



Hunterdon County
Division of Parks & Recreation
News Release



Mailing Address: PO Box 2900, Flemington, NJ 08822-2900
Office Location: 1020 State Highway 31, Lebanon, NJ
Telephone (908) 782-1158 • Fax (908) 806-4057
E-mail: parks@co.hunterdon.nj.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
CONTACT: dbush@co.hunterdon.nj.us

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ECHO HILL POND DAM REMEDIATION SCHEDULED

Echo Hill Park is a fundamental piece of the Hunterdon County Parks System, containing 90 acres of forest, fields, and wetlands in Clinton Township. It is the site of many of our nature and recreation programs, and a popular place to hike, fish, rent event space, picnic, and enjoy the playground. The pond is a major feature of the park, but the dam is failing.

The 1.3-acre pond was constructed over 80 years ago when Echo Hill was a private summer camp. The water is diverted from the Prescott Brook, and earthen embankments contain the water in the pond before it is discharged through a concrete box culvert. Severe soil erosion and gradual sinking of the land above the culvert has led to leakage, safety concerns, and diminished use of the pond.

Hunterdon County Division of Parks & Recreation is currently working with French & Parrello Associates (FPA) to remediate the failing pond. The goal is to provide a long-term solution of a healthy and structurally sound pond, returning it to its former state. The pond should support fish and other wildlife, and provide safe active recreational use, such as canoeing and kayaking.

Before work begins, the pond will be inspected by a state-licensed engineer. Threatened and endangered species will be inventoried, and impact on neighbors downstream will be assessed.

A new concrete discharge spillway and low-level outlet gate will be constructed by an additional contractor to control the water level. The embankments will be cleared of the large trees and bushes that have become heavily overgrown, and which have the potential to destabilize embankment material. The embankments will be amended as necessary to meet standard dam embankment criteria. The surface of the embankment will be covered with topsoil and reseeded to create a stable walking surface. To complete the work efficiently, the pond level will be lowered so the contracted employees may work in a dry environment. The contractors require access to the pond and a small staging area, but these are designed to minimize impact to environmental resources and to the park.

French & Parrello Associates will oversee all of the work practices, and they will follow the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's Standard Practice for Pond

Design and NJDEP's Dam Safety Standards. All appropriate permits will be obtained, including a Dam Safety Permit, a Soil Erosion & Sediment Control Permit, a Freshwater Wetlands Permit, and a permit to move the fish before the pond level is lowered. All designs will reference the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, or other universally accepted procedures of dam engineering.

French & Parrello Associates is experienced in hydrology, hydraulic structures, dam embankments, lake management, and knowledge of NJDEP regulations. FPA recently rehabilitated the Lake Solitude Dam in High Bridge and is currently involved in the rehabilitation of the Round Valley Reservoir Dam.

The inspection and surveying for this project is expected to begin in February 2022, with the actual construction following about 18 months later. The construction will last about three months.

For more information on this project, contact Dan Bush, Division Head of Hunterdon County Division of Parks & Recreation at (908) 782-1158 or dbush@co.hunterdon.nj.us.