

# north shore news

## \$2.5M for flood control on District of North Vancouver creeks

### Creek upgrades to reduce risk of repeat of November's flooding

Maria Spitale-Leisk / North Shore News

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Crews work to repair the destruction after Kilmer Creek overflowed its banks last November and sent a torrent of debris into nearby neighbourhoods. file photo Mike Wakefield

Standing at the edge of tinder dry Kilmer Creek Wednesday it was easy to forget that last fall the watercourse dumped its banks during heavy rainfall and sent a torrent of debris downslope through Lynn Valley neighbourhoods causing millions of dollars in damages.

Now a few months ahead of the next rainy season a disaster mitigation project to control extreme flooding is being put into place on creeks in Lynn Valley and Deep Cove to better protect those areas.

Three levels of government announced Wednesday at one of the areas that was hardest hit last fall — Kilmer Creek at Michener Way — a cost-sharing agreement to fund \$2.5 million in infrastructure improvements at six creek crossings.



North Vancouver-Seymour MLA Jane Thornthwaite, North Vancouver MP Andrew Saxton and District of North Vancouver Mayor Richard Walton survey the newly completed culvert at Kilmer Creek at Michener Way. photo Mike Wakefield

District of North Vancouver Mayor Richard Walton recalled the destructive flooding that occurred late in the evening on Nov. 3.

"It was a very, very horrific night. Many homes were inundated, our nearby streets ran like rivers and two nearby schools were badly affected as well," said Walton, adding it was lucky no one was injured or killed in the flooding.

Under the project, debris basins will be built or upgraded and culverts are to be replaced or improved along three watercourses: Thames Creek at Grouse Mountain Road and Kilmer Road; two crossings on Kilmer Creek; and Gallant Creek at Deep Cove Road and upstream of Badger Road.

The debris flow basins are constructed based on engineering standards and can sustain a quick flow of water and mud. Vertical bars, meanwhile, are in place to catch runaway logs and boulders while allowing the smaller fragments to go through.

The concern with these mountain creeks, explained Walton, is the debris flow that forms when heavy rainfall dislodges small logs and larger rocks, which dams up and then suddenly releases.

"So when an event like that happens you can find that all of a sudden it's just like pulling a plug literally out of a sink. And it's just a huge torrent of stuff that comes down," said Walton.

Such was the case on Nov. 3 when a culvert overflowed on to Fromme Road, sending boulders and trees with huge amounts of water on to the nearby streets. At least 20 houses sustained extensive water damage in basements, mainly on Kilmer and Fromme roads. A torrent of water also rushed into Argyle secondary, forcing the closure of the school for a couple days.

The district itself faced a \$1.2 million repair bill in the aftermath of the flooding. Emergency Management BC will likely cover \$1 million of those costs, according to district spokeswoman Mairi Welman.

The multi-million-dollar flooding mitigation project is funded in part by the federal and provincial New Building Canada Fund - Small Communities Fund program, with each of those governments kicking in \$841,683 and the district covering the balance.

"These improvements will help reduce the risk of flooding and the property damage and cleanup associated by debris typically carried by flood waters," said North Vancouver MP Andrew Saxton.

The flood mitigation project will provide peace of mind for residents living downstream, added North Vancouver-Seymour MLA Jane Thornthwaite. "These improvements will go a long way towards reducing the risk of debris floods reaching neighbourhoods, protecting people and homes," said Thornthwaite.

Work on the project is expected to start in the next couple months and carry on to 2016. Some mitigation work, including the installation of a new culvert, has already been done on Kilmer Creek at Michener Way.

November's flooding served as a wake-up call for the district, which is now doing a risk assessment of all watercourses along the mountain slopes.

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