



TOWN OF ALLENSTOWN
OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
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Allenstown Residents

January 31, 2011

RE: Suncook River Public Information and Flood Assistance Projects

Spring is just around the corner and the preparation for potential flooding has begun. We have implemented a number of steps to provide residents with as much information as possible about flood preparation.

It is important for residents living in the flood hazard zones to take steps as individuals to protect their property from flood damage. Residents should make plans for sheltering as well during periods of flooding. The town does have resources for sheltering however those resources are limited.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

The Police Department has established a Twitter site as well as a Facebook site that will allow us to quickly provide you with updated information. The use of Twitter will allow us to send out text messages to cell phone users or email addresses. This would be used to send out critical public information for events such as:

Emergency Winter Parking Bans, Flooding forecasts, Road Closures, Public Health Warnings/Emergencies, Weather Event Warnings, Amber Alerts, etc...

Residents who choose to receive this information would need to sign up at the following website:

www.twitter.com/AllenstownPD

Users can select to follow us by email or by text message by texting "follow AllenstownPD" to 40404. We will be able to send 140 character messages to users. Users can shut this off or turn it on at any time.

The Facebook site can be logged into at www.facebook.com and type in "Allenstown Police Department". Users can then sign onto our Facebook site or subscribe to the text message option. There is no cost for these services.

FLOOD ASSISTANCE PROJECTS

We will continue to monitor the forecasts for weather that could result in flooding. The town has taken a number of steps to mitigate the impacts of flooding from the Suncook River on residents:

1. The town has applied for a fourth round of grants from FEMA to acquire and demolish additional homes along the river. We anticipate notification from FEMA sometime in March of this year if we were successful with those applications.
2. The town has applied for Emergency Management Performance Grants (EMPG) to have a new river gauge installed on the Suncook River in Allenstown to provide more accurate and timely data in regards to water levels. The data will be updated every 15 minutes on the USGS website that anyone can access. Anyone can log into the system and set up parameters that will send email messages every 15 minutes to the user advising of the water level. We anticipate that this gauge will be operational by the end of 2011. In the interim there is a gauge on the Suncook River at N. Chichester which does produce data on the water levels and does forecast flooding events. Residents can log into the system and set up email notifications to notify the resident when the water levels reach or are forecasted to reach a certain height or velocity. This data can be located at the following websites.

<http://www.weather.gov/ahps/rss/gauge.php?wfo=gyx&lid=nchn3>

<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/usa/nwis/uv?01089500>

3. The town has applied for an EMPG for additional traffic signs to provide for a new Rt. 28 detour route utilizing Buck St. and Academy St. instead of River Rd. River Rd. is not designed for heavy traffic especially truck traffic. The road has sustained significant damage due to this heavy usage in the past.
4. The town has applied for an EMPG for a portable 100Kw generator to provide electricity at the Elementary School to operate a shelter during a power outage. Two additional EMPGs will provide a laptop computer for the building inspector/health officer and updating the town's emergency operations plan.
5. The town is working closely with the Suncook River Community Planning Team which is being coordinated by the Central NH Regional Planning Commission. The Planning Team involves the five towns along the river from Allenstown to Pittsfield. The Dept. of Environmental Services (DES), Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) and the US Geological Service are also participants. The Planning Team and its subcommittees are working on 26 short and mid-term tasks to mitigate issues on the river.

6. DES and HSEM have proposed \$800,000 in the next state budget to install infrastructure in the river to stop the head cutting north of the avulsion site in Epsom as well some bank stabilization at some of the locations in Epsom. Both agencies are also proposing a \$2 million appropriation to provide for matching funds to support property acquisition in the five towns impacted by the river.
7. DES Dam Bureau is proceeding with their environmental review of the proposal to remove one or both of the Buck Street Dams. This could occur as early as the fall of 2011. There will be public hearings forthcoming on this issue over the next several months. DES will continue to post updated information on their website regarding the dam removal project and other issues of concern on the Suncook River. The DES website is:

<http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/rivers/suncook-river.htm>
8. The USGS has completed two new studies of the river. The first is the new 2009 Flood Study of the Suncook River in Allenstown, Epsom and Pembroke. Although the flood maps that the town accepted in April of 2010 are based on the 1978 flood study this new data can be used for land use planning, permitting and emergency management planning. A copy of the study can be found at the Allenstown Public Library or at the USGS website with the link listed below;

<http://pubs.usgs.gov/sir/2010/5127>
9. The USGS is developing a sediment transport study which provides data on the amount of sediment and the flow of sediment from the upstream Epsom town line to the Merrimack River. This study will be available on the USGS website sometime in April of 2011.
10. USGS is also producing new inundation mapping for the Suncook River from the avulsion site south, 16 miles to the confluence of the Merrimack River. This stretch of the river will be one of about a dozen such stretches of river in the country to have this data available. The data, which can be accessed real time through the internet, will show individual property owners the projected water levels on their individual property for a flooding event. This will also be very valuable to emergency responders and for evacuation planning. These maps may be available as early as this summer.

If there are any additional questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact us. The emergency management team has implemented a comprehensive strategy to address the

problems along the Suncook River. Flooding will always be a problem that we will have to contend with. Our goal is to limit the impact on our citizens and the community to the extent that we can.

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