

Dam engineering report 'inadequate'

By Tom Standard , Special to the Sun Journal

Tuesday, October 30, 2007

CANTON - The chairman of the Lake Anasagunticook dam committee said Monday night that the revised engineering report by dam owner Raymond Fortier does not provide a plan for completing repairs by the state's Dec. 31 deadline.

PHOTO GALLERY



The report was ordered by the Maine Emergency Management Agency.

Committee chairman Malcolm Ray, a civil engineering professor at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, said he discussed the revised report with MEMA engineer David Sait. He said that while he and Sait have not yet completed their study of the report, it seems to lack sufficient engineering detail to be acceptable, even if the work were completed by the deadline.

Fortier is under MEMA orders of Dec. 4, 2006, and May 8, 2007, to complete the repairs by the end of this year or face a fine of \$500 a day.

Members of the Dam Committee recently went to Augusta to deliver a petition asking that MEMA assess the fines if Fortier continues to ignore its orders.

State Rep. Terry Hayes of Buckfield and Sen. Bruce Bryant of Dixfield arranged for the group to meet with Robert McLeer and Sait of MEMA, Attorney General Steven Rowe and House Speaker Glenn Cummings to urge them to use their influence to force Fortier to comply with orders to repair the dam. All agreed that the problem had gone on for too many years and they would do all they could to get Fortier to meet his obligation.

The state inspected the dam last year and concluded that the integrity, structural stability, function and operation of the dam constituted a threat to public safety. It was determined that the spillway didn't have adequate capacity to handle flood waters without overtopping the earthen embankments, potentially causing the dam to burst.

Fortier, who has owned the dam for 20 years, was asked to repair and test the four spillway gates to ensure all were functional and could be raised in a timely manner, to have an emergency operational procedure for opening the spillway gates during flooding conditions, and to have a plan for reducing the height of all four spillway gates.

Fortier dug test pits in the dam last week, as requested by MEMA. However, according to committee members, the work went beyond what was required and may have damaged the dam, located on Whitney Brook at the northern outlet of the lake. They said it took four days to get the Department of Environmental Protection to stop Fortier from doing the unauthorized work.

He is under orders that all work must be done under engineering supervision.

"He can not be doing work under direction of an engineer if he doesn't have an approved engineering plan," Ray said.