

Town Deals With Flooding Aftermath

By Charlie Darling
Beacon staff

The Mother's Day Flood of 2006 is just a memory now for most of us, but Mark Stetson, Andover Town Administrator, is still awash in meetings and paperwork dealing with the storm's aftermath. The Board of Selectmen and our Road Agent have been kept very busy as well, making plans to repair the damage to Town roads and to the Highland Lake Dam and trying to figure out where the money for the repairs is going to come from.

Highland Lake Dam

In last month's *Beacon* we covered the dramatic and successful effort to protect the Highland Lake Dam when it started to show signs of stress during the flood. (You can read that article online at AndoverBeacon.com.) But that was only the beginning of the story.

On June 1, Town officials accompanied a New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services dam inspector to see if the dam had sustained any significant damage during the flood. What the inspector found was not good news.

According to the inspector, the dam is still leaking, most likely through the sinkholes that opened up during the flooding. The sinkholes were filled with sandbags as soon as they appeared, and those sandbags are still in place, but the leaking continues. The dam is not in imminent danger of failing, but the leaking must be stopped as soon as possible.

The first step toward fixing the problem is to hire an engineer to diagnose exactly where the problem is, how bad it is, and what we have to do to fix it. In preparation for the engineer's visit, the lake has been drawn down by six to twelve inches.

"This problem with the dam will certainly impact the water level in Highland Lake, at this point for how long we don't know," said Stetson. "We have no choice but to ask for everyone's cooperation and patience while we deal with this difficult situation. We'll do it as quickly as we can, but the most important thing is that we do it right. A lot depends upon doing it right."

To that end, the Selectmen have hired the HL Turner Group, a Concord engineering firm, to do an engineering study to identify the dam's problems and prepare recommendations for fixing them. The recommendations are expected to include estimated costs as well as some indication of potential sources of funding for the work – the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), for example, or various state programs.

Turner will conduct test borings soon to better assess the state of the dam. They have committed to having their study complete by July 20. The study will cost the Town approximately \$16,000, an amount that the Selectmen have to find somewhere in the budget that was passed at Town Meeting in March.

Once the study is complete, the Selectmen plan to move promptly to consider its recommendations and decide on a course of action. Funding will be a big concern, as the project could easily run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. "We know that we have a problem, and we have no choice but to deal with it," Dennis Fenton said during the Selectmen's meeting on May 19.

As soon as the Selectmen know at which meeting they'll be reviewing the study, that information will be posted on the *Beacon's* Web page (AndoverBeacon.com) and on the Community Bulletin Board on Adelphia Cable Channel 8.

Maple Street Flooding

West of the dam on Maple Street, the Mother's Day Flood sent water over the road and into basements. The Town has asked another engineering firm for a proposal on an engineering study to look at the drainage problems within the Town's right-of-way along Maple Street. The study would come up with recommended ways to prevent the road from going under water in future storms.

Elbow Pond Road

Elbow Pond Road has been closed at Mountain Brook since early June. It appears that at some point upstream Mountain Brook has breached its usual bank and cut a new channel into the wetland crossed by Elbow Pond Road. The result has been a deep trench across the road several yards from the bridge. Despite the Road Agent's best efforts the road is not safe, so it has been closed until further notice.

The Town Office is discussing the problem with FEMA in hopes of finding a solution that would be eligible for FEMA assistance.

FEMA Visit

As of this writing, the Town Office is still waiting for FEMA representatives to tour the Town roads and Town property damaged in the Mother's Day Flood. Of particular interest, of course, will be the Highland Lake Dam, the portion of Maple Street that was flooded, and Elbow Pond Road.

Based on FEMA's findings, the Town will be able to apply for FEMA funds for costs incurred and repairs to be made on eligible roads and structures. FEMA reimburses 75% of the money spent by the Town on eligible projects. If the state legislature approves the idea, the state may reimburse another 12.5% on FEMA-approved projects.

As a point of comparison, last year's Columbus Day Weekend flooding cost the Town about \$12,500 in FEMA-approved repairs. FEMA reimbursed about \$9,700 of that, and the state will be reimbursing about \$1,500.

The storms of April 2005, on the other hand, were far more costly to the Town than the Columbus Day Weekend event, but because the rest of Merrimack

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Come Home to the Country



Next to Covered Bridge

- 300 ft Warner River frontage, Mt. views
- Good access to Rt 103, 114, and I-89
- Newly renovated house, large barn/shed

Bradford \$219,000



Waterfront Cottage

- 100' of shorefront on Mt. View Lake
- End of the road location, mesmerizing sunsets
- Restaurants 2 miles from lakeside cottage

Sunapee \$229,000



Hunting Camp/Cottage

- 100' frontage on state highway, 2.8 acres
- Water, septic, and electric, wood and gas heat
- Camp sits high and dry, great hunting & fishing

Marlow \$49,900



150' Waterfront

- Charming Lake Kellelemook, sandy beach
- 3 bedrooms, recent upgrades, well kept
- Open concept, kitchen, DR, LR w/gas stove

Springfield \$255,000



Lake Sunapee Condo

- 4 bedrooms, 2 1/2 baths, wood fireplace, views
- 4 levels, access to beach, golf, and tennis
- Southern exposure, 1st flr laundry/mudroom

Sunapee \$369,000



Fantastic Starter Home

- 2 bedrooms, 1 1/2 baths, .80 acres, efficient
- Eat-in kitchen w/pantry, master BR w/bath
- 2-car detached garage, 8x12 shed, I-89 access

North Sutton \$209,000



14.5 Commercial Acres

- Currently art studio/retail store, 6 miles to I-89
- Owner occupied 2-BR apart, great location
- High traffic, prime route to/from Mt. Sunapee

Bradford \$299,000



Sunny Log Home

- Energy efficient log home, mountain view
- Field for your horse, above-ground pool
- 32'x24' heated garage w/attached carport

Goshen \$259,000

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