday afternoon, when the breach was approximately 75 feet wide. A bulldozer, working on both sides of the breach, constructed a dike into the reservoir where flow velocities were minimal. However, it was not until 9:15 a.m. on the following morning (Monday) that the gap was finally closed.

Within this approximately 24-hour period, the water level fell from an initial gage rod reading of 36 feet to 27 feet, a total drop of 9 feet. This represents a loss of approximately 2,880 acre-feet of water, about half the reservoir's contents.

The relatively small channel below Prospect Valley Reservoir was inundated as the flood progressed toward the confluence with Lost Creek. A study of arrival time versus distance, as reported by various observers in the path of the flood, shows that the velocity of the flood front in this 6-mile reach above Lord Reservoir averaged 1.4 miles per hour (2.0 feet per second). The width of the flood below the reservoir ranged from about 1,000 to 1,500 feet.

Upon entering Lost Creek, the flood was confined to the better defined channel until it reached State Highway 52. The flood width in this reach was narrower, ranging from 200 to 400 feet. State Highway 52, acting as a barrier upstream of Lord Reservoir, spread the flood to a width of approximately 3,200 feet.

Before the flood, Lord Reservoir, at its maximum allowable capacity had a gage reading of 10.3 feet and contained approximately 1,280 acre-feet, about 88 percent of its unrestricted capacity. The water level was 2.0 feet below the level of the emergency spillway on the right abutment, and 0.7 feet below a smaller concrete service spillway located near the center of the dam.

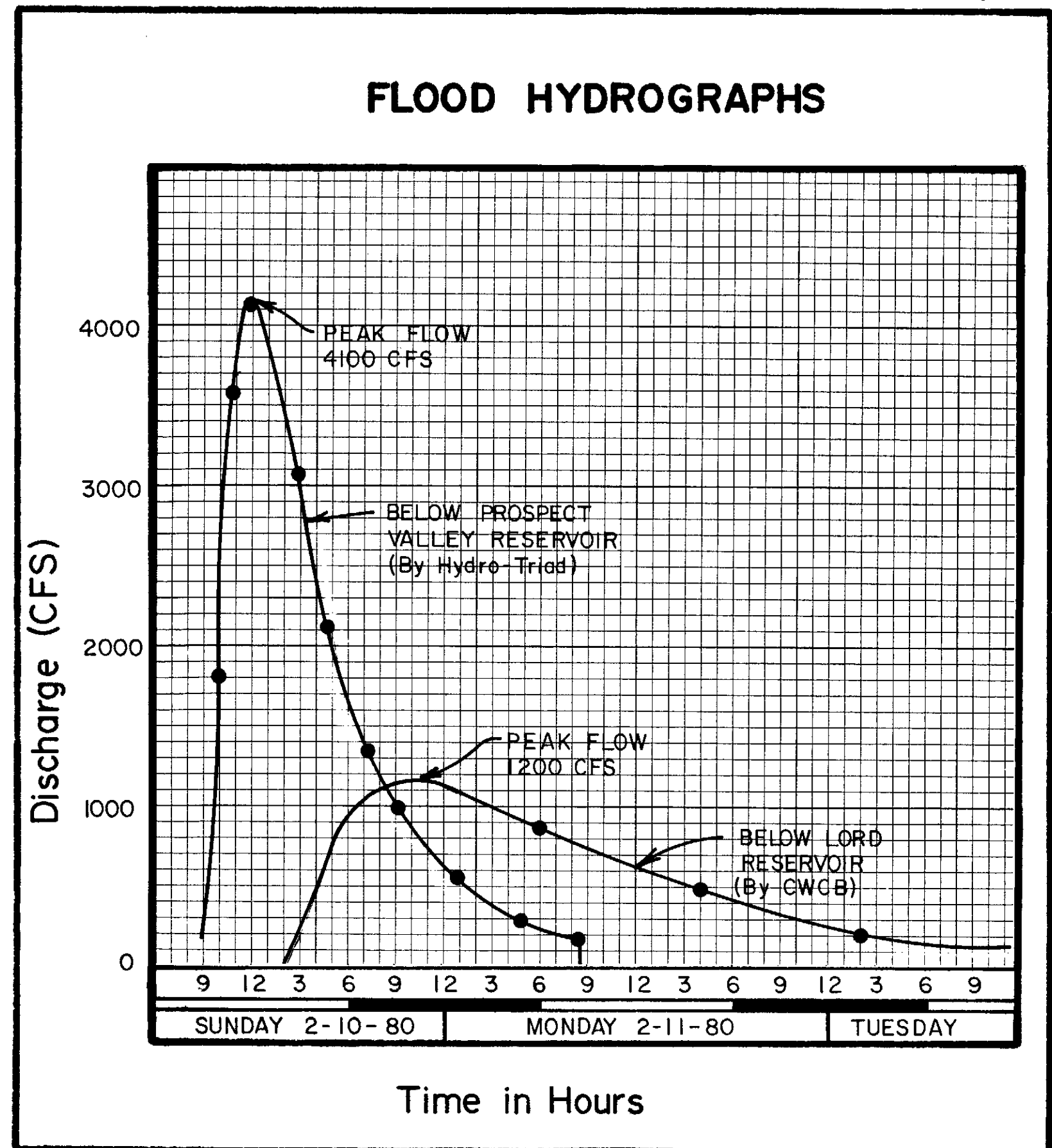
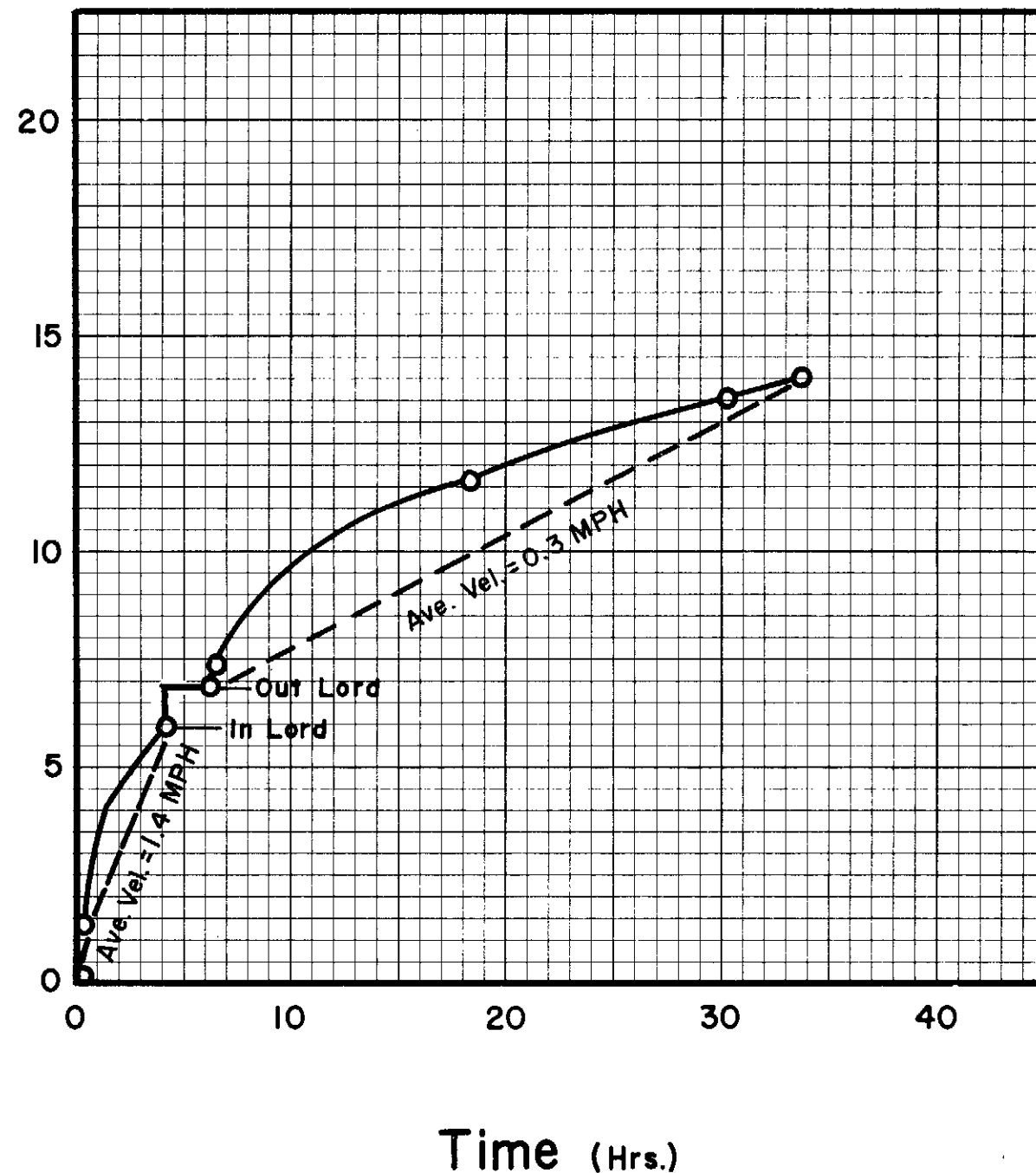


FIG. 6

FLOOD DISTANCE VS. TRAVEL TIME

Flood Distance (Miles Below Prospect Reservoir)



The flood began to enter Lord Reservoir at about 1:25 p.m. on Sunday, and the water level was reported to have risen initially at a rate of about 10.5 inches per hour. Water began to flow through the central service spillway at about 2:15 p.m., and through the emergency spillway at 3:45 p.m. The outlet works were opened to increase discharge capacity.

At approximately 10:15 Sunday night, the rate of release from Lord Reservoir equalled the rate of inflow, and the water level slowly began to drop. The combined peak discharge from the three release points was 1,200 cubic feet per second, based on a series of water level measurements taken at the service spillway. The water stopped flowing over the emergency spillway at about 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, February 12, 1980. The volume of water that passed through Lord Reservoir is estimated to be approximately 2,230 acre-feet.

Flood hydrographs were developed from observations and available information for the stream reaches immediately downstream of both Lord and Prospect Valley Reservoirs. These hydrographs are shown in Figure 4. The peak discharge from the Prospect Valley Reservoir breach is estimated to be approximately 4,100 cfs, which occurred at about 12:00 p.m. Sunday. The flood hydrograph below Lord Reservoir had an estimated peak discharge of approximately 1,200 cfs, occurring at about 10:15 p.m. Sunday.

The flood continued below Lord Reservoir and generally followed the Lost Creek channel north, toward I-76. The peak discharge had been attenuated by Lord Reservoir. The rate of travel in the 7-mile reach below Lord Reservoir averaged about 0.3 miles per hour (0.4 feet per second, see Figure 5). The width of the flooded area in this reach ranged from a maximum of about 3,100 feet, at Weld County Road 16, to as narrow as 30 feet in the channel above Weld County Road 20.

As the flood approached I-76, the water spread out and flowed in an irregular pattern over primarily uncultivated land. The

front of the flood, at 3:40 p.m. on Monday afternoon, was approximately 13 miles downstream from Prospect Valley Reservoir and one mile upstream from I-76. A small volume of water that had separated from the main channel flowed east, toward the town of Roggen, Colorado, at low velocity. By sundown, this part of the flood was still about 2 miles west of the town and it had lost most of its momentum. The remainder of the flood was contained in the Lost Creek channel. The cold temperatures on Monday night finally froze the remaining flooded areas.

Black and white aerial photographs of the flooded area, taken between 3:40 and 3:45 p.m. on Monday, February 11, 1980, are shown in Appendix A. The outline of the flood was enhanced by the presence of approximately 6 inches of snow on the ground. The scale of the photographs is approximately 1 inch = 600 feet.

FLOOD DAMAGES

The Lost Creek flood extended a total of 13 miles, and covered approximately 3,000 acres. Along its course, the flood crossed eleven county roads, two railroads, two canals, a state highway, and a natural gas pipeline. It also flowed under one power transmission line. A total of six farmsteads and one oil storage tank were inundated by the flood, as indicated on the aerial photographs.

Most of the damage was to the reservoir and ditch system owned by the Henrylyn Irrigation District. Other damages occurred on farm property and from losses in crop revenue. Severe erosion occurred on approximately 2.5 acres on one farmer's property, just below Prospect Valley Reservoir and above Prospect Lateral. On other farms, thick layers of silt were deposited. Topsoil was stripped from the land in the floodplain and deposited in Lord Reservoir. Severe erosion also occurred to the emergency spillway at Lord Reservoir.

County roads were closed in seven places, and State Highway 52 was closed for about 24 hours during the flood. The Prospect

Lateral was severely breached and the lowline Canal, below Lord Reservoir, also suffered damage. Little or no damage is known to have occurred to the railroad, gas pipeline, or the power transmission line.

Except for about a dozen baby pigs that died from exposure during a move to higher ground, no livestock or human lives were lost (or injured) in the flood. No one, including the Henrylyn Irrigation District, is known to have had any flood insurance.

A review of requests for disaster assistance received by the U. S. Soil Conservation Service and the Colorado Water Conservation Board has resulted in an estimate of the total flood damages at over a million dollars with the following breakdown:

<u>Damage Category</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Land and Crop Losses	\$ 250,000
Farm Machinery	150,000
Residential Property	100,000
Prospect Dam Repairs	583,000
Lord Reservoir	47,000
Prospect Lateral Repairs	<u>22,000</u>
TOTAL	\$ 1,152,000

THE MEDIA

The television and newspaper media carried accounts of the flood for several days after the event. Several television stations were able to respond quickly and obtain video tapes during the flood event. A selection of major stories which appeared in the local and regional newspapers are included in Appendix B. These articles illustrate the human side of the flood and include further details on damages and the emergency response of various federal, state, and local agencies. It should be pointed out, however, that during the emergency there was much confusion relative to the technical details as presented in this report.

FIGURE 7

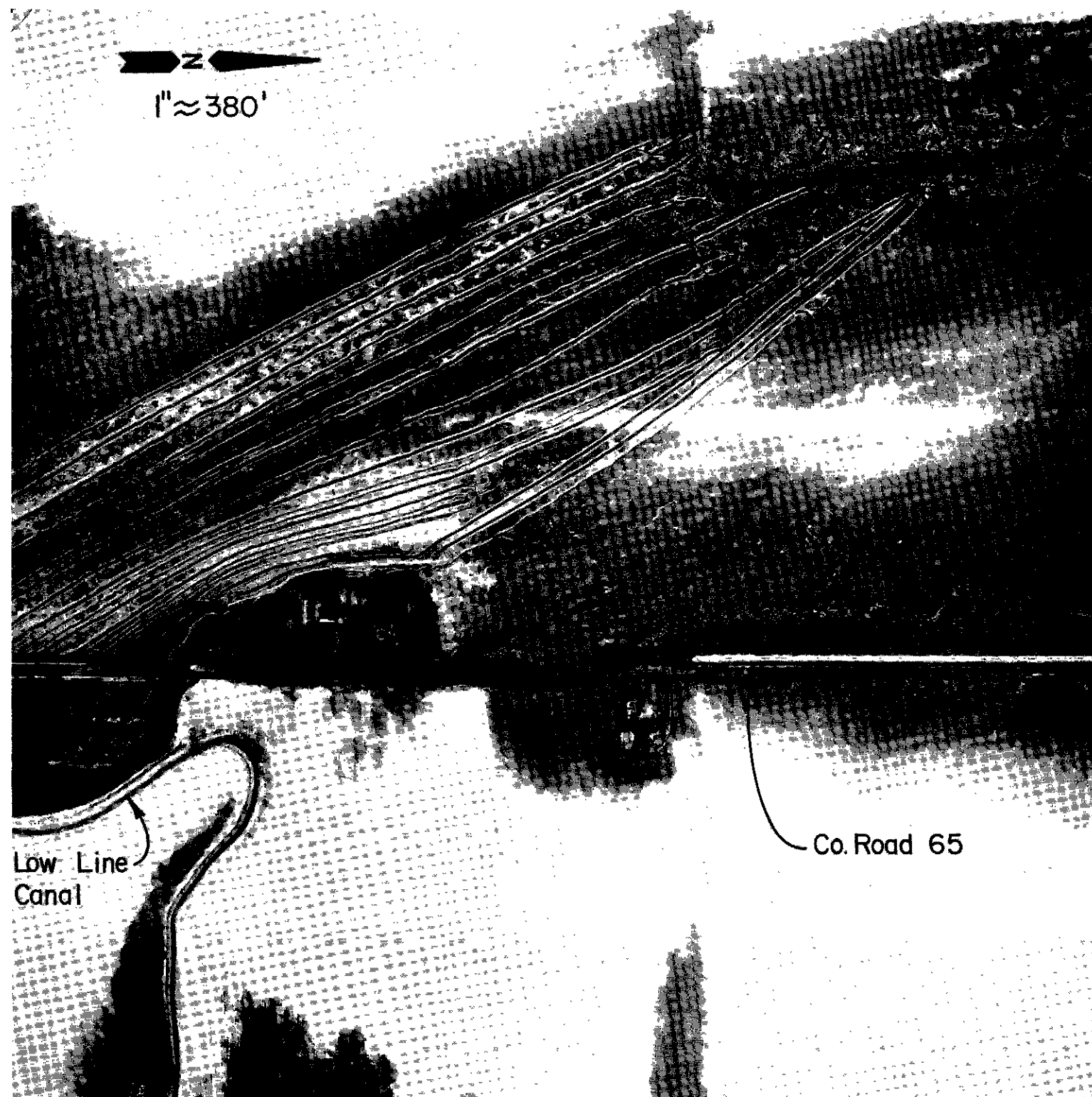


SEVERE EROSION ABOVE PROSPECT LATERAL

Severe erosion occurred over approximately 2.5 acres of farmland located about 1,500 feet downstream from the breach in Prospect Valley Reservoir (above the Prospect Lateral).

Eyewitnesses described the flood in this reach as a loud, spectacular waterfall. Dramatic erosional cuts remained after the water receded (see Figure 10). These cuts began at the Prospect Lateral and proceeded upstream. Maximum cut depth is approximately 30 feet, with major benches at 10- to 15-foot levels. The volume of material removed in this area is estimated at 83,000 cubic yards.

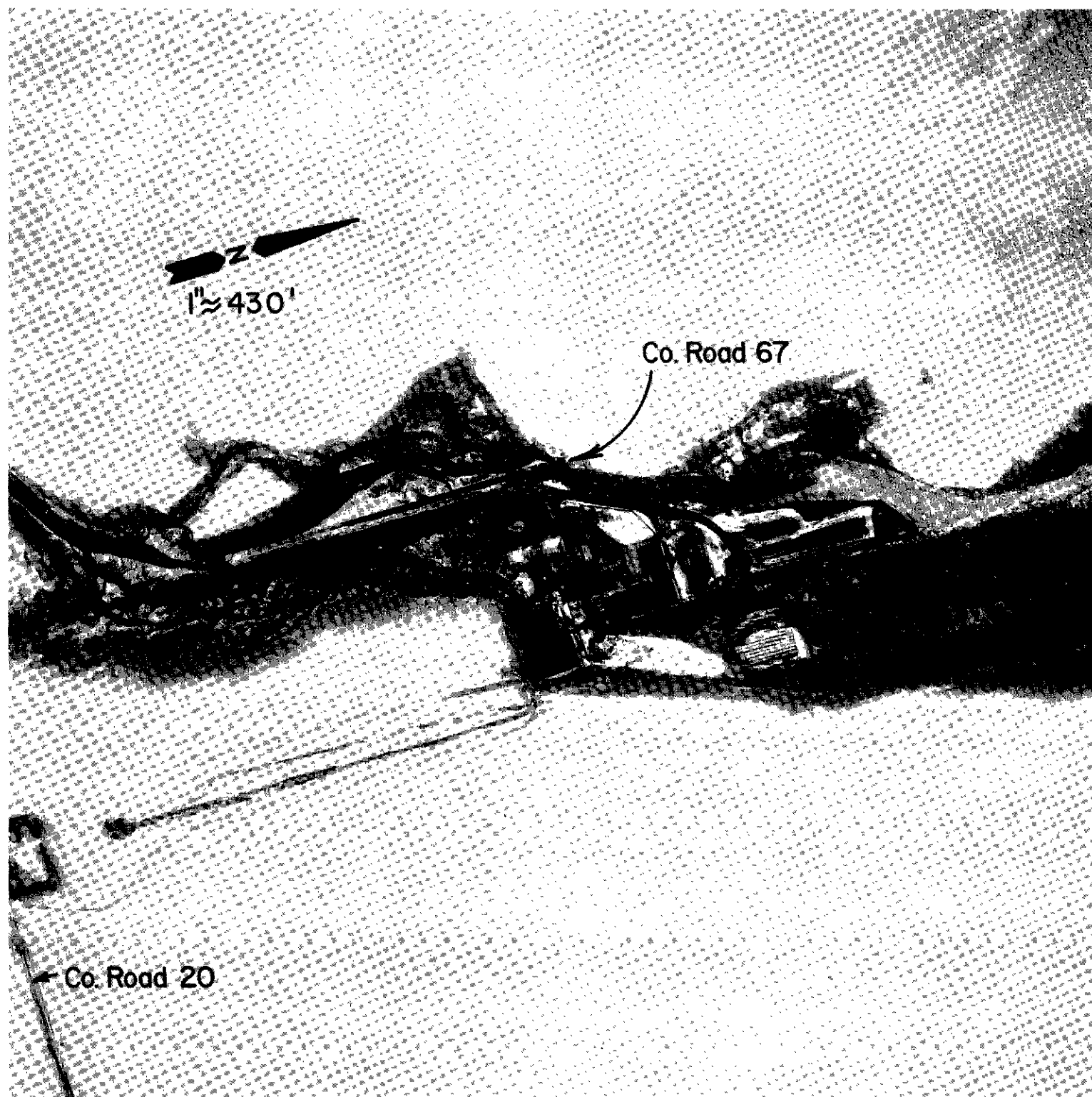
FIGURE 8



FARMSTEADS BELOW LORD RESERVOIR

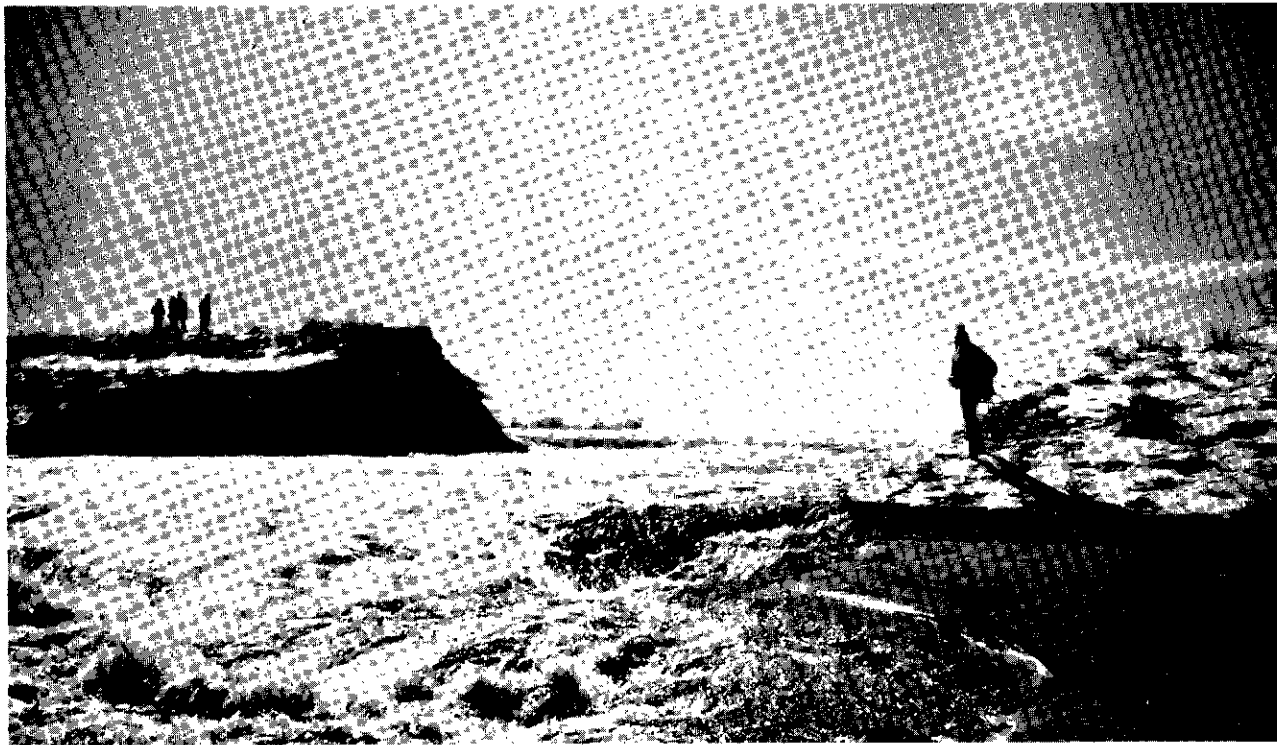
These two farmsteads are located in low spots adjacent to County Road 65, directly below Lord Reservoir. Note the ineffective series of parallel snow dikes constructed to divert the flood. Most of the water flowed around the dikes and down the road.

FIGURE 9

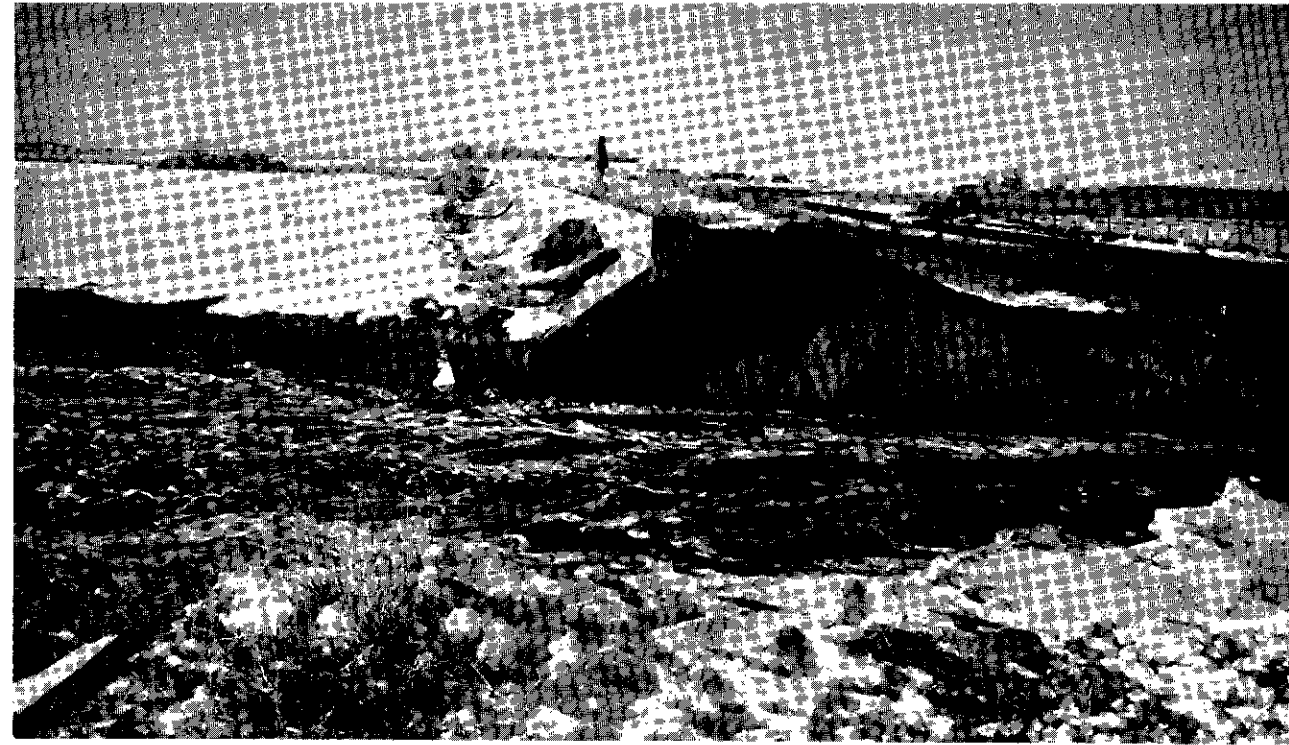


FARMSTEAD NEAR END OF FLOOD

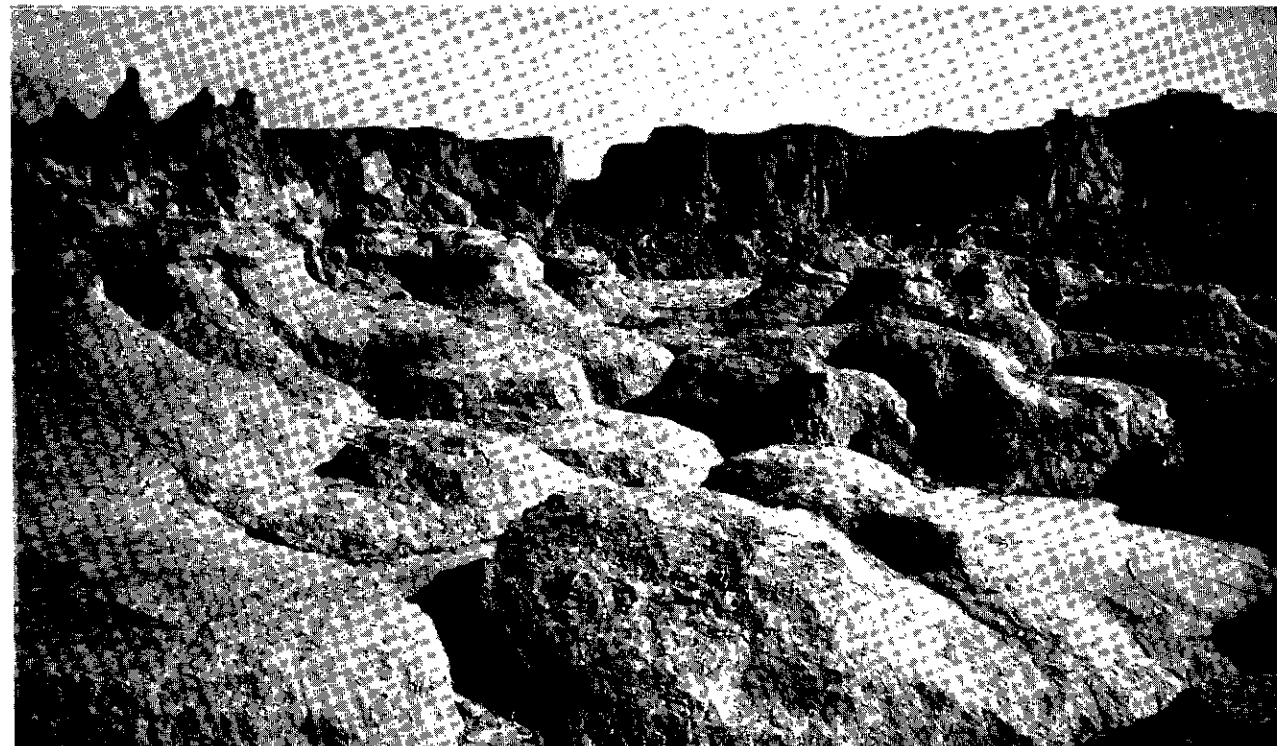
This farmstead is located adjacent to Lost Creek and County Road 67, approximately 2 miles downstream from Lord Reservoir. It was in the direct path of the flood.



Prospect Valley Reservoir Dam during breaching event looking southwest at about 1:00 p.m., February 10, 1980 (Hydro-Triad, Ltd.).



Prospect Valley Reservoir Dam looking north during failure at about 1:00 p.m., February 10, 1980. Note reservoir ice on concrete apron (Hydro-Triad, Ltd.).



Erosional cuts between Prospect Valley Reservoir Dam and Prospect Lateral. Maximum cut depth is approximately 30 feet, with major benches at 10 to 15 foot levels (CWCB).



Deposition of sediment downstream of Prospect Valley Reservoir after breaching event (CWCB).

FIGURE 10
BREACH AND
EROSION
PHOTOTGRAPHS

FLOOD MAGNITUDE

A study of the hydrology of the Lost Creek Basin was made to determine the relative magnitude of the flood of February 10, 1980 (see Figure 11). The results of the study showed that the magnitude of the flood decreased discontinuously, as it progressed downstream, due to reservoir storage effects and tributary drainage areas. Directly downstream of Prospect Reservoir, the flood was far in excess of a 500-year event. It was greater than a 100-year, or one percent chance flood, over most of the length of the unnamed tributary. A 100-year flood has a peak flow magnitude with a one percent chance of being equalled or exceeded in any given year, and a frequency of occurrence of about once in a hundred years on the long-term average.

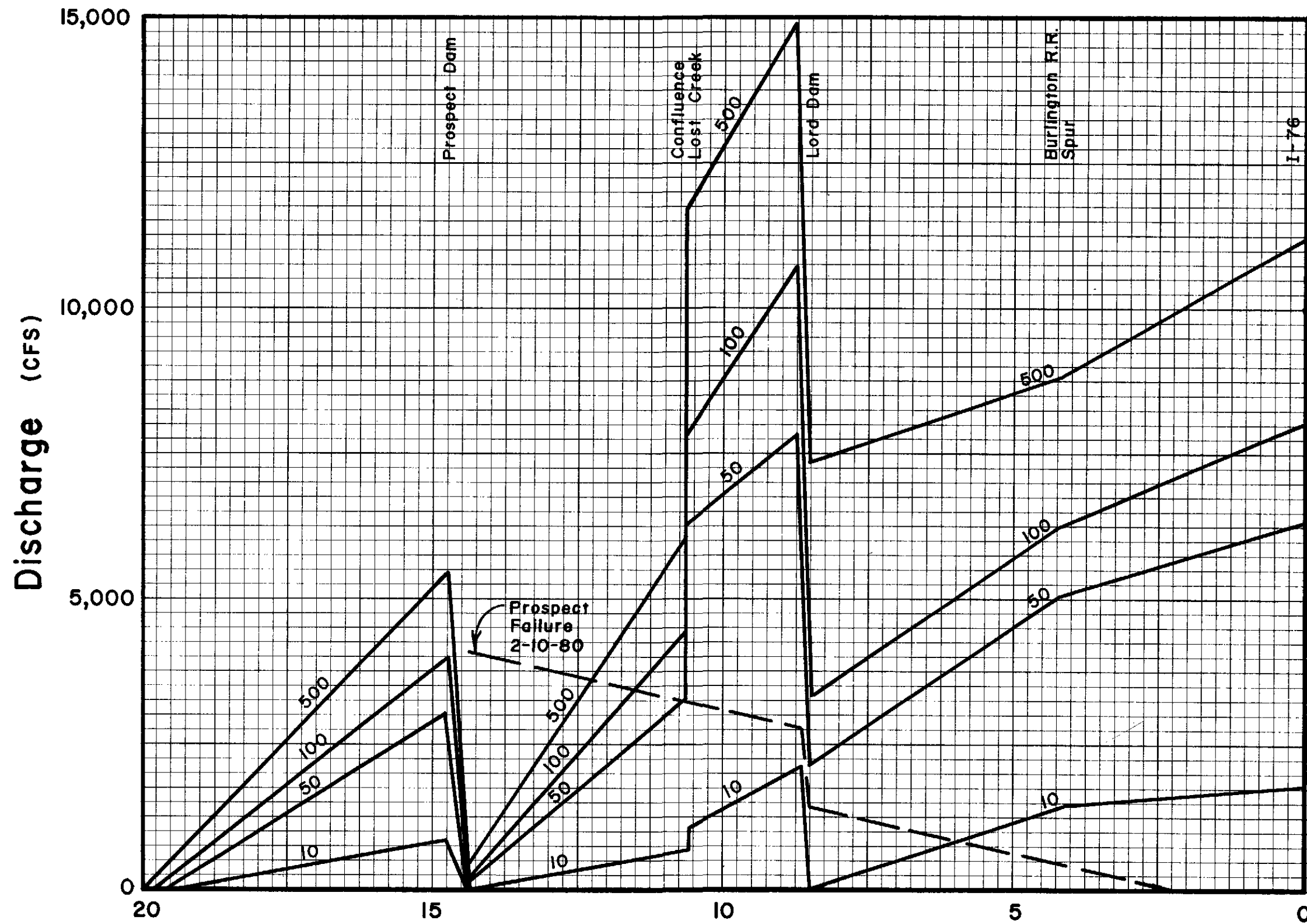
At the confluence with Lost Creek, the relative magnitude of the flood dropped sharply to correspond to approximately a 25-year event. It decreased gradually to about a 15-year event at Lord Reservoir. Directly downstream of Lord Reservoir, the flood was slightly greater than a 30-year event and decreased steadily.

COMPARISON TO THE "ZONE A" FLOODPLAIN

The Federal Insurance Administration (FIA) has prepared a Flood Insurance Study for the unincorporated areas of Weld County. In that study, the 100-year floodplain was delineated for the reach of Lost Creek below Lord Reservoir using approximate methods. The term "approximate methods" means hydraulic routing of flood discharges using surveyed channel cross sections was not performed. Approximate floodplain areas are identified by the FIA as "Zone A".

A comparison of the dam break flood (30-year maximum return interval) with the Zone A (100-year flood) outline on the Flood Insurance Rate Map shows poor agreement for about 1 mile below Lord Reservoir and at the northern terminus of the flood (see Figure 12). The Lost Creek flood outline was within the Zone A boundary for approximately 60 percent of the flood length.

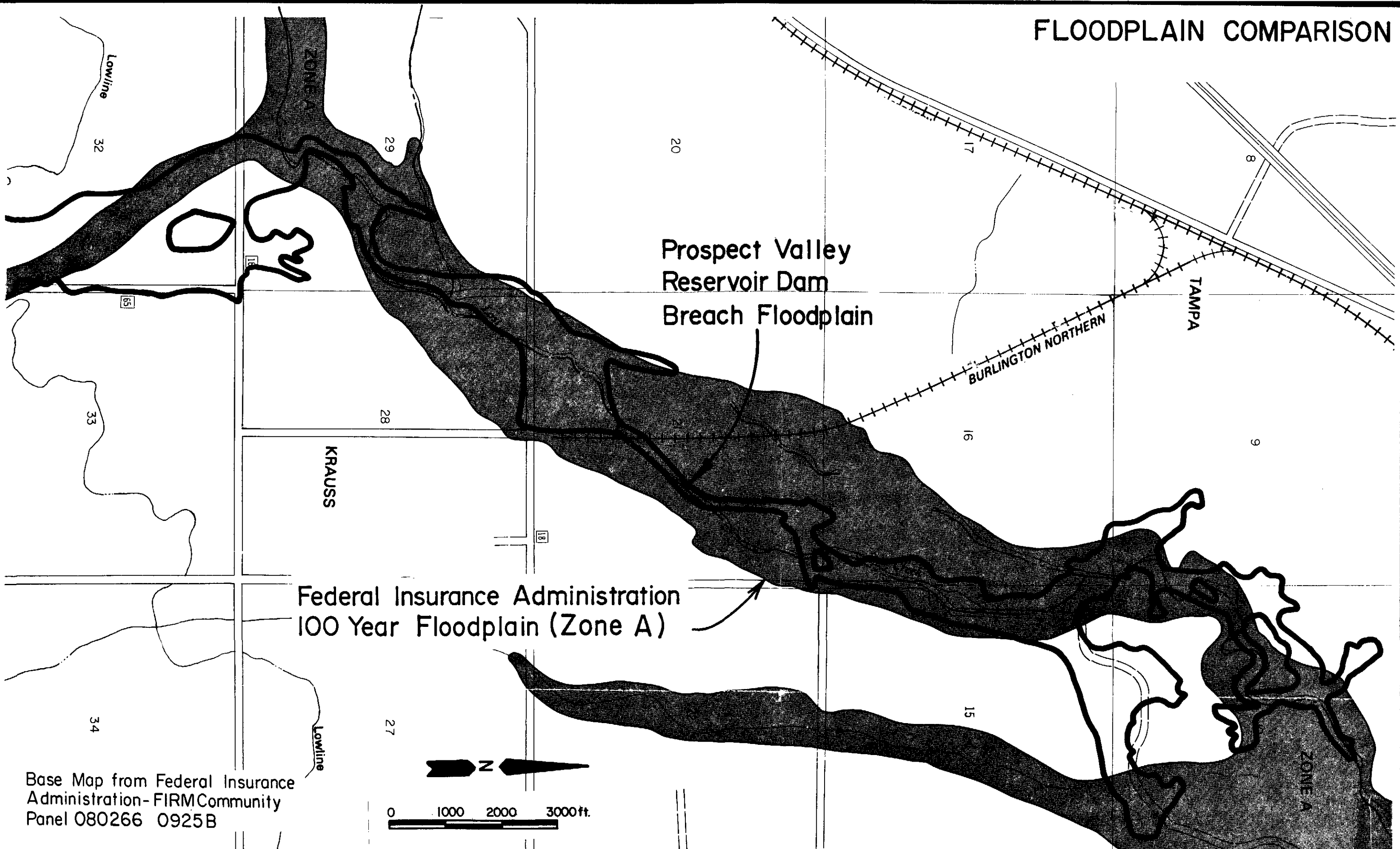
FREQUENCY-DISCHARGE PROFILE



Hydrology by,
Hydro-Triad, Ltd.

Distance Above I-76 (Miles)

FLOODPLAIN COMPARISON



Base Map from Federal Insurance
Administration-FIRMCommunity
Panel 080266 0925B

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

1. USGS, County Series Topographic Maps, Scale 1:50,000; Weld County, Colorado, Sheet 7 of 7; Adams County, Colorado, Sheet 2 of 3.
2. USGS, 7-1/2 Minute Quad Maps: Keensburg, Colorado; Prospect Valley, Colorado; Roggen, Colorado; 1"=2,000'.
3. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Federal Insurance Administration, Flood Insurance Rate Map, Weld County, Colorado (unincorporated areas), Community Panel No. 080266 0925 B, March, 1980.
4. Rocky Mountain News.
5. Denver Post.
6. Greeley Tribune.
7. Keene Valley Sun.
8. State Engineer, Files on Prospect Valley Reservoir and D. A. Lord Reservoir No. 4.
9. U. S. Soil Conservation Service, Prospect Valley Reservoir Flood Damage Survey Estimate.
10. Soil Conservation Service, Soil Survey of Weld County, Colorado, Southern Part, September, 1980.
11. Soil Conservation Service, Soil Survey of Adams County, Colorado, October, 1974.
12. Soil Conservation Service, Procedures for Determining Peak Flows in Colorado, March, 1980.
13. Soil Conservation Service, National Engineering Handbook, Section 4, Hydrology, 1972.
14. Chow, V.T., Open Channel Hydraulics, 1959.
15. USBR, Design of Small Dams, 1977.
16. Brater & King, McGraw-Hill, Handbook of Hydraulics, 1976.
17. Hydro-Triad, Ltd., Report on Breaching of Prospect Dam, February, 1980.

FIGURE 13
LOST CREEK FLOOD
OF FEBRUARY 10, 1980
INDEX MAP

MAY, 1981

COLORADO WATER CONSERVATION BOARD

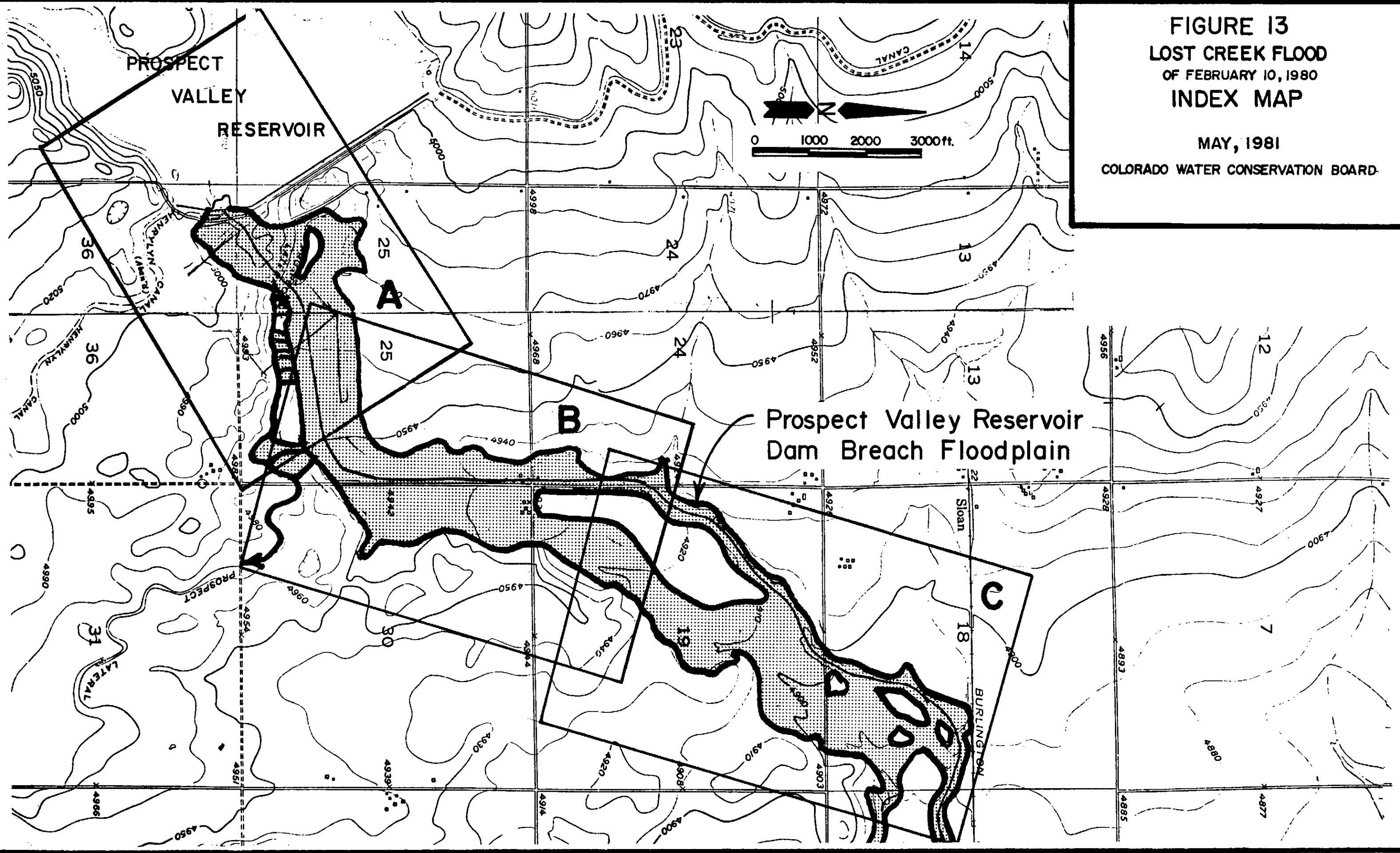
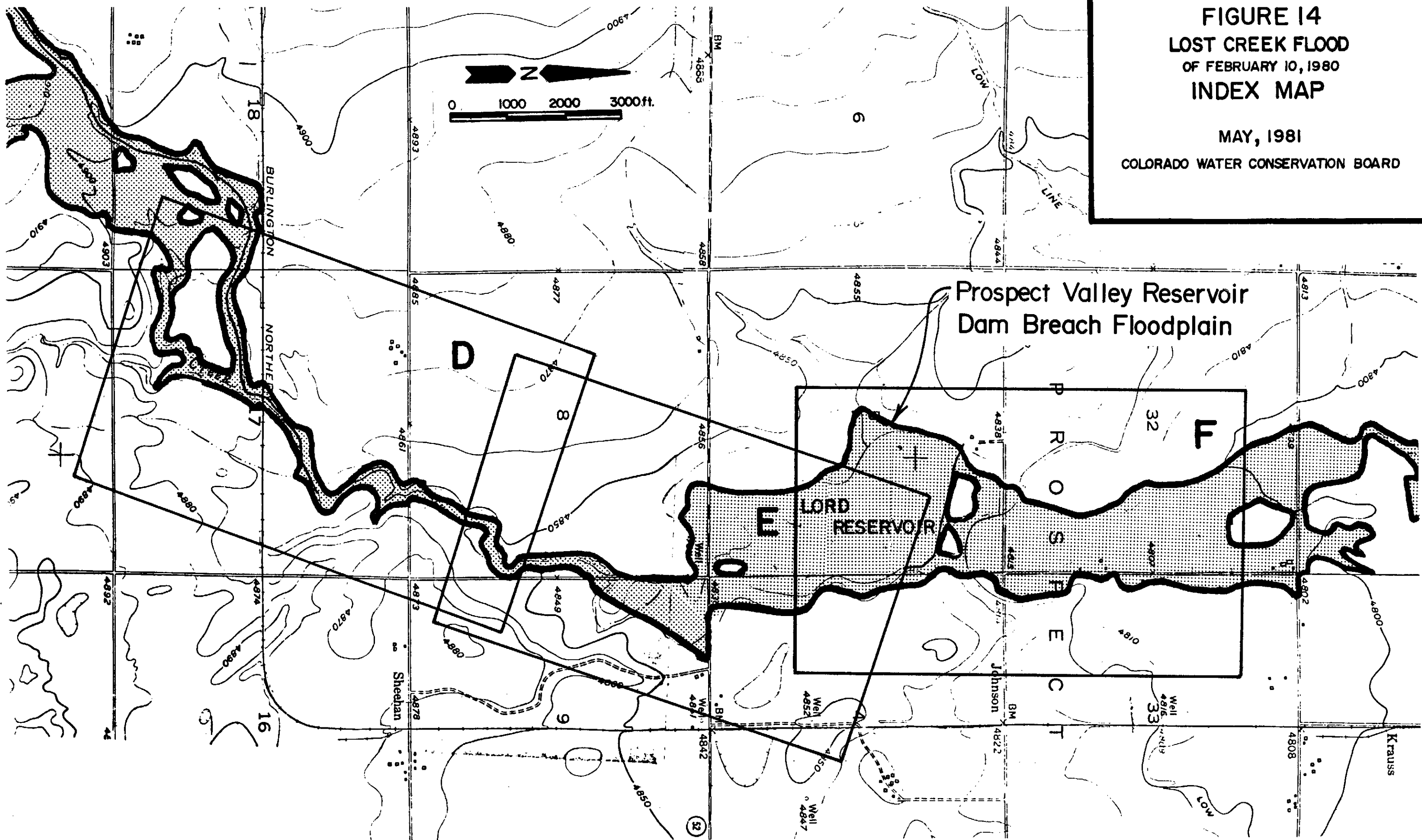


FIGURE 14
LOST CREEK FLOOD
OF FEBRUARY 10, 1980
INDEX MAP

MAY, 1981

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MAY, 1981
COLORADO WATER CONSERVATION BOARD

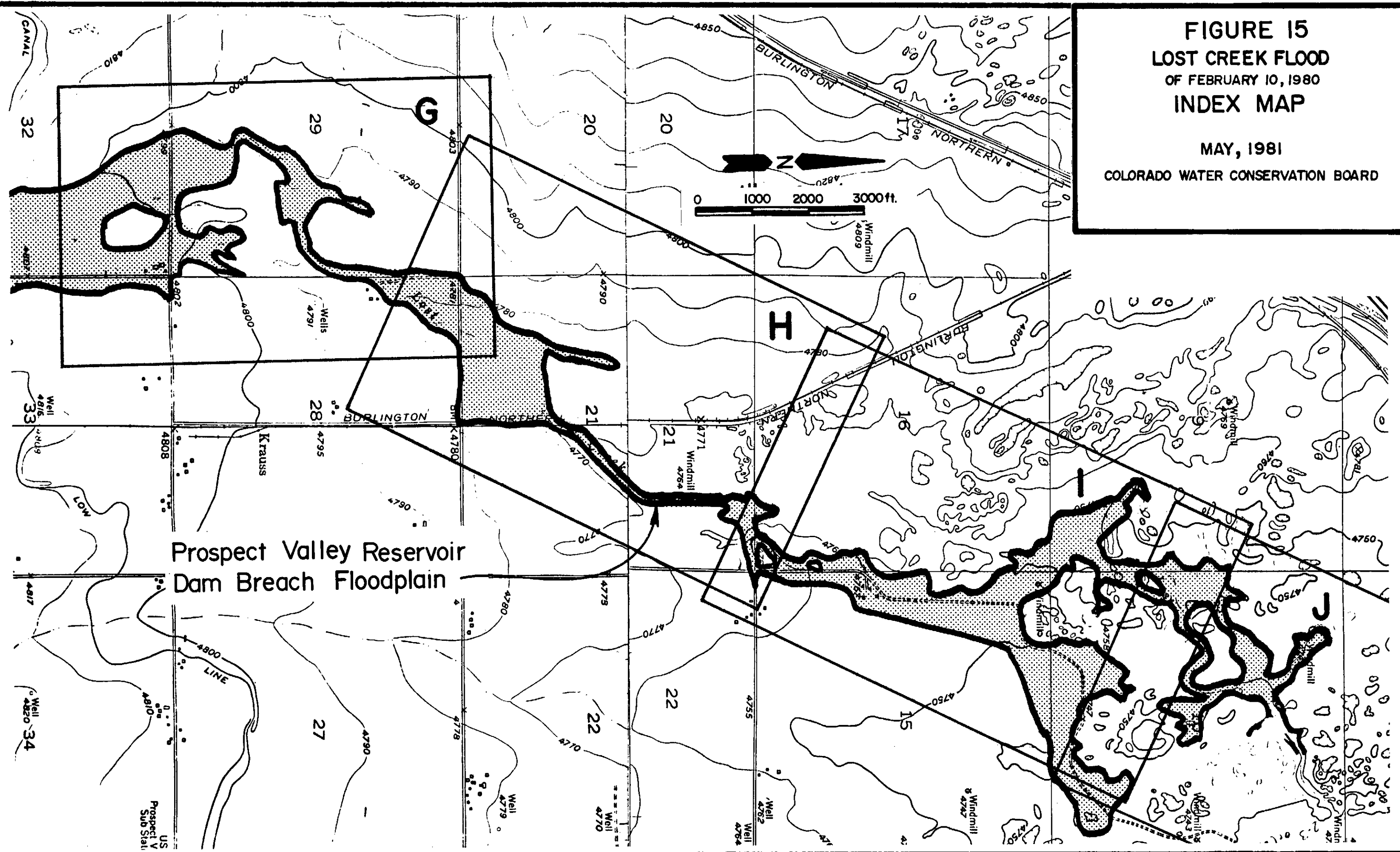
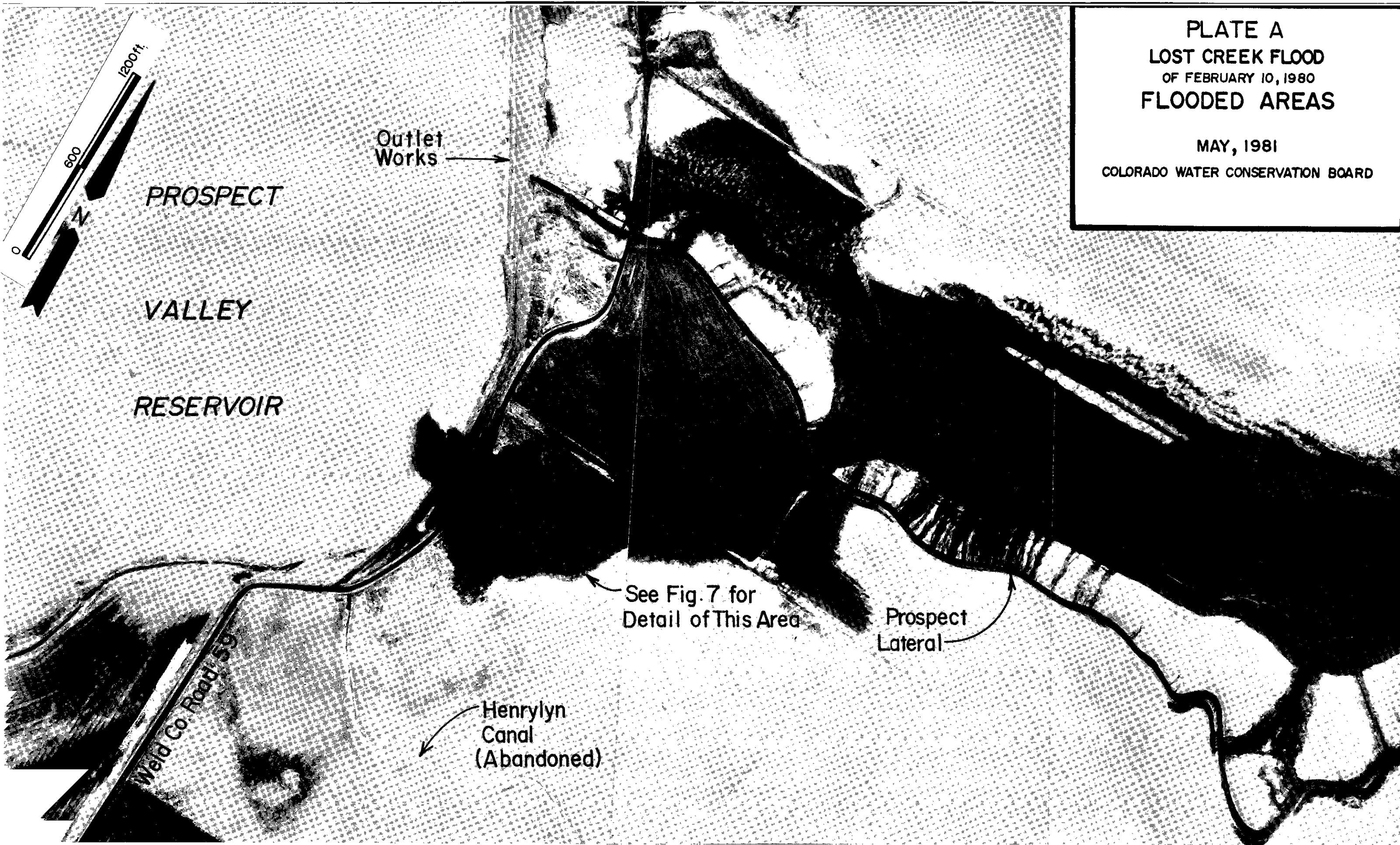


PLATE A
LOST CREEK FLOOD
OF FEBRUARY 10, 1980
FLOODED AREAS

MAY, 1981
COLORADO WATER CONSERVATION BOARD



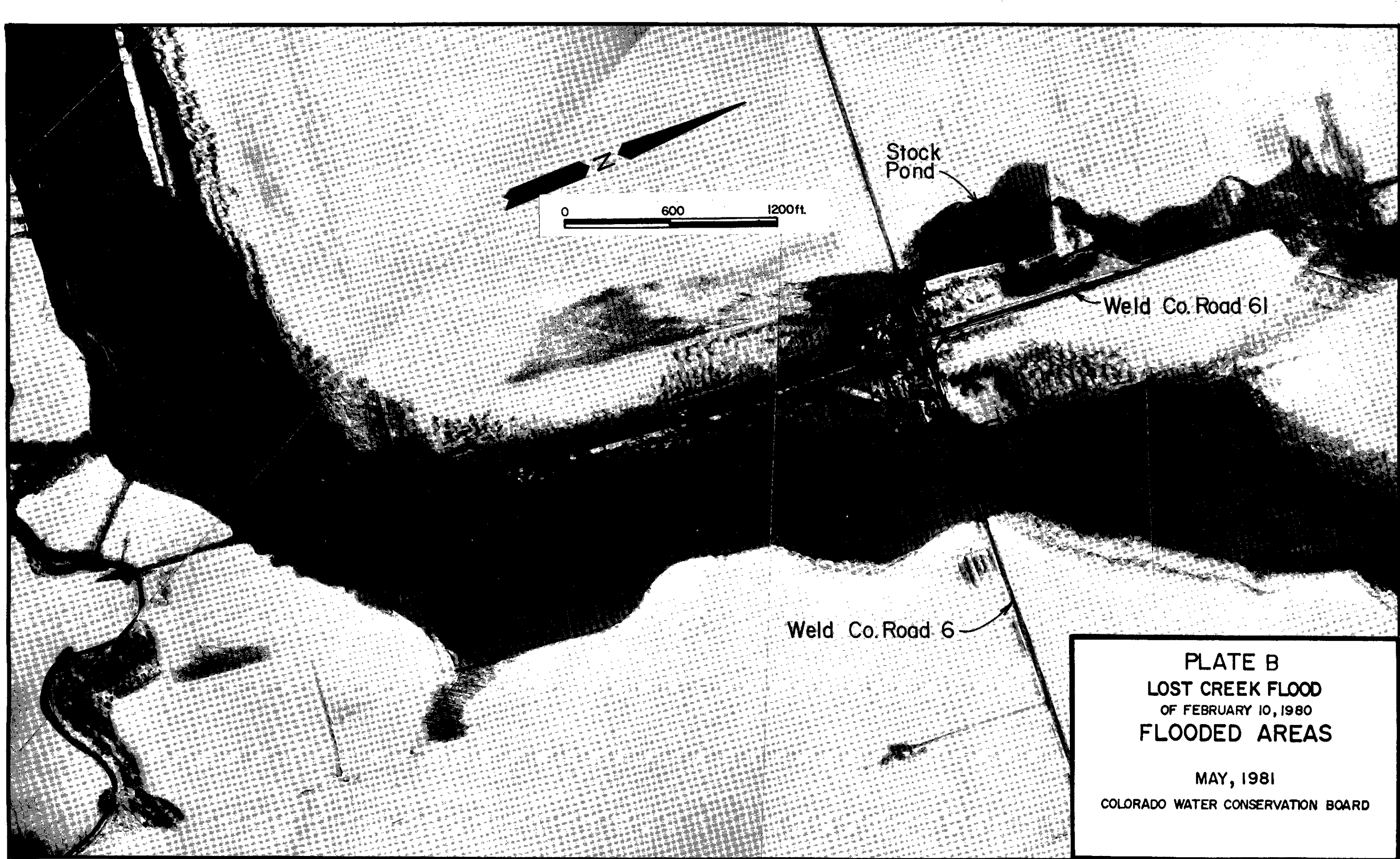


PLATE B
LOST CREEK FLOOD
OF FEBRUARY 10, 1980
FLOODED AREAS

MAY, 1981
COLORADO WATER CONSERVATION BOARD

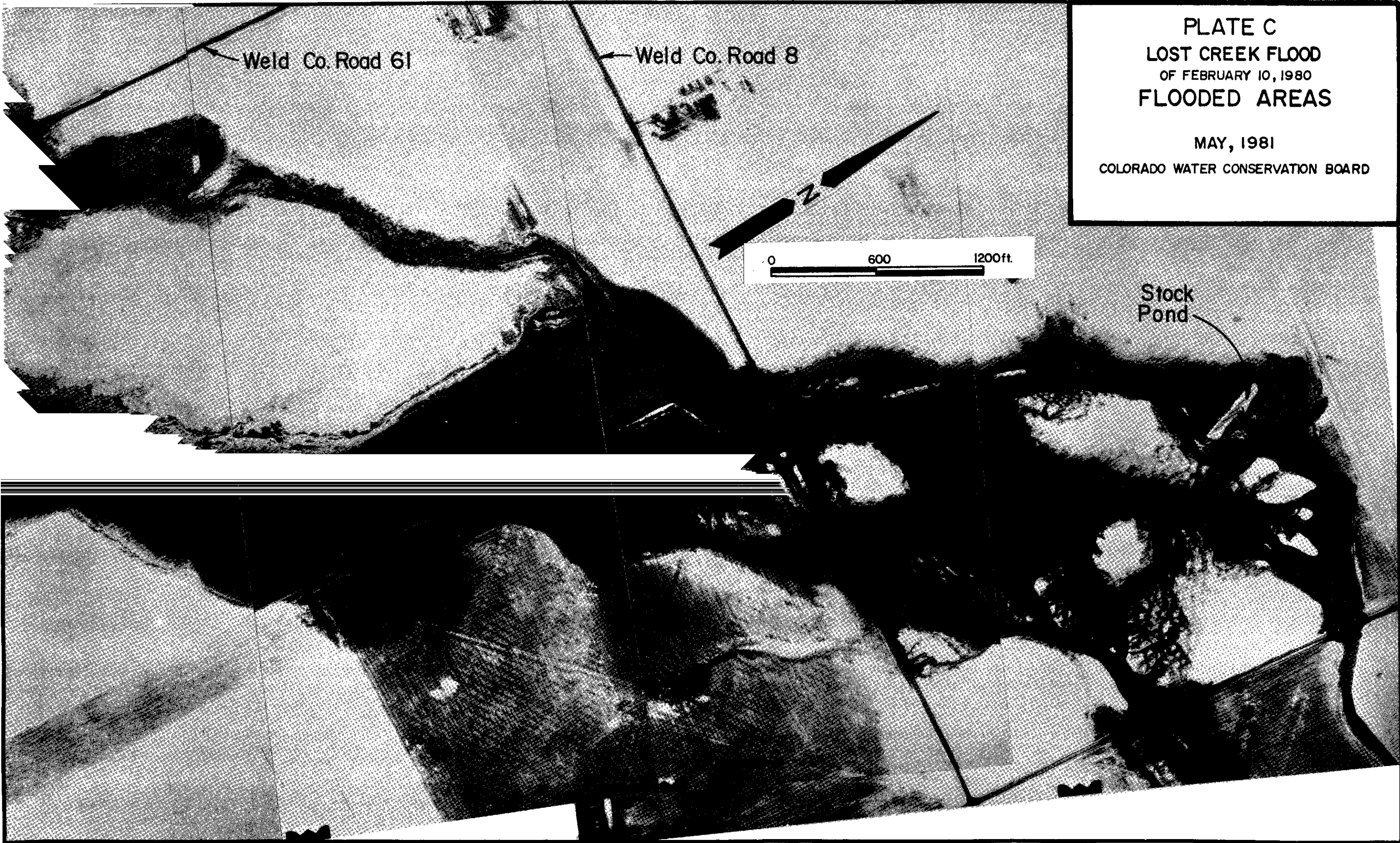


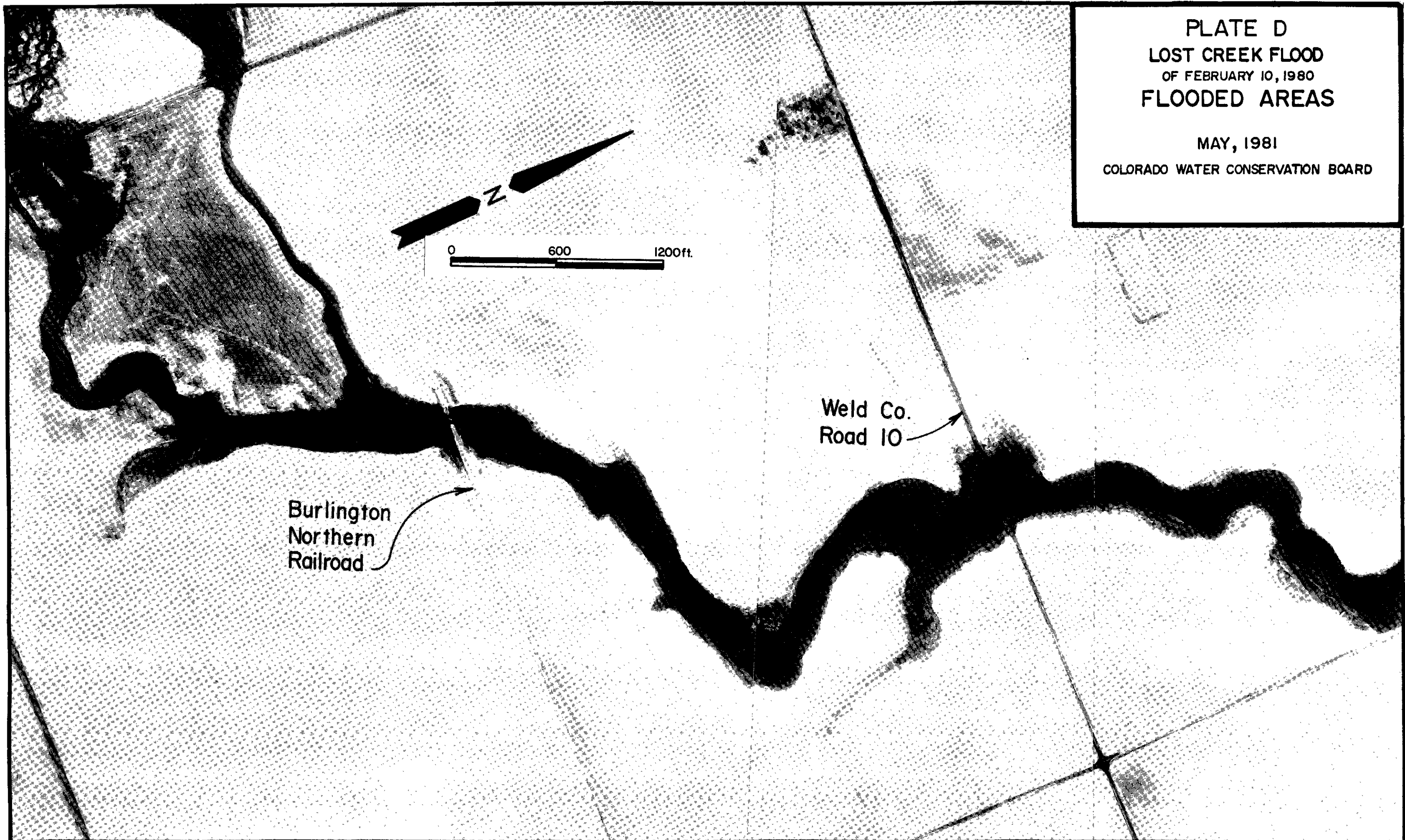
PLATE C
LOST CREEK FLOOD
OF FEBRUARY 10, 1980
FLOODED AREAS

MAY, 1981
COLORADO WATER CONSERVATION BOARD

PLATE D
LOST CREEK FLOOD
OF FEBRUARY 10, 1980
FLOODED AREAS

MAY, 1981

COLORADO WATER CONSERVATION BOARD



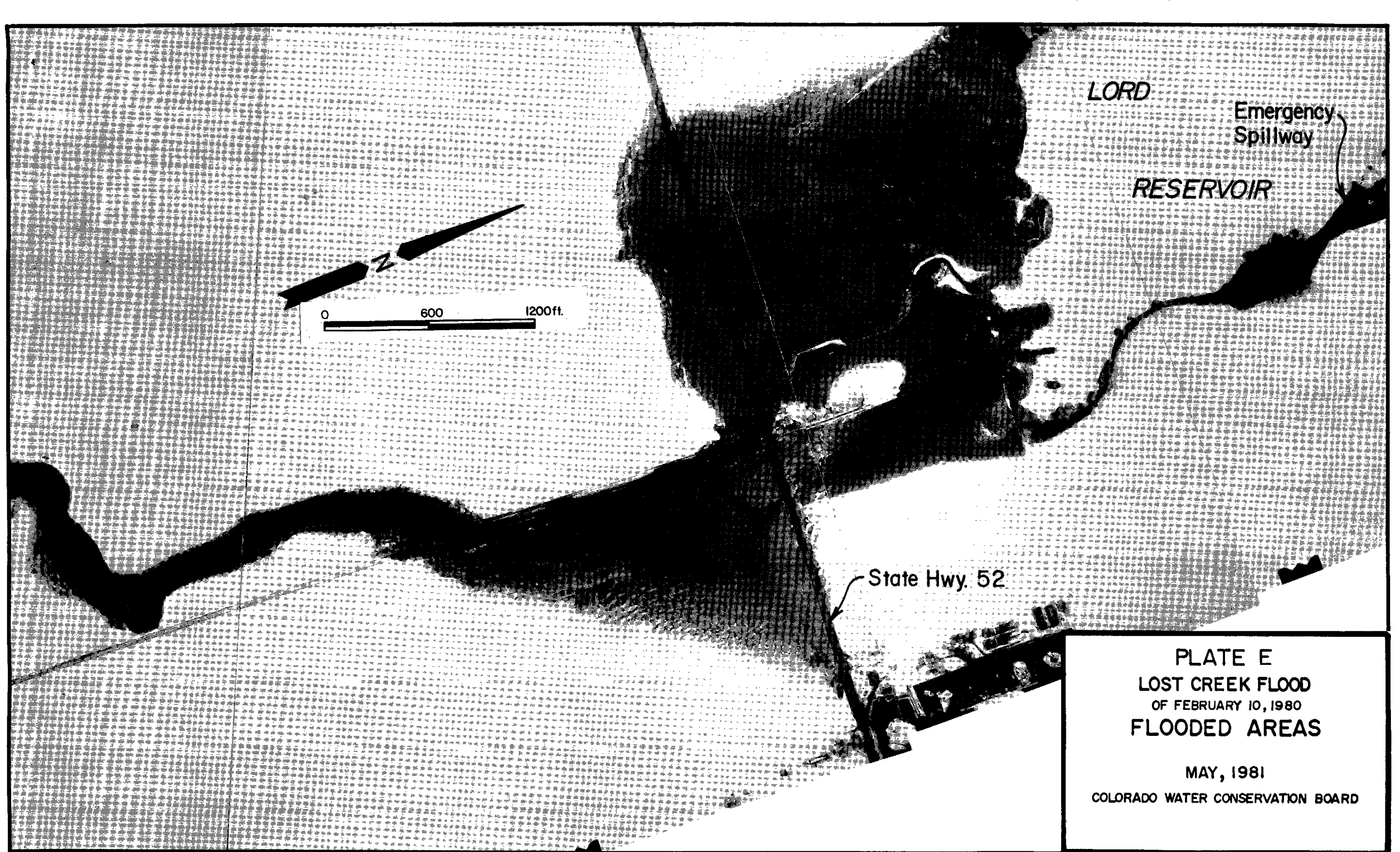


PLATE F
LOST CREEK FLOOD
OF FEBRUARY 10, 1980
FLOODED AREAS

MAY, 1981
COLORADO WATER CONSERVATION BOARD

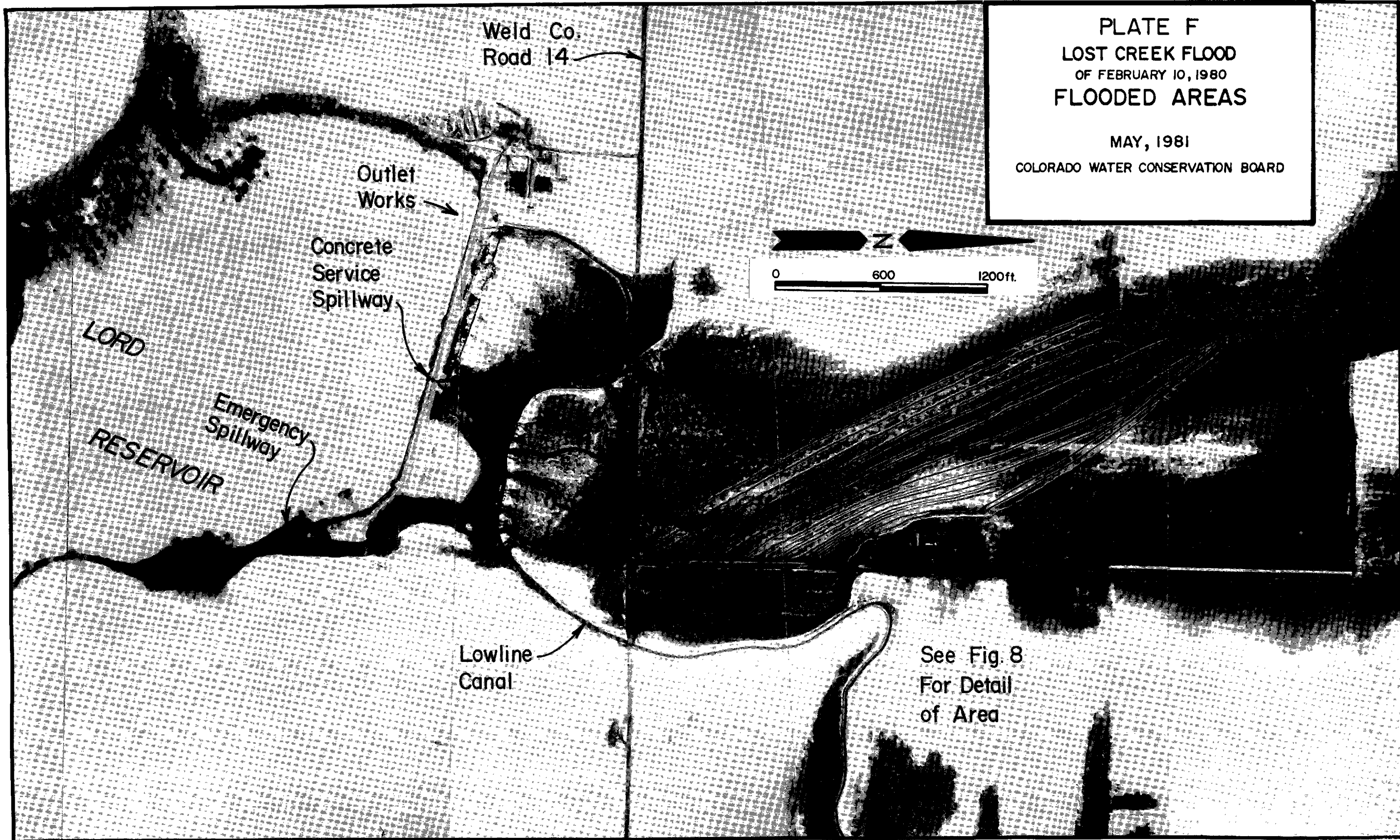


PLATE G
LOST CREEK FLOOD
OF FEBRUARY 10, 1980
FLOODED AREAS

MAY, 1981

COLORADO WATER CONSERVATION BOARD

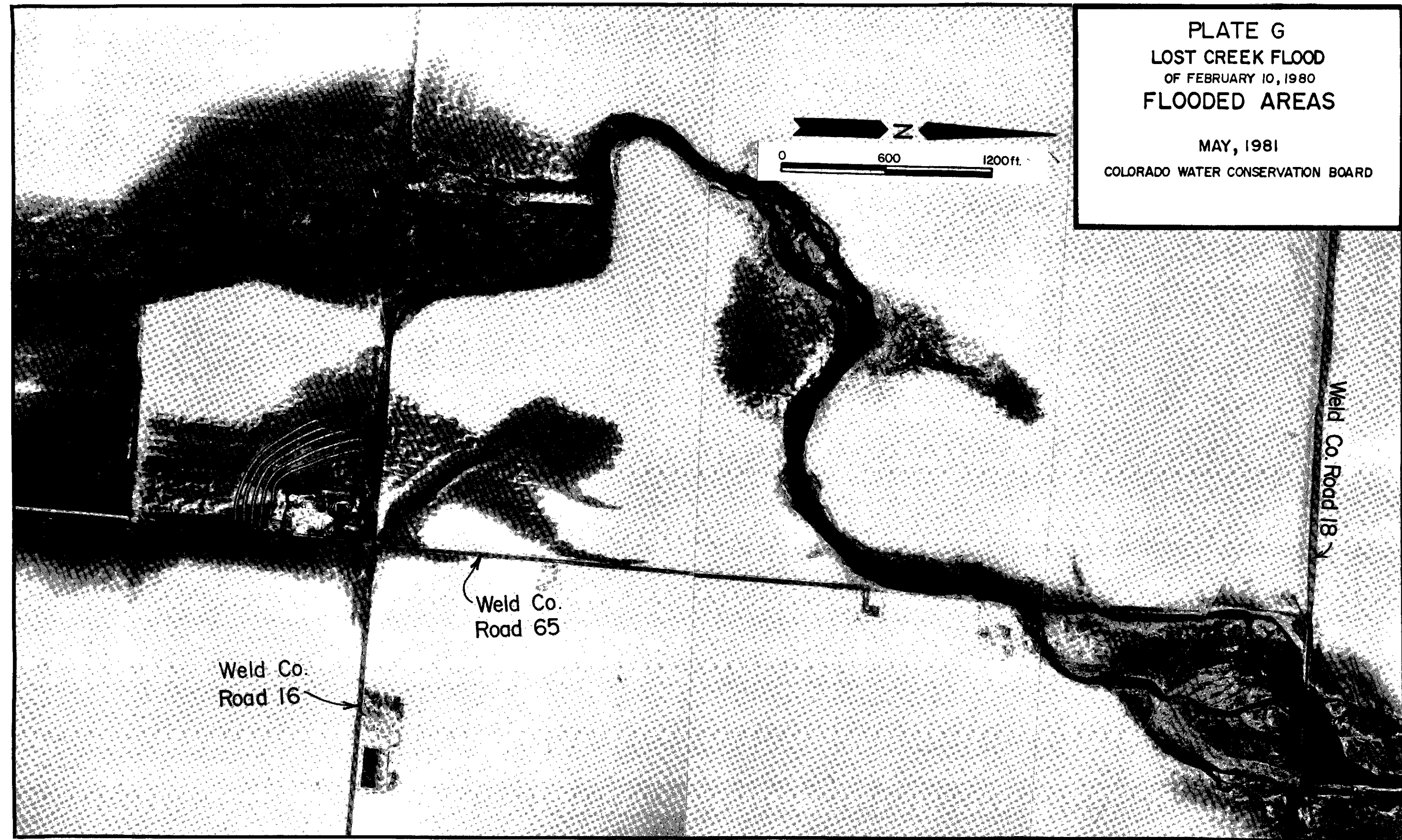


PLATE H
LOST CREEK FLOOD
OF FEBRUARY 10, 1980
FLOODED AREAS

MAY, 1981

COLORADO WATER CONSERVATION BOARD

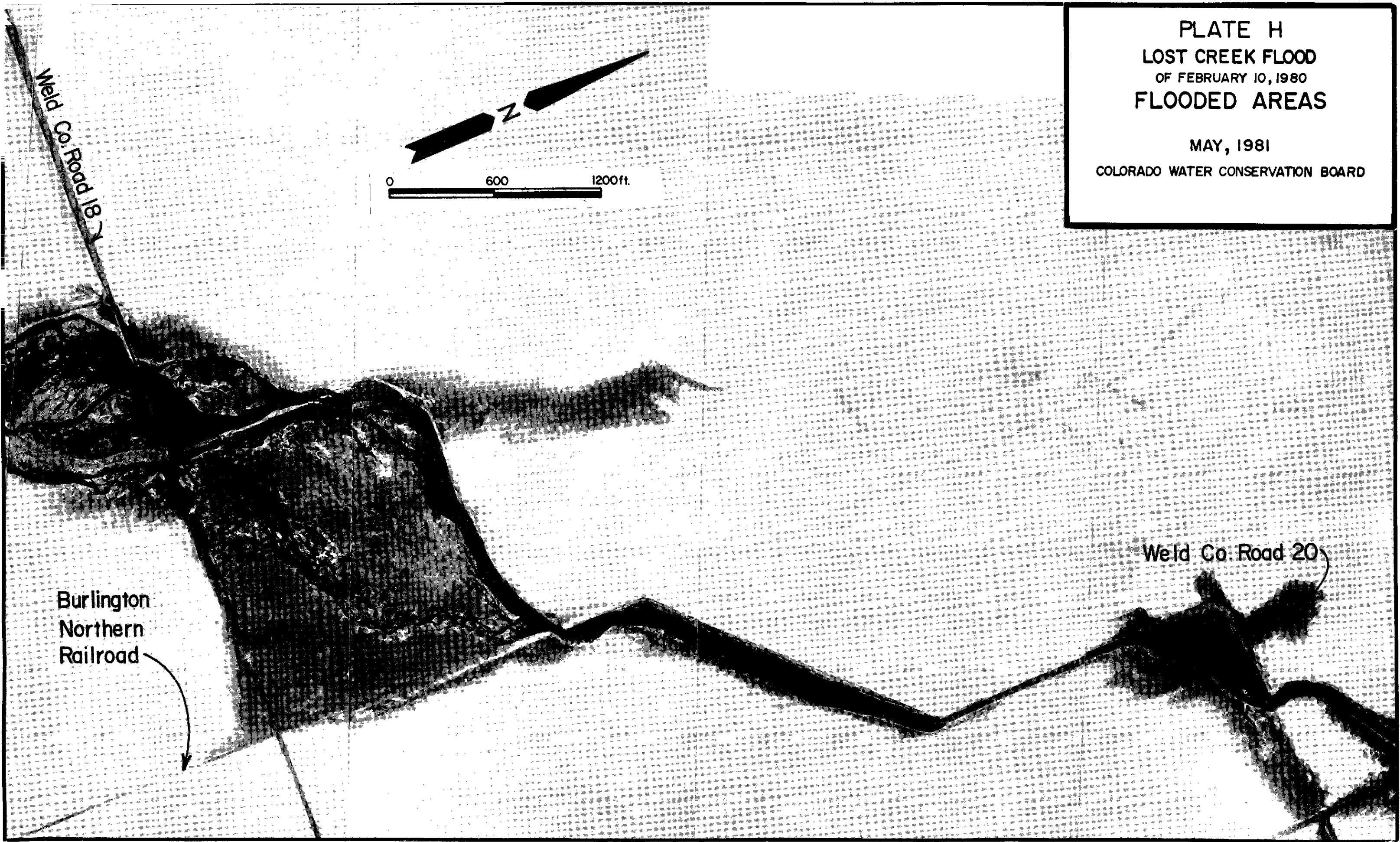


PLATE I
LOST CREEK FLOOD
OF FEBRUARY 10, 1980
FLOODED AREAS

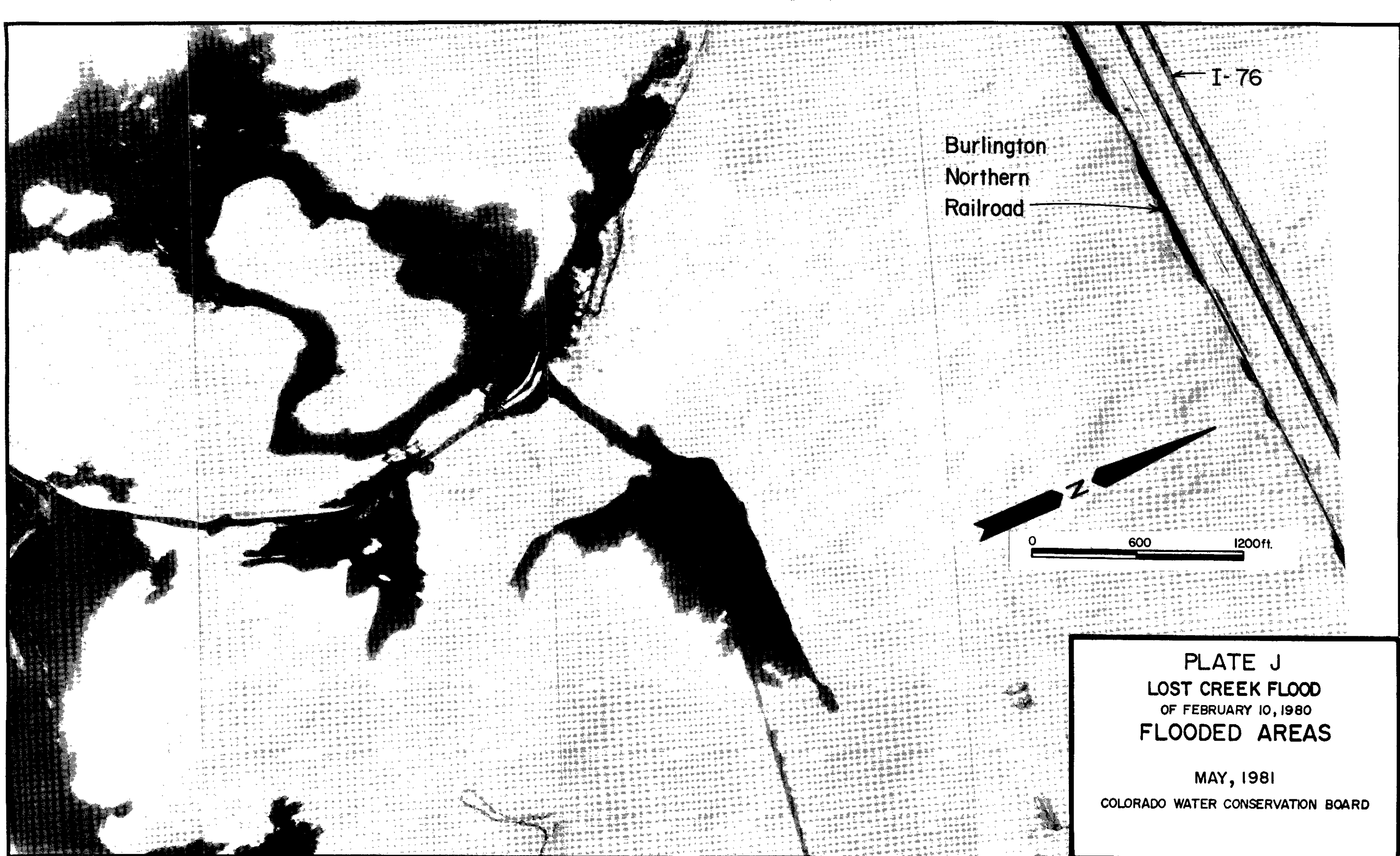
MAY, 1981

COLORADO WATER CONSERVATION BOARD

0 600 1200ft.

See Fig. 9 for
Detail of Area

Weld Co.
Road 67



GREELEY TRIBUNE

Original script written by Horace Greeley

Weekly Tribune est. 1870

VOL. 72, NO. 15

GREELEY, COLORADO 80631

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1980

15 CENTS

Dam break floods S.E. Weld

By JOHN SEELMEYER
Tribune Staff Writer

KEENESBURG — Shallow floodwaters, the result of a broken irrigation dam, were expected to reach the community of Roggen Monday afternoon.

The bulk of the floodwaters, however, were expected to miss most of Roggen. Authorities said they believed the water would be channeled to the edge of town by a railroad embankment in the area.

Officials said the broken dam at Prospect Reservoir in southeast Weld County was closed at mid-morning Monday, but an estimated billion gallons of water had spilled out before the breach was closed.

The break may have been caused by animals such as muskrats which burrowed into the side of the dirt-and-concrete dam, according to Charles Starks, president of the Henrylynn Irrigation Co. which owns the reservoir.

As water poured from the break in the 40-foot-high dam, sheriff's officers evacuated about 100 families downstream Sunday night. Most of them spent the night with relatives and friends.

No deaths or injuries were reported, although the Colorado State Patrol rescued three persons who were stranded in their autos when the cars became surrounded by floodwaters.

Authorities haven't begun to estimate damage from the flood. At least eight county roads — along with Colo. 52 — were damaged by the water, and a handful of farms were inundated by the water which generally was no more than 2 feet deep.

Weld County Engineer Wayne Smyth voiced optimism damage to roads might be less than first expected because the water moved relatively slowly after the break Sunday.

But, he said, authorities may have to wait days before they can assess the damage.

"It's going to take a long time for the water to recede," said Smyth. He explained the floodwaters can't soak into the frozen ground, which is already soaked from heavy winter snows.

Authorities first learned of leakage from the dam from area residents about 9:30 a.m. Sunday. By 2 p.m., the dam 6 miles south of Keenesburg had broken.

Jim Clark, director of the State Division of Water Resources office in Greeley, said Prospect Reservoir had a capacity of some 7,680 acre-feet of water, and held 5,686 acre-feet when checked on Jan. 31.

(An acre-foot is a measurement which is the amount of water spread over one acre, 1 foot deep.)

Water flowed from the broken Prospect Reservoir about 5 miles across cropland to Lord Reservoir, a smaller irrigation lake.

Lord Reservoir, with a capacity of 3,419 acre-feet, was about 75 percent empty when Prospect Reservoir broke.

Still, Lord Reservoir filled rapidly. Water spilled from its dam, and around the east end of the dam, as the flood continued its path north and east.

Officials were relieved late Sunday, however, when Lord Reservoir's dam didn't break as they had feared.

One farmer downstream from Lord Reservoir, Jim Zimbelman, said his farm was surrounded by water late Sunday night. Zimbelman said, however, he was able to move livestock before the slow-moving waters reached his farm.

Other farmers downstream from Lord Reservoir were busy late Sunday building dikes around the farms and livestock facilities.

The American Red Cross established emergency shelter at Weld Central High School, some 3 miles from the broken dam, Sunday night, but only a handful of evacuated persons appeared. They were sent to spend the night with other area residents.

Weld County officials won't seek disaster designation for the area until floodwaters receded and the damage can be assessed, County Commissioner Chairman Bill Kirby said.

Clark said effects of the dam break on farmers who will need irrigation water next summer depend on the speed in which the dam can be rebuilt.

"If they can repair it, we've got plenty of water," Clark said.

The dam was built in 1910 and reinforced with concrete in 1965. Sunday's break tore a hole about 100 feet wide in the dam, and more damage resulted as bulldozers moved dirt to plug the break.

Water moved fairly slowly across the flat farmland after the break.

For example, the water took about four hours to move from Prospect Reservoir to Lord Reservoir.

Observers said Monday morning, however, the water appeared to be moving more rapidly as it approached Roggen.

The water traveled 4 miles between midnight and 10 a.m., and had covered a total distance of about 10 miles since the break.

Authorities said they feared the water would travel north to Burlington Northern Railroad tracks near Roggen, dam behind the railroad embankment, then travel east into the community.

They were hopeful, however, that two small culverts under the railroad west of Roggen might divert some of the water away from the town.

The same area was struck by a similar flood in 1949.

Backup Reservoir Slows Weld Floodwaters

DENVER TRIBUNE Mon., Feb. 11, 1980

By TIM MCGOVERN
Denver Post Staff Writer

KEENESBURG — Menacing floodwaters loosed by a large rupture in the Prospect Reservoir dam cut a large, icy swath through nearly 15 miles of southeastern Weld County farmland Sunday and Monday, but were slowed by a backup reservoir.

The crisis point came late Sunday, when Weld County sheriff's deputies feared that water from the broken dam would crumble the smaller Lower Prospect Reservoir, also known as the Lord Reservoir, five miles away, already filled to near-capacity, and flood the town of Roggen, population 200, eight miles to the northeast.

Prospect Reservoir is about 10 miles south of Keenesburg.

SPILLWAYS WERE opened in the Lord Reservoir, to allow excess water to escape, and some minor flooding occurred to within five miles of Roggen.

By dawn Monday, officials were encouraged that the worst had passed. John Sauer, superintendent of the Henrylynn Irrigation District, said the Lord Reservoir's water level was down 7½ inches from its level at 10:30 p.m. Sunday.

"I think we've got her whipped unless something unforeseeable should happen up north where the break was," he said.

There were no known injuries from the flood.

Officials still didn't know what caused a 60-foot-wide chunk of the Prospect Reservoir dam to give way.

Sunday, about 100 farm families in the region were advised of the break and told to consider leaving their homes. There was no indication of how many did leave, but a temporary aid station was established by the Red Cross at Weld Central Junior-Senior High School, 2½ miles south of Keenesburg.

DEPUTIES SAID, however, that only two families showed up at the high school and they left before midnight Sunday.

Sgt. Dave Holm said Monday from the command post established near the high school that the floodwaters "have slowed down considerably this morning. They're moving much slower than they were." He said the output from the Prospect Reservoir was "next to nothing" Monday morning.

The crack in the Prospect Reservoir dam was horizontal rather than vertical, and therefore allowed only a limited quantity of water to escape.

"I'm much more comfortable than I was last night at 11 o'clock," Holm said. "It's certainly serious to the people who were flooded, but we're not looking at a Big Thompson flood."

SEVEN COUNTY ROADS and Colorado 52 were closed in the flood area, preventing an accurate count of the number of farms or farmhouses that were damaged.

At one point on County Road 16, slushy, sun-sparkled waters crossed the road for one-half mile. A deputy said the waters had progressed barely two miles past that point toward Roggen.

Sunday, the waters had moved more rapidly. A Keenesburg businessman said he had driven into the area and that "from half a mile away, the roar was like a freight train going through."

Also Sunday, several area residents disregarded sheriff's barricades and made attempts to drive their cars through the path of the flood.

"The worst that anyone got was some wet feet," Holm said. But their cars, stalled in the water, dotted the landscape early Monday.

ROGGEN FIRE CHIEF Stan Dodson said that because the Lord dam held, "There's no danger of any great flooding." Asked whether residents of Roggen were nervous or had evacuated, Dodson said, "They aren't too excited. They've been through minor flooding before."

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TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1980

15 CENTS

Floodwaters slow down

By JOHN SEELMEYER
and MIKE PETERS
Tribune Staff Writers

KEENESBURG — Floodwaters from the ruptured Prospect Reservoir slowed dramatically late Monday, and Weld County authorities said they don't know if the water will reach the community of Roggen.

The water, which at mid-morning was about 1½ miles from Roggen, had moved only about a mile in 24 hours.

In another flood-related development, the state engineer's office said the Prospect Reservoir dam was last inspected in 1977, even though state law requires annual dam inspections.

State Engineer Jerry Danielson said Monday his office has only five engineers to inspect some 2,300 dams in the state.

In that last inspection, Danielson said engineers voiced concern about rodent activity — notably, muskrats — around the dam, and asked dam owner Henrylynn Irrigation Co. to undertake a rodent-control program.

Henrylynn President Charles Starks said Monday the irrigation company hired a trapper to remove muskrats from the lake annually.

In earlier published reports, Starks said Sunday afternoon's 100-foot break in the dam might have been caused by animals burrowing into the earth-and-concrete dam.

Monday, he said "there's just no way of knowing" what caused the break.

Starks said the irrigation company hopes to begin reconstruction of the damaged dam as soon as possible, in hopes the reservoir can hold water for farmers this summer.

He said estimates of damage to the dam aren't yet available, and said the Henrylynn didn't have insurance for flood damage.

"There's no insurance you can get, that you can afford," he said.

State Rep. Walt Younglund, R-New Raymer, flew over the 1,500-acre flood-stricken area Monday and estimated damage could total between \$1 million and \$2 million.

Gov. Richard Lamm plans to make an aerial survey of the area Wednesday.

The Weld County Commissioners Wednesday will designate the flooded region as a disaster area, the first step toward seeking state and federal aid, Commissioner Chairman Bill Kirby said.

County Engineer Wayne Smyth said county roads were flooded at 13 locations, but damage assessments won't be available until the water recedes.

That could be later this week, he said.

While the water's movement slowed Monday, state officials kept a wary eye on I-76 some 10 miles from the ruptured dam.

They said floodwaters might close the highway, but noted Colo. 52, closed by floodwaters earlier, was re-opened and

appeared to sustain only minor damage. Weld County officials requested a handful of families in the flood's path Tuesday to evacuate their farm homes, but most were staying on their property.

The break in Prospect Reservoir was closed early Monday by heavy equipment operators who shoveled dirt from other areas of the dam into the breach.

When the dam broke Sunday afternoon, water flowed some five miles to Lord Reservoir, another Henrylynn facility. The second reservoir wasn't damaged, although large amounts of water moved through its spillway and around the east end of the dam, Starks said.

100 Weld County residents flee homes ahead of flood

By PAMELA AVERY
News Staff

About 100 residents of southwest Weld County were asked to evacuate their homes Sunday night as floodwaters from a break in the Prospect Valley Dam rushed over county roads and cascaded across miles of farm land.

Officials said the break probably was caused by animals burrowing through the concrete-lined earthen dam.

The evacuation notice was issued almost nine hours after water began escaping from a break in the dam, five miles south of Keenesburg, just after dawn Sunday. The reservoir feeds several irrigation canals.

"We're telling people not to kill themselves but to leave the area as soon as they can," said a dispatcher with the Weld County sheriff's office. Temporary housing for persons without other accommodations was set up earlier in the day at Weld Central Junior and Senior High School a few miles east of Hudson.

The evacuation order was issued after it appeared that Lord Dam, downstream from the ruptured Prospect Dam, wouldn't be able to contain the floodwater. By Sun-

day night, millions of gallons were rushing into the already full-to-capacity Lord Reservoir.

Earlier in the day, sheriff's Capt. Rick Dill, who was manning a mobile command post at the school, had expressed hope that the flood waters would be contained at the second reservoir, about six miles northeast of Prospect Dam. However, efforts to divert water into other channels proved futile by early evening.

Dill said he received first reports about the flooding at 9:30 a.m. By mid-afternoon, water was gushing from a 100-foot break in the earthen dam, which is one of three owned by the Henrylynn Irrigation Co.

The water surged through County Road 59 and forced the closure of a portion of Colorado 52, a few miles west of the town of Prospect Valley.

Charles Starks, president of the Henrylynn Irrigation Co., said the break probably was caused by "a muskrat or something that dug through (the dam.) Usually something burrows under the dam and water starts running through."

The reservoir, which was constructed in 1910 and reinforced with concrete in 1965, was about one-third full, said Starks. It nor-

mally holds about 3 billion gallons of water.

Efforts to repair the break with bulldozers were under way by 3:30 p.m.

About 100 farm families live in the area affected by the floodwaters, Dill said. Sheriff's deputies spent most of the morning contacting area residents and telling them to take precautions with their property and livestock should the flood waters continue to rise.

They spent the evening urging them to leave their homes.

"We're not talking about a Big Thompson flood or anything. People aren't panicking," said Dill.

He was optimistic that the water would continue to stay in floodplain channels and wouldn't endanger the town of Roggen, seven miles northeast of Lord Dam.

"The water will definitely flow east of Roggen," said Dill.

The State Office of Natural Resources was appraised of the flood earlier in the day and were "monitoring the situation," according to Dill. Gov. Richard Lamm — who was on a business trip in Vail — also was notified about the flooding and was kept aware of developments.

4—Rocky Mountain News

Mon., Feb. 11, 1980, Denver, Colo.

Ruptured dam last inspected by state in '77

By PAMELA AVERY
News Staff

Prospect Dam, which broke and flooded 20 square miles of Weld County farm land Sunday, hadn't been inspected since March 1977 despite a state requirement that it be inspected once a year, a state official said Monday.

Meanwhile, a ragged, 100-foot break in the dam was bulldozed closed Monday morning, almost 24 hours after the start of the flooding, which caused an estimated \$1 million to \$2 million in damages in southeast Weld County.

State Engineer Jerry Danielson said the reservoir wasn't inspected on schedule because the state lacks enough engineers to handle the task.

Danielson said the Division of Water Resources, which is charged with inspecting more than 2,300 dams in the state, has only five dam inspectors and can't carry out annual inspections as required by law.

By Sunday night, flood waters had channeled through a dozen county roads, closed Colorado 52 a few miles west of Prospect Valley and forced about 20 farm families to leave their homes. The state highway was opened to traffic by 3 p.m. Monday.

But Weld County officials continued to keep watch on Lord Reservoir, about six miles downstream from the ruptured dam. They feared Sunday night that the full-to-capacity lower reservoir would break, too, as the flood waters hit.

"I'm still nervous about it," said Weld County Sheriff Capt. Lew Tydings. "It crested about 1:30 a.m. (Monday), but it's only gone down about 6 inches since then. I wouldn't call that subsiding much."

Runoff from Lord Reservoir flooded basements and caused dozens of farmers to leave their property overnight. The water was still flowing steadily across the Lord Dam spillway by mid-day Monday, even though the break in Prospect Dam had been fixed by 9:15 a.m.

Rep. Walt Younglund, R-New Raymer, who was flown over the flood site, estimated damages at \$1 million to \$2 million. Younglund said he might ask Gov. Richard Lamm to declare southeast Weld County a disaster area.

Lamm's press secretary, Sue O'Brien, said the governor's office was waiting for a formal request from Weld County commissioners, who will meet Wednesday to discuss the situation.

"If they declare it a disaster area on a county level, we will give them legislation, too," said O'Brien, adding that the state departments of Agriculture and Highways also were assessing flood damage.

"The problem is we won't really know exactly how much damage has been done until the water clears," O'Brien said. Weld County officials estimated that water will continue to flow for several days.

She said Lamm will fly over the area in a helicopter in an effort to see for himself how much damage has been done.

Although the cause of the dam break hasn't been determined, Lawrence Gerkin, manager of Henrylynn Irrigation Co., theorized that it was caused by a "burrowing rodent." The irrigation company owns both Prospect and Lord Reservoirs.

"We try to inspect these reservoirs daily to make sure that this doesn't happen, but we can't always prevent it," said Gerkin, who was supervising repairs on Prospect Dam. He estimated that the 3 billion-gallon-capacity reservoir was almost full when the dam broke on Sunday.

Half of that water escaped, he said.

He said there was "no danger" by Monday that the Lord Reservoir dam would break.

That was little consolation to James Jakel, a farmer whose property is located directly north of Prospect Reservoir. Jakel, burly and gray-haired, dourly surveyed his fields from his pickup truck.

"There's about a foot of silt all over the place," he muttered. "The problem with silt is that it takes forever to dry out. I won't be able to do a thing with this land till late spring."

He estimated that 100 of his 600 acres were damaged by the flood. His house was saved from flooding by concerned neighbors who arrived Sunday morning and dug a trench around the yard.

Although his livestock had been moved to high ground by friends, and his tractor pulled out of the flood water, most of

Jakel's farm equipment — including drills and plows — was mired in the silt.

While Jakel was suffering from too much new soil on his fields, his neighbor, Leo Urbas, was concerned about too little. Flood waters raked across his farm, carrying away most of his topsoil.

"I don't know how much damage has been done yet," said Urbas, who was also surveying his property. "All I know is that I'm going to have to get some new soil in here before I can farm a thing this spring."

Several other farm families had to dig out their homes before they could begin worrying about lost farm land. Although a relief station with food and bedding had been established at Weld Central High School Sunday for families evacuated from the flood area, only two families showed up at the school that night.

"They only stayed a few hours," said Jean Kipp, Weld Central High School bookkeeper, who was at the school until midnight Sunday.

"Most people in these parts have family. That's where they went," Kipp said.

GREELEY TRIBUNE Mon., Feb. 11, 1980

Flood area aid studied

DENVER (AP) — The breaching of the Prospect Valley Dam has caused such extensive damage to homes, farm machinery and feed that Gov. Richard Lamm may be asked to declare southwest Weld County a disaster area, Rep. Walt Younglund said today.

The Republican lawmaker from New Raymer said he flew over the area early in the morning before traveling to Denver. He said the channeling of roads and fields from the earthen dam is going to be expensive.

"I'd say at least one or two million dollars," Younglund told a meeting of House committee chairmen.

"At its broadest point, I'd say the water is about 1,000 feet wide. It's damaged a lot of machinery, cars, and

homes, and haystacks and other feed areas have been hit hard, too. I think those stacks are spoiled. It's melting a lot of snow, and building up.

He said cattle were being evacuated from the area, but added he did not know of any extensive livestock deaths.

Younglund said he will discuss the possible disaster request with Rep. John Hamlin, R-Fort Morgan, and with ditch company officials in the area, and make his decision later. Part of the damaged area is in Hamlin's district.

Younglund said he has not discussed disaster funds with the governor or any of his staff members. Lamm has been notified of the flooding and is being kept aware of developments.

Officials in Weld ask for state aid in flood damage

By PAMELA AVERY
News Staff

Weld County commissioners on Wednesday took action to have the state declare a 52,160-acre section of southeast Weld County a disaster area following the rupture of Prospect Reservoir on Sunday.

Floodwaters from the reservoir ripped through county and state roads, tore across hundreds of acres of farmland and caused at least 20 families to evacuate their homes.

Although no exact figure on damage was available Wednesday, state Sen. Walt Yunglund, R-New Raymer, estimated that the floodwaters destroyed at least \$1 million and possibly \$2 million worth of property.

According to Weld County Commissioner Leonard Roe of Evans, the region declared a disaster area by the commissioners ranges from seven miles east of Hudson to a few miles west of Prospect Valley, and from the reservoir southeast of Hudson to a few miles south of Roggen.

The commissioners' declaration was a necessary first step for state aid. The declaration will be forwarded to Gov. Richard Lamm for action. If he declares the farmland a state disaster area, Weld County may be eligible for state disaster-fund assistance, said Roe.

Lamm spent part of Wednesday afternoon surveying the flood site from a helicopter. Afterward, he said state assistance, if it is approved, will come from the state Highway Users Fund. He said there is little money available from the state's \$100,000 agriculture assistance fund.

Lamm said he would wait until he received a formal request from the county commissioners before taking action on the issue. But he predicted farmers in the area would be eligible for low-interest loans through the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"This is the fourth disaster I've had an opportunity to inspect," said Lamm, shortly after stepping out of the helicopter. "I don't mean to minimize the damage, but it is definitely not as awesome compared to the Big Thompson flood."

The governor admitted the state

was partly to blame for the flooding, since the dam apparently hadn't been inspected for almost three years, but he pointed out that there aren't enough reservoir inspectors to go around.

He estimated that only 1,100 of the state's 2,300 reservoirs can be inspected by the state's five inspectors each year.

"We would need seven more inspectors to do the job," said Lamm. "We probably will be adding more inspectors this year."

As Lamm surveyed the flood site, members of Weld County extension service spent the day assessing damage done to roads and farmlands. Extension officer Stan Boyes expected a report on the situation by Thursday morning.

Charles Starks, president of Henrylynn Irrigation Co., which owns Prospect Reservoir, said company crews also were surveying the damage. Prospect Dam was repaired early Monday but Starks said he had no idea how much damage had been done or whether the irrigation company would be able to reimburse the county or farmers.

"We still don't know if we're liable for damages," said Starks.

Cold nights and chilly days "have stabilized" flood conditions, said Weld County sheriff's Capt. Rick Dill. He reported that runoff from Prospect Reservoir was being contained by Lord Reservoir, seven miles northeast of the damaged dam.

"The water's not going anywhere now. It looks like a big glacier out here," said Dill, adding that water no longer was running over the Lord Reservoir spillway.

Floodwaters stopped about a mile short of Roggen, seven miles northeast of Lord Reservoir, said Dill.

"We're in good shape," he added, "unless we have 60- to 70-degree weather in the next few days."

However, the "glacier" has prevented farmers from returning to their homes.

"Everything's frozen solid," said Dill. "It would be hard for them to dig out. We don't know when they'll be able to return to their homes."

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15 CENTS

Residents work to divert water Aid sought for flood area

By JOHN SEELMEYER
and RON TOLLEFSON
Tribune Staff Writers

ROGGEN — Southeast Weld County residents worked Wednesday to divert slow-moving floodwaters from Roggen, a community about 14 miles northeast of the broken Prospect Reservoir.

Authorities voiced hopes, however, that the water wouldn't reach Roggen. They said the flood was practically stopped about a mile from the town.

Meanwhile, Gov. Richard Lamm made an aerial inspection of the flood-stricken area Wednesday afternoon, and State Rep. Walt Yunglund, R-New Raymer, said he'll seek disaster aid from two state sources.

Lamm made a helicopter inspection of the area, accompanied by top officials of the state's Highway Department, Department of Agriculture and

Division of Water Resources, just hours after the county commissioners declared the flood-stricken region a disaster area.

Yunglund said he'll seek disaster funding for damaged roads through the governor's office, and will study possible aid for damaged ditch and reservoir facilities in the form of low-interest loans from the Colorado Water Conservation Board.

Damage to the broken dam and surrounding farmland could be as much as \$3 million, the manager of the Henrylynn Irrigation District, owner of the broken dam, said Tuesday.

Lawrence Gerkin said, however, an accurate damage assessment will be difficult because farmland in the area is covered with water, snow and ice.

The county commissioners met with representatives of the irrigation com-

pany Wednesday afternoon to discuss the flood, and its damage.

Sheriff's Capt. Rick Dill said officials believe further flood damage will be minimal, unless warm weather melts snow to feed the flood.

Water continued to spill out of Lord Reservoir downstream from the broken dam Wednesday, but Dill said the amount of water coming from Lord Reservoir was sharply reduced from earlier in the week.

When Prospect Reservoir broke Sunday afternoon, about a billion gallons of water moved downstream to Lord Reservoir, which was only about a quarter full at the time of the break.

Still, water spilled out of Lord and flooded an estimated 1,500 acres of farmland for about 5 miles downstream.

Cause of the break hasn't been determined, although Henrylynn officials have speculated it may have been caused by burrowing rodents — such as muskrats — which dug holes in the side of the dirt-and-concrete dam.

Jerry Danielson, the state water engineer, Wednesday contested reports that the dam was inspected last year. Danielson said earlier this week the dam hadn't been inspected since early 1977 because his office is short of inspectors.

A Brush water commissioner told Denver reporters he inspected the dam last year.

Danielson said, however, an inspection by a water commissioner untrained in engineering doesn't qualify as an official inspection required annually under state law.

By MIKE PETERS
Tribune Staff Writer

The farm house of the Clifford Quimby family is an island in an ocean of ice.

Located below Lord Reservoir halfway between Prospect Valley and Keenesburg in southeastern Weld County, the house can be seen by a person who stands atop the dam of Lord Reservoir.

Because of that location, Clifford Quimby and his family were forced out of their home Sunday night as flood waters slowly approached their home and farm.

The family heard about the Sunday break in Prospect Reservoir, and knew that a lot of water would be coming their way. They prayed that Lord Reservoir would not break when the Prospect Reservoir water began pouring into it.

The dam held, but the floodwaters still reached the Quimby farm and home. Damage was extensive.

Sunday afternoon, neighbors drove trucks and tractors to the Quimby home to help.

While some used the tractors to cut ditches in hopes of diverting the oncoming flood waters, others carried Quimby's livestock — 50 sows and 450 pigs to trucks. The trucks carried the pigs to other farms to keep them from dying in the cold flood water.

"As it is, we've lost about 20 baby pigs," Quimby said Tuesday. "You just can't take those babies out of an 85-degree building into the cold

winter air. I hope we don't lose any more."

But the loss of the pigs was only one of the problems brought by the flood.

"I don't know what will happen this spring," Quimby said as he looked across acres of solid ice. "Even if the flood didn't deposit all its silt on my fields, or wash away my top soil, it could be a while before I could grow anything. It does something to a field to have all that water on it. I probably won't get anything in the way of a crop for a year."

The walkway from the back porch of the Quimby house to the kitchen of the Quimby house is decorated with valentines. Boxes of books and other small items are stacked around the living room.

And the newly remodeled basement is filled to the ceiling with brown flood water.

"We just finished with that basement a short time ago," he said. "We even put up new wood paneling, and now it's all ruined. We have a lot of my wife's books, furniture and other things under that water now."

Because the family worked quickly to get the pigs moved to a safe area Sunday, they didn't have time to move most of their belongings from the basement. Sandbags were piled around the outside basement door, but they didn't help.

Early Tuesday, members of the Prospect Valley Volunteer Fire Department brought a pump and hose to Quimby's home to start the process of pumping out the water.

After the pump was started, and the pumping process was working smoothly, Quimby used his tractor to carry neighbors to two other farms nearby which received the same type of damage — flooded fields, water-filled basements, damaged machinery in the yards and fields.

The other homes and farms were owned by Charles Quimby (Clifford's brother) and Hans Arnush. All worked together before and after the flood.

"Neighbors really help each other in a small community like this," Clifford Quimby said. "It's nice to have friends."

Quimby and his friends worked through the day Wednesday while the warm temperatures caused the water to start flowing again.

The water moves during the day, freezes in fields of ice during the night, then begins the daytime movement again. It could be several days before the waters finally pass completely through the Quimby farm.

Quimby raised corn, beets and beans last year. "I usually start working the fields around the first of March. But not this year," he said.

Quimby estimates his losses at about \$60,000, including the fields, farm equipment and damage to his home.

"We have some insurance, but I'm not sure it would cover something like this," he said as he surveyed the damage.

"Besides, you know that insurance never pays enough."

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Much Farmland Flooded

Prospect Reservoir Dike Gives Way Sunday Morning

The dike at Prospect Reservoir, 3½ miles south of Weld Central high school, sprung a leak early Sunday morning.

Rex Abbott, who lives south of Prospect Reservoir, may have been the first to spot the leak in the dike. He says it must have been about 9:30 that morning when he was driving down the road, with the dike looming to the west, when he came to a spot where water was running over the road—a stream maybe 20 feet wide. He looked at the dam, and there was a washed-out hollow, maybe ten feet around or three feet across, from which the water was coming.

His first thought was his friend Jim Jakel who he knew would be the first to be hit by flood water. So he contacted the Jakels.

At approximately the same time ditch rider Paul Sampson spotted the leak, and at 9:45 Sunday morning he called Larry Gerkin, secretary-manager of the Henrylyn Irrigation company which owns the lake ... and of course, the dam.

In a short time the leak in the dam grew larger and caved in from the top. An hour after Gerkin was informed of the break, there was a gaping hole in the dam and water was gushing out, to spread out over the farmland to the east and north.

There were 5900 acre feet of water in the lake at the time of the break. It is estimated between 2000 and 2300 acre feet escaped through the break before it was finally plugged by bulldozers Monday.

Two earth movers arrived at the scene Sunday and worked all day to push land from the top of the dike over to plug up the gap. They worked till dark, when area fire trucks arrived to light up the scene.

However there was not enough light to continue work, so the bulldozers resumed the chore at 6:30 Monday morning, and had it plugged at 9:15.

Farmland Covered

The muddy water spread out over the farmland Sunday and worked in a northeasterly direction, starting to trickle into Lords reservoir at 1:20 p.m. Fortunately the dike of Lords reservoir held under the strain. This lake already contained 800 acre feet, but there was enough capacity left to contain some of the water from Prospect. Lords dike gave out in 1949 and the town of Roggen was flooded. This time the water stopped a couple of miles west of Roggen.

Time of Emergency

Because the water moved slowly once it spread out across the land, there was time to move families and livestock out of the path of the flood.

However the water was enough to close many roads in the area, including state highway 52 between the high school and the town of Prospect Valley. An emergency shelter was opened at the high school to take in marooned motorists and others, but only one family came and stayed for a few hours. Red Cross personnel from Denver and Greeley came to help care for dispossessed families, but those who had to evacuate their homes had friends and relatives in the area and so dropped in on them instead.

Bringing or sending food to patrolmen, workers and the news media were the Pepper Pod, Merry Mixers, Keene Homemakers, Community UMC, Catholic Women's group, Louise Beard, Pauline Imhof, and others.

Denver tv reporters and photographers were on hand most of the day Sunday and for a while Monday; this was the "lead story" on the state news programs on all the Denver stations. It was also the lead story for daily papers in the area.

"Still Plenty of Water"

In a story in the Greeley Tribune written by John Seelmeyer, it is thought the irrigation water which escaped won't be missed too much this summer, "if the dike is repaired quickly enough to catch more runoff this spring." This was the opinion of Jim Clark, director of the state division of water resources.

There was some talk about asking governor Lamm to proclaim part of the flooded land as "disaster area," but county commissioner Bill Kirby said they won't seek such designation until the floodwaters recede and the damage can be estimated.

Cause of the Break?

Since the dam burst Sunday there has been much speculation about the cause of the leak. A Denver reporter called Henrylyn president Charlie Starks, who said it might have been the result of a rodent—a muskrat perhaps, burrowing into the dike and weakening it enough to let water start seeping through.

This theory was jumped on immediately by the media, and soon a state engineer was found who claimed his department had warned Henrylyn three years ago that they'd better start a rodent control program.

Henrylyn manager Gerkin admits the leak might have been caused by a burrowing rodent, "but there are many other possibilities too." And he said he does not recall state engineers ever advising the irrigation company about rodent control.

Preparations Numerous

Some hundred families in the path of the flood were warned to be ready to move, in case the Lords dike again gave out.

Perhaps one of the biggest jobs was at the Roggen elevator, where many, many tons of chemicals in the low-lying fertilizer building adjacent to the railroad tracks were moved to higher ground, and dirt was hauled in to form a low dike in front of the building just in case the flood waters again reach Roggen. In the 1949 flood water ran north to the railroad tracks. Then, unable to continue north over them, it piled up along the tracks like another dike, and eventually followed them into Roggen.

A number of farms suffered the ravages of the weekend flood, with loss of topsoil and heavy silt resulting in dollar damage which will extend about damage which will be felt for about 10 years because of yield disadvantage, one farmer reported.

Following are only a few reports from those affected by flood waters:

Mrs. Leo Vrbas estimated they've lost between 80 and 100 acres of topsoil, their diesel-driven sprinkler was extensively damaged, and there are deep washouts (3 to 4 feet) in the fields.

Jim Jakel, who lives northeast of the reservoir, said that had it not been for the neighbors their loss and damage would have been much worse. Flood waters were prevented from flowing into the house because neighbors trenched around the house, and also helped herd his cattle to safer areas after Jakel broke the fence with his pickup to let the cattle out. His biggest damage he thinks will be the silt (about 1½ feet he estimates) settling on the land.

The Cliff Quimbys had to move about 55 sows and baby pigs to the Roy Quimby and other farms as the water reached their house as well as the farrowing house.

There are probably others whom the Keene Valley Sun has not heard about yet.

Anyway, the results of this Prospect Reservoir flood will probably not be finally known for a long time.

Lamm Cool on U.S. Disaster Aid to Weld

After an afternoon helicopter tour of flood-washed southeastern Weld County, Gov. Dick Lamm said Wednesday it will be up to the state and local governments to absorb most of the \$1 million to \$2 million loss suffered when a reservoir dam broke last weekend.

At an impromptu press conference after returning from the area, Lamm said the Weld County damage caused by the break of the Prospect Reservoir dam was "the least dramatic" of four disaster areas he has inspected as governor. While acknowledging that the cost of repairs would be steep for area residents involved, Lamm said he believes major federal disaster aid other than possibly agricultural loans isn't warranted.

He praised the Weld County Board of Commissioners for taking a cautious approach to the situation. The governor said he wouldn't take further action in requesting state aid for the area until the county commissioners complete their assessment of the damage caused along the 15-mile flood path.

Gov. Lamm takes look at flood area

DENVER (AP) — The damage done to about 20 square miles of Weld County was "impressive, but not awesome," said Gov. Richard Lamm after his first flight over the sodden area 30 miles northeast of Denver.

"Which doesn't mean that people aren't suffering," Lamm added at a news conference after his return from a helicopter tour of the flooded farm country. Of particular concern are roads and loss of topsoil, he said.

An aide said the governor waited until Wednesday to look at the area because he thought he would be able to see more when some of the water had receded.

The biggest problem will be repair of county roads, Lamm said. No estimates have been made by Weld County or state officials of how large the repair bill will be.

The damage occurred after the wall of Prospect Dam broke early Sunday afternoon, spilling 1 billion gallons of

water across the sparsely populated area. Authorities asked about 100 families to leave their homes, but many stayed put. There were no injuries or loss of lives from the flood.

Officials diverted much of the water through irrigation canals to the smaller Lord Reservoir, 7 miles downstream from Prospect Dam. Floodgates at the reservoir were opened as soon as the dam broke, and the overflow created a ribbon of

brown water for the next eight miles.

That slow-moving ribbon, just a few inches deep, stopped moving altogether Wednesday, and Weld County sheriff's captain Rick Dill predicted none would reach Roggen unless warm weather melts snow to feed the flood.

There has been no official damage estimate, Lamm said, and probably would not be until more of the water is gone. He commended Weld County commissioners for

proceeding cautiously with their assessment of damage.

The commissioners Wednesday declared a county disaster area.

Lamm said the area may be eligible for assistance from the Federal Agricultural Service as an "agricultural emergency area," and possibly for road-repair funds from the state's portion of the Highway Users Fund.

State Rep. Walt Younglund, R-New Raymer, said the Colorado Water Conservation Board may make available low interest loans for dam and irrigation repair.

The breach in Prospect Dam was repaired Monday by workmen using heavy construction equipment. The Henrylynn Irrigation Co. owns the dam, and there is insurance.

GREELEY TRIBUNE Thurs., Feb. 14, 1980

Prospect farmers face silt woes

By JOHN SEELMEYER

Tribune Staff Writer

KEENESBURG — Silt and gullies are the immediate problems which face flood-stricken farmers downstream from broken Prospect Reservoir, agricultural experts say.

On the horizon is a rush to rebuild the broken dam so it can hold water for this summer's critical weeks of irrigation.

Representatives of Henrylynn Irrigation District, which owns the broken dam, met with engineers Wednesday to begin study of reconstruction of the dam.

Lawrence Gerkin, Hudson-based manager of the district, said Thursday Henrylynn officials hope the dam can

be rebuilt quickly enough to store water from this spring's run-off.

Earlier, Jim Clark of the State Water Resources Office in Greeley said water supplies to refill the ruptured reservoir should be sufficient if reconstruction can be completed in time.

Gerkin said, too, Sunday's flood didn't empty the reservoir and some irrigation water supplies are available from Prospect Reservoir.

The reservoir, with a capacity of 7,680 acre-feet of water, provides irrigation water for about 10,000 acres of farmland north and east of the reservoir.

Farmers in the area primarily grow sugar beets, beans, corn, barley and

other small grains, according to Weld County Extension Agent Stan Boyes.

Federal agricultural experts examined the damage to farmlands in the Keenesburg-Roggen area Wednesday, but they say it's impossible to estimate damage until water and ice are removed from fields.

Arnold Gurman of the U.S. Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service in Greeley said the flood tore gullies in some fields, and left heavy deposits of silt in others.

While silt-removal shouldn't pose a major problem for most farmers, Gurman said some of the gullies may be difficult to fill because little earth is

available to move into the washed-out areas.

"It didn't look as bad as I thought it might," Gurman said Thursday.

Another expert who examined the area Wednesday, Jim Burwell of the Soil Conservation Service in Brighton, said damage to fences appeared to be extensive in some areas.

He said, however, a dollar amount of damage can't be estimated.

"We can't tell until the ice melts off the farmland," Burwell said.

He said floodwaters appeared to generally follow a natural channel between Prospect Reservoir and Lord Reservoir, some 5 miles downstream.

That channel moves through less-

valuable dryland, rather than irrigated farms, Burwell said. Beyond Lord Reservoir, the floodwaters settled on primarily irrigated land.

An estimated 15,000 acres of farmland were flooded after the dam broke, and Gov. Richard Lamm said Wednesday some of the landowners may qualify for low interest loans through the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

About 20 families were evacuated in the face of the flood.

Authorities said clean-up operations at flooded farms were slow because the slow-moving flood water has turned to ice.

Following Prospect Dam Break

Several Area Homes Flooded

Among those who suffered considerable flood damage when the Prospect Reservoir dam broke about two weeks ago was the Hans Arnusch family, who live directly north of Lord's reservoir.

The water, overflowing Lord's reservoir, rose to a depth of two feet at the Arnusch house, flooding the basement completely to within a few inches from the basement ceiling. The basement was finished in knotty pine, and although Arnusch said there

wasn't as much dirt brought in as one might expect, there was still a lot of damage.

A daughter of the Arnusches had her bedroom in the basement and so lost lots of personal belongings, including books. But her mother said they did manage to "rescue" her large collection of dolls.

Arnusch said he tried desperately to build a wall of sandbags in time to keep the water away, but they didn't do the job. However, he says, it might have

been worse. Nobody died, and they still have a house. "And we're sure glad the Lord dike held; it would have been a lot worse had that one given 'way again."

The basement of the Cliff Quimby home lacked about 10" of being full. They reported that they had moved most of the things out, but the piano, which was left, is probably a total loss and the couch "doesn't look too great." They think the paneling will hold.

Early in the week they were preparing the farrowing houses so they could return the 54 sows and 450 baby pigs which were moved before the waters hit. They lost only a few baby pigs. Cliff reported there was no building damage, and land damage is yet to be estimated.

The Ralph Boehner land, located east and north of the dam was affected by the flood also; the gushing waters cut a gully approximately 30 feet deep that ran about an eighth of a mile. As with other nearby and adjoining

farms, the land damage is still to be assessed.

The Rich Ishidas, who live about 2 miles downstream from Lord's dam, were evacuated by friends Sunday night of the flood. All their household goods and farm equipment were moved and stored with neighbors, and the family stayed with the Tom Theis family until returning to their home this past Sunday.

The basement of their house was flooded with about 4" of water, the only area of the house damaged by the flood.

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Tips Given on Decontaminating Domestic Wells

Because of the Prospect reservoir flood, well water could possibly have been contaminated in the area, according to John Hall, Weld county director of environmental health. To decontaminate the domestic well he recommended the following procedure:

Add 1 gallon of 5% chlorine bleach (1 gallon of Clorox or Purex) to 10 gallons of water and pour into the well between well casing and pump dropline.

Start the pump and open all faucets on the system and pump until the chlorine odor is detected on all faucets. Then close faucets and stop pump and allow chlorine solution to remain in the well, storage tank and distribution system for 24 hours.

Then pump the well to wash out the system until odor and taste of chlorine has disappeared.

After this contact the county health department for a bacteriological analysis.

Anyone having any questions is asked to call the county health department, 353-0540.

For Flooded Farmers

Financial Aid Being Sought

Financial help for farmers who suffered losses in the Feb. 10 flood caused by a break in the Prospect reservoir dam is being sought from several sources.

Arnold Germann, from the Agricultural Stabilization & Conservation office in Greeley, said his office has submitted a cost-share request of \$350,000 from the federal government.

He and Don Sartz, also from the ASCC office, inspected the flood area last week Wednesday prior to sending the request to

the Denver office which has sent it on to Washington, D.C.

The \$350,000 is 80% of the cost-share, the farmers to put up the other 20%. The money, if approved, will be used only for the destroyed canal and damaged privately owned land, Germann said. "Hopefully, we'll have the program ready to go within the next two weeks," he added.

According to stories in the Greeley Tribune and the Rocky Mountain News, the Weld county commissioners, at their meeting

last week, declared the 52,160-acre section affected by the flood

a disaster area. Their action was the first step necessary for state aid. If Gov. Lamm declares the area a state disaster area, Weld county may be eligible for state disaster-fund assistance.

According to the news stories, State Representative Walt Younglund said he'll seek disaster aid for damaged roads and damaged ditch and reservoir facilities.

Roggen Swept by Lost Creek Flood Which Was Receding Tuesday Eve: Farm, Town Losses Above \$500,000

EXCERPTS FROM
THE GREELEY DAILY TRIBUNE
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 15, 1949

(Original Spelling Preserved)

At 9:30 p.m. Tuesday night flood water had receded to the point where the state patrol was allowing traffic to go through Roggen in one-way formation and escorted by highway trucks. Water was still six inches deep in the street.

Worst flood damage was at the west end of the business district. Business places at the east end will have little damage to stocks of goods and fixtures it was believed.

Foundations of a number of buildings have cracked badly but the buildings have not collapsed. Railroad line was still closed at 9:30 p.m. A semi-basement house in the west end of town was badly flooded.

Reports said that Lord Reservoir was nearly empty at 9:00 p.m., so it is expected the floodwater will recede rapidly.

It is hoped that flooded land will drain off rapidly so that rehabilitation work on farms and highways can be mapped and estimated.

Clear skies and predictions of fair weather Wednesday and Thursday helped to cheer the persons damaged thruout the flooded area.

No human lives have been lost in the Lost Creek Flood and loss of livestock is said to be limited to chickens and pigs and possibly a few small calves.

At 10:00 p.m. there was still some water flowing over the highway at the west end of town.

Most of the town was dark but many people were walking about with flashlights or lanterns assaying damage.

The town had come out of the flood much better than seemed possible when the water was at its peak.

Many people had capped their domestic wells before the flood water arrived to avoid contamination.

Among the places which had apparently escaped water damage were: the post office, Red and White Store, Dutchess Cafe, Vic's Cafe, L.P.O. Garage.

Highway traffic was going thru in both directions. Railroad workers were still tamping rock and gravel but because of uncertainty as to the condition of the big fill, no quick resumption of rail traffic was probable.

Flood flow was receding rapidly.

Flood water which poured into Roggen, southeast Weld farming and cattle town, for four hours had begun to recede at 8:00 p.m. Tuesday. Robert Widlund, Greeley Tribune reporter phoned the Tribune office from Keenesburg at 8 p.m. saying that the flood had apparently reached its peak at Roggen and was beginning to drop noticeably.

After backing up against the Burlington Railroad embankment and forming a lake south of the embankment two miles long against the embankment and half a mile wide the flood water poured over the railroad fill with a deafening roar shortly before 4:00 p.m. and soon had the entire village of Roggen flooded with from one to three feet of water. Most basements in town were believed flooded and in some places of business water was hip deep.

The flood washed away the balleast under the Burlington tracks and quickly flooded Highway U.S. Six shortly after it had started coming over the embankment. Rail and highway traffic were completely suspended.

The flood made a deafening roar as it came over the railroad tracks into the town.

Many hours earlier the Burlington railroad station, grain elevators, all storage plants and section houses had been surrounded with flood water from Lost Creek.

By 4 p.m. the creek's flood flow had been swollen by the arrival of some of the 2,000 acre-feet of water stored in broken Lord Reservoir, 11 miles southwest of Roggen.

After the main flood arrived about 30 men remained in the town doing what they could to lessen flood damage. Most of the other residents had moved to Keenesburg, the nearest town to the east.

Thruout the forenoon people had feverishly moved furniture and supplies to upper floors of two story buildings, had removed merchandise from basements and lower shelves of stores and had built dikes in the vain hope of protecting their property.

Burlington railroad moved a work train with 10 cars of rock into the flood area but was apparently having little luck in saving its ballast. One rail official said that the embankment from Roggen west when repaired would be slow track for the rest of the summer.

Soil in the Roggen area is very sandy and it is feared some building foundations will collapse as the flood recedes.

After pouring thru Roggen the flood was rushing northward, across the huge Painter Ranch pastures toward the South Platte River.

In its 10 mile passage thru the sandy pastures it is believed much of the flow will lose itself in the underflow. The remainder will be caught by the big Bijou Reservoir intake. Bijou Reservoir was discharging water Tuesday afternoon to make room for the water expected from the Lost creek Flood.

In recent years Roggen has flourished from high wheat and cattle prices and increased tourist trade and is now much larger than indicated by the 160 people credited to it by the 1940 census.

Among the buildings in the town are 100 residences, one grocery, the post office, three garages, three filling stations, a hotel, a modern school house and a fin community church.

Across the tracks are the large grain elevators and a large amount of oil storage.

The point where the floodwater surmounted the Burlington fill and swept across the tracks onto Highway 6 and into town is just west of the Burlington water tower.

At 8 p.m. water was up to the hips of tall men in parts of the Main street of the town which is U.S.6.

As the floodwater started to recede, townspeople and farmers began to count ther losses from the flood. Total damage will far exceed \$500,000 it was said. About 12,000 acres of exceptionally fertile farm land had been swept by water, many farm buildings had been damaged. It was feared that scores of the more than 100 deep irrigation wells in the area have been damaged by silt to the degree they will have to have extensive repairs. The county road system south and southwest of Roggen is badly wrecked with many bridges out. Irrigation ditches have been out in many places and the damage to the broken Lord Reservoir will be considerable.

Many domestic water supplies have been fouled by the floodwater.

Roggen people estimated their damage alone as around \$50,000 Tuesday night. Both the Burlington Railroad and the State Highway Department suffered considerable loss.

Many Roggen businessmen told the Tribune that Burlington railroad's embankment west of town lacking waterway for a natural channel or draw a mile west of the town had caused the town to be flooded and had caused great damage to farmers southwest of Roggen.

Townspeople had desired to blow a hole in the rail embankment which they said would have saved the town and would have decreased the eventual damage to the railroad. They could contact nobody with authority to allow them to break the fill or embankment.

Among the farms close to Roggen which could be seen partially under water were those of George Hill, Merle Dunham, Tony Bettale, Bill Hoff, John Zimbelman, Henry Zimbelman and the Sadie Knox place.

At places the water backed up by the rain embankment was said to be seven and eight feet deep. Some of the farms had two to three feet of floodwater covering most of their area.

(Original Spelling Preserved)

Flood Pours thru Lord Reservoir Dike, Covers Portion of Roggen

Roggen, Colorado, June 14-(AP)-
Most of the residents of this community of 160 fled to higher ground today as waters from a broken dike poured across farm lands into the town.

Most of the fleeing residents found refuge on sand hills three miles east of Roggen, which is in northeastern Colorado.

Rampaging waters flowed thru a cut in the Lord Reservoir 11 miles south of here. The waters swept through a railroad cut and stood four feet in some parts of Roggen.

Torrents from the reservoir also hit Prospect Valley, two miles from Roggen, causing some damage to houses and farms.

A cut was made in the reservoir dike last night to ease pressure from the water. Residents toiled through the night to sandbag the reservoir and cut a new channel to divert the water away from Roggen, but gave up when the dike burst this morning.

Forty workers labored alongside State Highway Department employees to lay sandbags against buildings and build a dike alongside Highway U.S. 6 through Roggen.

The reservoir, usually about a half mile wide, was more than a mile across when the dike gave way. Water poured through a break 150 feet wide and 18 feet deep.

Lloyd Parker, a ditch rider for the Henrylynn Irrigation Company, which operates the reservoir, watched helplessly as the flood waters undermined his house and smashed it. All occupants got out safely.

Deputy Sheriff Tim Wilson reported that every Roggen resident except those needed at the scene was getting out "as fast as possible by any means possible".

Flood-harrassed Weld county was troubled by new onrushes of high water Tuesday as water poured through a deep gap in the Lord reservoir dike, southeast of Keenesburg and the South Platte and Poudre rivers continued to rise from new rains Monday.

County Commissioner George Andersen reported from his home near the reservoir that water was rushing thru a cut in the dike 150 feet wide and 18 feet deep.

No families living in the lowland north of the reservoir were believed to be in danger, altho the water spread out over the valley and flooded a part of Roggen, about 10 miles to the north.

A channel five feet wide and three feet deep was cut in the east end of the dike Monday to relieve the pressure. Mounting water from new heavy rains Monday afternoon filled the reservoir dike high and cut the channel badly Monday evening.

Many eastern tourists were stopping along Highway Six to watch the flood water thru field glasses.

Parker House Falls into Flood

The house of Lloyd Parker, ditch rider, which is owned by the Henrylynn district, fell into the flood water from Lord reservoir shortly after the reservoir dike broke. Some furniture had been moved from the house, spectators said.

The new flood from the reservoir was expected to add considerably to the many thousands of dollars of crop damage caused by between six and eight inches of rain in Prospect Valley Sunday afternoon.

At Roggen, water was around the Denver elevator and the Standard Oil service station as the result of the break in the Lord reservoir. However, the highway patrol said traffic was moving over U.S. highway 6 at Roggen Tuesday morning.

The telephone office at Roggen said some families had already evacuated Tuesday morning and others were prepared to leave their homes if the situation became worse.

The sheriff's office and American Red Cross headquarters here had received no calls for aid, however.

Embankment Diverts Water into Town

The culvert under the Burlington Railroad at Roggen which handles water flowing down the draw from Lord Reservoir was unable to handle the flood. The water was running east down the south side of the railroad embankment and into the town.

Water stood about a foot high in some places in the town with the crest yet to arrive some time early in the afternoon. It was hoped to hold the water on the south side of the railroad embankment.

The Burlington Tuesday morning had not encountered any trouble to its tracks it was reported. Although the section houses along the right-of-way were flooded.

Highway U.S. 6 Blocked by Water

Highway U.S. 6 was closed to thru traffic Tuesday afternoon by floodwaters from Lost creek and the broken Lord reservoir which swept over the heavily traveled U.S. 6 at Roggen.

Highway blockade was established between Hudson and Wiggins Travel was routed to Greeley over 85 and east from Greeley over U.S. 34, the Colorado State Patrol announced.

The Hudson-Keenesburg cutoff is open to travel but is very narrow just south of Sky View school because of flood water which has torn away part of the roadbed.

SMALL DAM ON JOHN ZIMBELMAN RANCH IS BROKEN

Guy Burscough, county road overseer for district three, which includes that area around Roggen which was flooded Tuesday, said a dam on the John Zimbelman place two miles southwest of Roggen broke early Tuesday afternoon.

Burscough, who spent several hours at Roggen, said the dam, which he estimated to be six feet high and 700 feet long, broke under the pressure of water swirling down from the cut in the Lord Reservoir.

GOVERNOR OFFERS HELP TO ROGGEN

Governor W. Lee Knous has offered whatever state assistance is needed at Roggen, eastern Weld community which was flooded by a cut in the Lord Reservoir Tuesday, according to Mrs. Charles A. Sterns, telephone operator.

(Original Spelling Preserved)

Phone Operator Tells of Flood Flow in Roggen

Mrs. Charles A. Sterns, who with her husband operates the telephone exchange at Roggen, said early Tuesday evening that approximately 30 of the community's residents were remaining in town despite the flood waters which poured from a cut in the Lord Reservoir 11 miles to the south.

"The water is around 12 inches deep throughout the town", Mrs. Sterns said in a telephone conversation with the Tribune. "It's washing across a quarter mile strip of the Burlington railroad slightly to the west and flowing from the southwest to the northeast."

As she talked, Mrs. Sterns told of seeing a man walking down the street with the water level just below his knees.

She also described another man who was frantically trying to load an armful of chickens onto a truck parked in the midst of the water. One of the chickens slipped from his grasp and was almost carried away by the current before being rescued.

Basements in Roggen are flooded and Mrs. Sterns said there was around three inches of water in her home. Some of the people carried out furniture and most of them evacuated possessions from their basements Monday morning.

"Everybody parked their cars on a side road off the highway and took off in a regular caravan," Mrs. Sterns said. "They have gone to Greeley, Wiggins and Fort Morgan; and some are staying in the sandhills hoping to get back into their homes."

She stated the water level was rising gradually and flowing fast.

A cafe and garage are remaining open on highway 6. The crest had not yet reached Roggen, but Mrs. Sterns said she and her husband planned to "stick it out".

Highway 6 has been closed between Hudson and Wiggins and traffic from Greeley has been routed by Highway 85 and east on Highway 34.

(Original Spelling Preserved)

Roggen People Begin To Bail Out Cellars

Roggen people were vigorously pushing the task of drying up their waterlogged town Wednesday afternoon and evening.

Every kind of a pump was in use and water was squirting from basements in all parts of the village. In some places however the water was seeping in about as fast as it could be pumped out.

A quite large stream of water was flowing down Highway 6 through the town but was kept hemmed in by a dike on which state highway crews worked steadily.

Filling stations and elevators south of highway 6 were still surrounded by water and were connected with the east side of the highway with improvised single plank bridges.

Barelegged boys and girls were obviously enjoying the aftermath of the flood.

Roggen people said the seep water might invade some basements for weeks to come. Many tourists stopped to take motion and still pictures of what was left of the flood.

Large stream of water was still across the road running south into Prospect Valley from Roggen and the road across the Painter pastures was also flooded.

Burlington Railroad crews were still working on flooded tracks and passenger and freight trains crossed the area at about 10 miles an hour.

Death of A House

This unusual sequence of pictures shows rampaging waters working their swift destruction on the home of Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Parker southeast of Keenesburg. The first picture shows the house sliding into the stream created when the rain-swollen Lord reservoir burst a dike and made a normally dry railroad cut into a raging river. The next view is of the house riding the full force of the torrent but still in one piece. And the final picture show what happened a few minutes later as the water crushed the frame dwelling. The pictures all were made within a span of 10 minutes by Dave Mathias of the Denver Post. In yesterday's Tribune the same house was pictured by Sen. W.A. Carlson in an aerial photo just before it tumbled into the flood. - Photo from Associated Press.