

## Curtis Pond Dam (CPD) Exploratory Group Summary

**Background:** “Curtis Pond Dam is located by Worcester Road in Calais, Vermont. The Curtis Pond Dam, constructed circa 1900, raised water levels approximately 10-ft and combined two smaller ponds together. Curtis Pond Dam is composed of laid up masonry stone with a sand and gravel embankment. From 2003-2006 a major effort was made to fix the dam but no action was taken and the effort was dropped”. Taken from a dam hazard report prepared for the Department of Environmental Conservation on 7/29/2019.

<https://curtispond.files.wordpress.com/2021/04/2019-vt-hazard-class-assessment-final-combined-072919.pdf>

**The Exploratory Group:** Since July of 2020, a group of owners either on the Pond or within walking distance have worked together as the “Curtis Pond Dam Exploratory Group” to look again into getting the dam fixed. The group has conducted research about ownership, insurance, funding scenarios, reviewing past reports and presentations, and talked with ANR, various officials of Calais, and many organizations.

**Results to date:**

- **Public ownership in some form is essential.** Affordable liability insurance is available to public entities, but not to private organizations.
- **Title will not be a problem;** the owners with any possible title have indicated they will quitclaim their interest to a public entity.
- **Doing nothing will result in loss of the dam** due to its deteriorated status and likely over-topping in a major storm. The Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) had the dam classified as a SIGNIFICANT hazard and the overall condition of the dam was considered POOR.
- **Such a “do nothing” strategy will cause fiscal damage to the Town.** If the dam is removed or breaks, it is estimated that the town would *lose at least \$3 million in the Grand List* because the Shore-Line properties would conservatively lose 25% of their Real Value resulting in an annual loss of \$86,000 in property taxes at current rates and an estimated \$2.2 million over 20 years. ***This would require an increase in property taxes of at least \$42 per \$100,000 Real Value, Town-wide to cover the loss.***
- **Doing nothing will cause economic and social damage.** Besides the loss in tax base, the Calais Town Beach, State Fishing Access, and “one pond” would be lost due to the lower water level. The Maple Corner Community Store would likely close due to loss of sales from summer residents and traffic to the beach, and fishing access.
- **Renovation of the dam will cost less than its loss.** The table below compares seven funding options to the “lose the dam” scenario. The Exploratory Group, consulted with John McCullough, and prepared a detailed analysis of the assessed value of the shoreline properties and the nearby properties, as well as the cost of bonding. We built funding scenarios for \$300,000; \$500,000 and \$1 million in various percentages for Town-Wide, Shore-Line and those within Walking Distance of the pond. The following table provides a small sample of the funding scenarios that have been developed.

Property Tax Increase Per Year Per \$100,000 Real Value			
Town bonds for <b>\$500,000</b> for 20 years at <b>3%</b> with an annual payment of \$33,300			
Scenario	Town-Wide	Walking Distance to Pond	Shore-line
1. Dam Breaks or is Removed >\$3 million in Grand List	\$42	--	decrease \$628
2. Everyone Shares 100%	\$16	--	--
3. Town: 20%; Shore-Line Owners: 80%	\$3	--	\$216
4. Town: 50%; Shore-Line Owners: 50%	\$8	--	\$141
5. Town: 80%; Shore-Line Owners: 20%	\$13	--	\$66
6. Town: 20%; Walking: 25%; Shore-Line 55%	\$3	\$103	\$150
7. Town: 50%; Walking: 10%; Shore-Line 40%	\$8	\$48	\$115
8. Town: 80%; Walking: 5%; Shore-Line 15%	\$13	\$33	\$53

The Curtis Pond Dam Exploratory Group would like to invite you to join in our effort to fix the dam. We are willing to help the Town wherever we can. Check out the **Curtis Pond Dam Exploratory Group** web page for contact information and access to our current research, timeline, funding scenarios, etc. (<https://curtispond.org/exploratory-group/>).