

# Area farmers incur heavy damages in floods



This aerial view shows the mud and silt that were dumped on area hay and corn fields. At the top of the picture is the Old County Road in Waitsfield. In the center is Route 100, which was covered by water. At the bottom are the fields which were covered with water, mud and debris. The river, now in its normal channel is at the top of the fields.

by Lisa Loomis

Hay and corn crops were hard hit by last weekend's flooding with many farmers reporting the loss of at least half of their corn and large portions of their hay crops. Produce crops were also hurt, with strawberries, pumpkins and other vegetables lost to the flooding.

The white round hay bales which floated freely down the rain-engorged river represent a significant loss in terms of dollars and in terms of feed for non-milking cows and horses. The hay bales, the first cutting of this year's hay, that went down river number over 500. Hardest hit, in terms of round bale loss, was Howard Kenyon in Waitsfield, who lost 420 bales.

At the Kenyon farm and property, on Route 100 just north of Waitsfield Village, there was also considerable damage to the horse show grounds.

"We didn't lose much land. We had a lot of damage to the horse show rings. We have to take off a foot of mud from each ring. We've got to be ready in two weeks," said Donna Kenyon.

The Kenyons are the annual summer hosts to the three week Valley Classic and Vermont Equestrian Summer Show case horse show which attract upwards of 600 horses and riders.

"There is also a lot of debris and trees we have to clean up. We lost parts of the roads in two places and Howard (Kenyon) lost 420 round bales. That

was hay for the cows. We didn't have crop insurance and as soon as we get a chance, we'll look into FEMA help. Other than the clean up we have to do, which is quite massive, we're lucky, we didn't lose land, lives or buildings. We just need it to stop raining," she said.

Further north on Route 100, David Hartshorn, who farms the field north of the Pines Rest Area and the fields around his farmstand further north, the loss of a week of picking on his strawberries and doesn't know whether his corn or squash (at the field by the Pines) will come back.

"Some of the corn and squash might come back, but some of it is half buried in mud and silt," Hartshorn said.

He said he is now worried about blight caused by diseases and organisms in the water and dirt that were splashed onto plants during the high water periods. Hartshorn came to his fields at 3:30 a.m. on Saturday morning and found the water rising. He went home and returned later and found water gushing through a culvert on Route 100 into his strawberry patch. He has some hay crops on fields higher up that he says are fine and he is considering donating that hay to others who need it.

Elwin Neill Jr.'s fields are across from Hartshorns. The Neill's also farm several fields near Waitsfield Village as well as others along the Meadow Road and near the river and the Mad River Rec Path.

Elwin Neill estimated his

loss, including field repairs, at close to \$100,000.

"On the crops that are left, we're looking at a 50 percent loss on the corn and 50 percent of the first hay that was left to cut. That's ruined. I can't cut it and I'm not sure what to do with it. I think I'm going to have to plow it under, or cut it and then plow it. The second cutting was about ready to cut, some had been cut and not picked up. The water wind-rows a bunch of that and I've got to pick it up before it kills the stuff underneath it," Neill said.

"I lost maybe two fields of sweet corn, but that may straighten up. I've never seen a flood like this before. We've been flooded in the past and it wasn't such a volume and it wasn't so silty. The last time, we were able to go in and cut the hay. But this time the fields that I've got left are just dusty. They are laid over and there's six or eight inches of silt or muck in each field," he continued.

"When you have 30-inch tall hay, I'm not sure what to do with it. We tried to harrow it up and couldn't. It was too mucky. We'll try to plow it, but it may be too tall. We may try brush hogging it and then plowing it," he added.

Neill has federal crop insurance on his corn. The policy covers 50 percent of the crop, when he has at least a 50 percent loss. Those claims aren't paid until fall, however. He guessed that loss at about \$20,000. For his lost hay, which falls under a non-insured loss, he anticipates a loss of \$20-\$30,000. Some of that loss may be covered through another federal program that is based on regional agricultural losses.

When he factored in the crop losses, repairs, land working, reseeding, and replanting, his losses approach \$100,000 he said.

A crisis like this, he said, forces farmers to be creative with crop rotation and selection.

"When you have a crisis you always become a better manager, Neill said.

At Maynard's farm, further north on Route 100, damage was limited to the loss of several acres of field corn, some sweet corn and some pump-

kins. There was no serious gouging or erosion reported other than basic clean up.

Down the road, George Carpenter Jr., who could not be reached by press time, was reported to have lost 150 round bales of hay, as well as a tractor, mower and baler which were submerged in the flood waters.

At the Spaulding farm in Waitsfield, Jonathan Spauld-

ing reported the loss of some 70 round bales, 10 to 15 acres of uncuttable hay and reported excessive silt on 7 to 8 acres of new seed where replanting will be needed.

Additionally, the Spauldings lost about half of their 40 acres of corn.

Reports of flood damage or lack thereof were unavailable from Turner's Simplicity Farm on Route 100 in Waitsfield.

Sugarbush Resort and Vermont Mozart Festival present

## Illuminate your Fourth of July

with

### ROYAL FIREWORKS

American Band Shell Music

moonlight, fireworks and music. Gather your family and friends, pack a picnic and come listen music by John Philip Sousa, Cole Porter, George Gershwin, and Handel's "Music for the Royal Fireworks."

**Saturday, July 4, Sugarbush Resort**

Mt. Ellen (North), Warren, 7:30 p.m.

Gates open at 5:30 p.m. for picnicking

Vermont Mozart Festival Orchestra—William Metcalfe, conductor

For tickets and information: 1-800-639-9097 or 1-800-53-SUGAR

### MAD RIVER GLEN . . . SKI IT IF YOU CAN



WALK TO SLOPES 4 Bedrooms, woodstove \$114,500

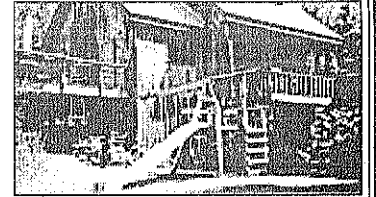


SKI TO SLOPES 4 Bedroom, fireplace \$143,500

#### EAST WARREN



Restore Me! 6 Bedrooms \$195,000

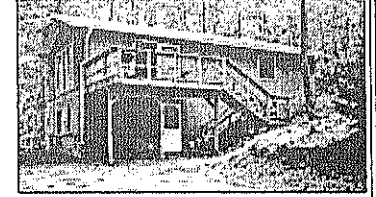


Come Swim 3 Bedroom/guest apartment, indoor pool \$190,000

#### READY FOR HORSES

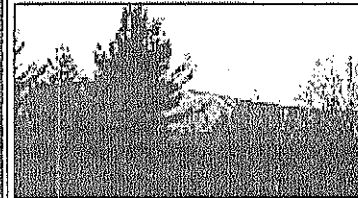


New Farmhouse Old Barn \$595,000

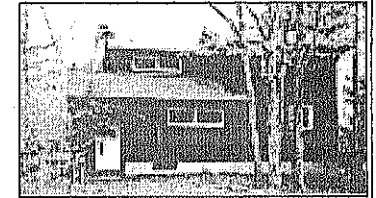


5 minutes to skiing shopping, Restaurants, 4 Bedrooms, Fireplace & woodstove \$122,500

#### BUILD YOUR DREAM



Imagine this site 12 AC- 2 Streams \$104,500

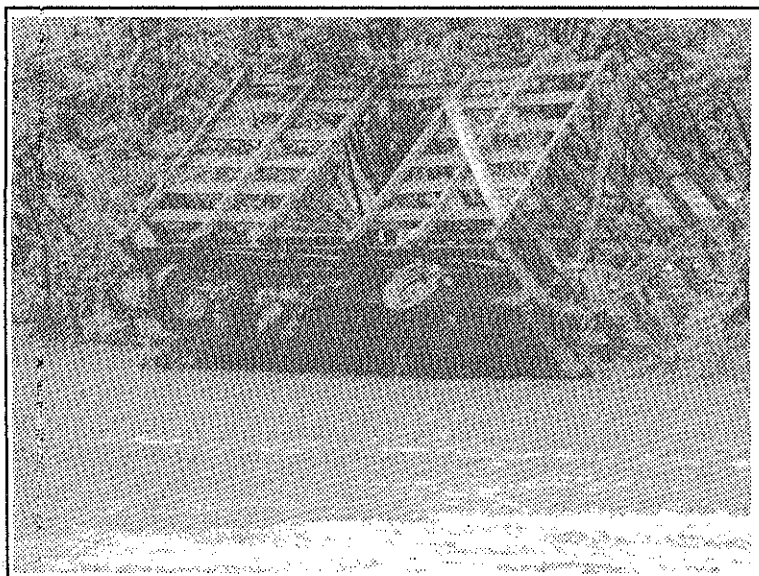


Large stone fireplace 3 bedrooms, 16 private acres \$298,500

Call Gussie Graves Broker 496-3230

#### LAND

Lincoln Peak Community Sewer & Water \$82,000 & \$92,500



A capsized wagon in farm field in Waitsfield.