

Flash Flood Devastates Great Village

Unless noted otherwise, photos by Linda Harrington



Mathew Morse points to the high water mark on his back deck. He is 6'4" and the mark is almost at the 6ft height. His basement was completely flooded and the water stopped about 1 inch from his kitchen floor.

By Linda Harrington

A flash flood exploded down from the Cobequid Mountains early morning, Sept. 22nd, the result of torrential rains through the night, and it was heading for the Bay of Fundy with a vengeance, leaving a path of carnage behind.

In Great Village, the center of the community was hit hard, as several feet of torrential water rushed through homes, businesses and across roadways. Walking through the neighbourhood, the damage was obvious....overturned postal boxes, a large storage trailer moved 50 feet from its origin, telephone poles and trees piled like match sticks... friends and neighbours just shaking their heads.



Postal boxes floated away during the flooding in Great Village.



Onslow Belmont Fire Brigade members bring Brian MacKenzie back to shore in their zodiac after he was able to rescue a young calf from his Belmont property.



A cooler floats away on a door step from one of the trailers at Elm River Park.

The front steps of the Elizabeth Bishop House were torn right off and the driveway and front yard deeply eroded.

The paved parking lot in front of the Great Village Fire Hall looked like an explosion had occurred, leaving a sizable crater and a pile of upheaved asphalt.

Around the corner, Matthew and Nicole Morse were surveying the damage to their house. Mathew says he first realized there was a problem when his young daughter said, "Daddy we have a pool in our back yard. Can we go swimming?" He says within 5 minutes the waters rushed up to his yard, totally flooding his basement and coming within an inch of his kitchen. "Everything down there was flooded, including the furnace and water pump and we have had to shut our power off," Mathew says as he points to the water mark on his deck right by his head, "I am 6'4" and the water was this high!"

Next door at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch #72, the sump pump was working overtime to clear the basement. It hasn't been long since the Legion lost all their wreaths and poppies to spring flooding.

Wilson's Gas Bar employees were busy cleaning up after being at the center of the unforgiving wall of water. The fuel pumps had been turned off but the store itself had power, so the convenience store was open.

Councillor Tom Taggart had been driving home from Truro when he found himself in the middle of the chaos and pulled over just in time to see a large propane tank from behind Wilson's come lose. "It floated out into the river and under the bridge where it must have hit something as it was going under. The cover broke off and a plume of propane shot straight into the air," says Taggart. "The tank was carried off down the river with the propane streaming out the top."

Councillor Taggart was later joined by Mayor Bob Taylor and Councillor Ron Cavanaugh, as they surveyed the damage throughout the County.

Over in Lower Debert, things were getting progressively worse at Elm River Camp Ground, as waters continued to



Debert Beach Road was blocked for traffic.



The bridge was barely passable on Spencer's Cross Road.



The doorstep was ripped right off the Elizabeth Bishop House in Great Village.

rise up until about noon time. Water levels reached half way up several large trailers and there was nothing anyone could do but wait it out. The area has also suffered spring flooding in the past, due to ice build-up, but flooding this time of year was totally unexpected.

On Hwy #4, heading up to Folly Mountain, the left hand lane was partially washed out near what is known locally as "Tunnel Brook", just west of the train bridge.

Onslow Belmont Fire Brigade received a call to bring their zodiac to help rescue cattle that were surrounded by water in the Belmont area. Neighbours pitched in to help and all but a lone calf were soon safe and sound. The fire brigade transported Brian MacKenzie out to where his last young calf needed assistance and soon the herd were all together.

The Belmont, Debert and Great Village Rivers all experienced some of the worst flooding people can ever remember. Within a few hours, the waters had receded but the damage will take much longer to clean up and repair.



Major erosion along Hwy #4 at the bottom of Folly Mtn. near the train bridge.



Pavement is torn up in front of Great Village Fire Hall.



Councillor Tom Taggart looks over potential damage on the new bridge under construction as workers remove wooden framing.



County Councillors Ron Cavanaugh and Tom Taggart are joined by Mayor Bob Taylor as they survey the flood damage throughout the County.

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