

## Androscoggin County Emergency Management Agency

The Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) for Androscoggin County has been updated and approved by FEMA. The HMP provides an inventory of mitigation projects identified to minimize future damages caused by severe storms and disasters. Mitigation project may include: larger culverts to prevent roadway flooding and washouts; raising the roadway above historical flood levels; improved ditching; erosion control; and stormwater separation, for example.

In February, Androscoggin EMA hosted a GIS discussion/ workshop that included people from fire, police, public works, communications centers, hospital, town managers, and regional GIS professionals.

This event was an opportunity to show current capabilities as well as possibilities for collaboration and coordination of important data management for public safety/ emergency management planning, response, recovery, and mitigation. Our agency took advantage of the opportunity to demonstrate projects in place or under development such as: online emergency services planning maps and damage assessment applications.

In June, Androscoggin County Emergency Management Agency took part in an Active Shooter Table Top Exercise (TTX) at Bates College facilitated by the Maine Emergency Management Agency. The exercise was part of an ongoing effort by Bates College to review and update their emergency plan and procedures. The exercise provided the chance for local law enforcement, fire, EMS, hospital, and Bates Security and college leadership to discuss their role in response to such an event.

The Agency also attended the Rumford Falls Dam Breach Exercise in Rumford on June 12 that was hosted by Brookfield Renewable Energy Group. It was good to see how our upriver neighbors thoughtfully prepared for such a disaster. We also had the chance to present some of our GIS planning work, using Brookfield's inundation models, to identify structures, roads, and other infrastructure that could be affected by a breach.

The Agency developed 'Flood Mapper' applications that we tested this spring while monitoring the snow melt and runoff. These tools include a survey that allow collection of data and photos in the field that can be used to monitor water levels, flooding, damages, as well as an initial point of documentation for potential disaster declarations and reimbursement. Most of all, the tool will support 'situational awareness' in the field or in the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) using an 'operations dashboard.' Tools like these help prioritize response and recovery operations. We can also pull highlights to create briefings and even public-facing updates.

The Amateur Radio Emergency Service/ Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service Teams (ARES/ RACES) have been busy in maintaining and updating equipment and procedures. They have participated in several radio exercises already this year and spent the weekend of June 21-23 at Beaver Park in Lisbon to participate in the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) Annual Field Day. Ham radio operators are key to response and recovery efforts when cell towers, power distribution, and internet services are overwhelmed or non-existent following disasters such as hurricanes, like Hurricane Maria of 2017. Preparing and exercising emergency communications is very important.

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