

What happened to Sweet Pond? (updated March 28, 2012)

In March, 2011, The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation's Dam Safety Section determined that the water behind the Sweet Pond Dam needed to be drained due to concerns about structural issues with the dam, and the potential for loss of life and property downstream should the dam fail. The drawdown was completed in April, 2011 after review by the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department and DEC.

The drawdown was conducted in a manner to minimize impacts to fish, reptiles, amphibians and birds that use the pond. The drawdown was carefully monitored to ensure that sediment was not transported downstream where it would have impacted habitat downstream in Keets Brook and another pond. Some sediment movement has occurred as the stream cut through the old pond bed to recreate its original channel. Work will occur as soon as is reasonably possible to stem further sediment movement to the extent possible. This will include a settlement basin upstream from the dam and several log check dams to minimize further head cutting. During the summer of 2011, the muddy flats left behind quickly vegetated with lush plant life.

The water level behind the dam will fluctuate some, especially after heavy storm events or prolonged periods of precipitation. An instance of this happened during Tropical Storm Irene on August 28, 2011, when the pond re-filled to capacity. The dam and impoundment continue to be monitored by the Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation and DEC.

What is the future of Sweet Pond?

An engineering firm was retained to investigate options for the 90-year old dam. These include rehabilitating, removing and/or replacing the structure. The report was released in January of 2012. On February 9th, a public meeting was held in the community to present the findings. Public and written input was unanimous in support of Alternative 2, "rehabilitation of the existing structure." The Springfield Stewardship Team supported this choice and recommended selection of this alternative to Agency leadership on March 14, 2012. A decision by the Agency of Natural Resources is expected to take several months. Whatever the future of the dam will be, local support, and likely financial contributions, will both be critical to its future.

How do I find out more information?

Information on the dam is available on the FPR's website at:
<http://www.vtfpr.org/lands/brattmu.cfm>.



Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation
Springfield Regional Office
100 Mineral St, Suite 304
Springfield, VT 05156 -3168
Ethan Phelps: (802) 885-8827 or ethan.phelps@state.vt.us or
Tim Morton: (802) 885-8825 or tim.morton@state.vt.us