

## **Public Notice – Drawdown and removal of Burnhams Dike in Pawtuckaway State Park - April 2025**

During the first week of April 2025, management at Pawtuckaway State Park observed significantly high water within Burnhams Marsh in Pawtuckaway State Park. This high water was level with the park's main access road as it crosses Burnhams Marsh and was likely impacting the foundation soils below the road. Park management immediately notified the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) Dam Bureau for assistance with evaluating the situation and developing a remedy.

Park management and Dam Bureau personnel determined that the cause of the high water was due to a beaver dam having been constructed on top of an existing man-made dam at the northern outlet of Burnhams Marsh. This dam, identified as Burnhams Dike, was constructed by New Hampshire Fish and Game (NHFG) in the late 1960's to manage the water level within Burnhams Marsh. The NHDES Dam Bureau is responsible for the maintenance, operation, and repair of NHFG owned dams, therefore, the Dam Bureau thoroughly evaluated the condition of the dam and determined that the dam was in a state of deterioration and no longer capable of performing as originally intended. Not only was it found that beaver had built a one- to three-foot-tall dam on top of this manmade dam, resulting in erosion and degradation of the earth embankment, but the outlet pipe at the base of the dam was cracked and in a state of failure and can no longer safely discharge water. If Burnhams Dike were to fail, debris and sediment would inundate Pawtuckaway Lake near the Fundy Cove boat ramp/channel immediately downstream of the dam.

To reduce the risk of Burnhams Dike from failing, the Dam Bureau applied for and received Emergency Authorization through the NHDES Wetlands Bureau to remove Burnhams Dike and restore the site to natural conditions. While the removal of the dam will impact the water level of Burnhams Marsh and alleviate water from inundating the main access road through the park, it will also allow for the marsh to return to the natural configuration before the dam was constructed and remove the threat to Pawtuckaway Lake.

During the week of April 14th, the NHDES Dam Bureau mobilized to the site and started lowering the water level in Burnhams Marsh by removing beaver debris and stop logs (boards that hold the water back from entering the outlet pipe) from Burnhams Dike. During the week of April 21st, the Dam Bureau will continue removing beaver debris and start removing manmade material from the site. Please be aware that this work will require heavy equipment to operate over the Park's Fundy Trail. Please adhere to any trail closures and stay clear of any heavy equipment. This work is anticipated to take approximately two weeks to complete, and the Dam Bureau will demobilize from the site during the week of May 5th, if not sooner.

**For more information, please contact Corey Clark, Chief Engineer at the NHDES Dam Bureau at [corey.j.clark@des.nh.gov](mailto:corey.j.clark@des.nh.gov) or (603) 271-1961.**