

N.C. Highway Crews Work Overtime To Repair Damaged Mountain Roads

If you think your car is hard to start on a cold, winter morning, you should try starting a bulldozer in zero-degree weather.

Or if you think a flat tire is a hassle to change, imagine changing a flat on a backhoe that sits in the midst of a frigid mountain stream.

Such are the obstacles, along with lots of mud and misplaced rocks, that Department of Transportation (DOT) maintenance crews have had to face as they piece back together the roads and bridges in Western North Carolina that were so badly damaged by heavy rains and flash floods in early November.

Obstacles or no, they have continued at full-speed ahead working from "dawn to dusk", first, to free those who were stranded or isolated and, second, to make emergency repairs.

Secretary of Transportation Thomas W. Bradshaw, Jr. said, "An additional 1200 employees and almost 200 pieces of equipment were moved from other parts of the State into the disaster area, encompassing 16 counties, to assist in the repair work."

State Representative Ernest B. Messer of Canton, upon touring the areas devastated by floods, observed convoys of DOT equipment. He talked with many who suffered from the disaster and they "...were highly complimentary of DOT's efforts to get the roads and



WASHED OUT -- Over 390 miles of roadway in the North Carolina mountains was damaged by floods early in November. So many roads were damaged that the State doesn't have enough signs to mark them all. Department of Transportation crews are working overtime to repair damage in the 16-county disaster area.

bridges back in operation as rapidly as possible," he said. "I never heard any criticism."

Representative Messer's district includes Haywood, Jackson, Madison and Swain Counties.

One DOT employee, on the job in Yancey County, remarked that he had "been working 12 hours a day, seven days a week for 35 days with only four days off. I've got a little one at home," he added. "I don't get to see her very often."

DOT Maintenance Crew Leader Blaine Peterson of Yancey County bragged on his men, "Every man has done his part and more. Each one has been mighty cooperative," he said, as his crew labored moving rocks, putting in pipe, re-routing streams and operating equipment to repair an unpaved secondary road in Yancey County.

At this point, DOT, having rescued those stranded or isolated, now nears completing emergency repairs and will start making permanent repairs to damages estimated at more than \$15 million. A total of 91 bridges and one reinforced concrete box culvert was destroyed. Eighty-eight other bridges on the State highway system were severely damaged.

Approximately 390 miles of roadway on the system were damaged extensively. Of this, some 289 miles were secondary roads and some 101 miles were primary roads.

"This step marks only the beginning of reconstruction," said Jim Medlin, DOT Highway Division Engineer. "It will take several months to get our roads and bridges back in the condition they once were. The damages are so massive and the winter months will slow the construction process down considerably," he added.

So far the weather has been "pretty good," according to DOT crews in Yancey and Buncombe Counties. But a couple of mornings the temperatures have plunged near zero, and that's when David Camp of Rutherford County had trouble starting his diesel-fueled "dozer."

"It wouldn't even stir for two days," he said.

It seems he was particularly anxious to remove one of many rocks from an unpaved roadway in Yancey County so an area resident "could get his tobacco out before Christmas."

But the worst is yet to come, warned Medlin. Not only will the

weather get colder, but snowy and icy conditions are almost inevitable.

As Medlin's Assistant Division Engineer Dan Martin explained it, "Just because many of the damaged roads are passable, does not mean they are wholly restored. There are still portions of undetermined roadway, sections of broken and cracked pavement and stretches where great chunks of pavement were completely washed out. A heavy snow will obscure these hazards and ice will make the routes even more treacherous," he said.

All major roads damaged by the floods have been marked and, in some cases, lighted with smudge pots. But, as DOT's Flood Damage Coordinator Floyd Bass put it, "there are just not enough signs and lights to go around," so some of the lesser travelled roads may not be properly marked.

State transportation officials have strongly advised motorists, those familiar and, even more so, those unfamiliar with the roads in the disaster areas, to avoid traveling the damaged byways unless absolutely necessary.

Of course, DOT maintenance crews will continue to alleviate the problems as weather permits, but it will probably be spring before construction can be on a full-scale basis.

Although State forces will perform most of the repair work, some major road and bridge construction will be let to contract. Presently, repair work at 29 locations will be let to private contractors. Estimated cost of these jobs is \$7.8 million.

"These are being let to contract as quickly as possible because of the urgency to get them back in operation," Bass said. He also indicated that roads and bridges carrying the highest 'average daily traffic' will be the ones fixed first. The number of school buses, homes and people affected by a certain road will be taken into consideration.

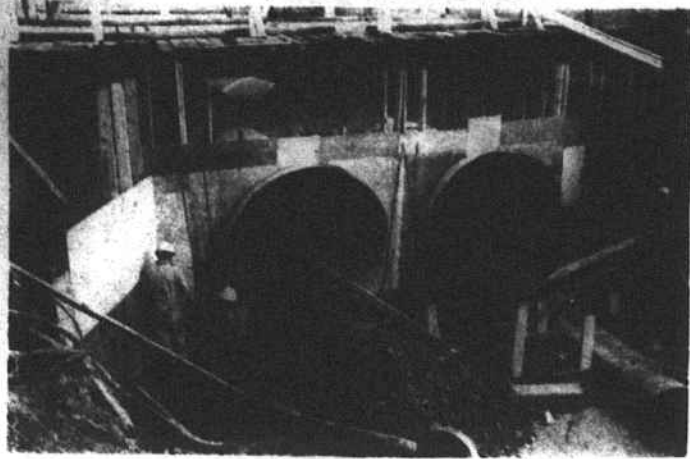
It is evident that DOT has put its best foot forward in dealing with the flood disaster. Chairman of the Yancey County Commissioners Carl Carter said, "I think DOT is doing an excellent job. It is doing everything humanly possible. I have no criticism whatsoever. Now, a lot of people have called me up to see when their road will be fixed," he continued, "but I haven't received any complaints in the county."

Yancey County was the hardest-hit in the 16-county region of Western North Carolina, declared a national disaster by President Jimmy Carter.

Governor James B. Hunt, Jr. made the comment, "I have seen firsthand the damage that the floods did to schools, businesses, homes, roads, and the lives of the people who live in our mountains. And I have seen firsthand how hard our State employees, including those in the Department of Transportation, are working to help bring the lives of those mountain people back to normal."

A conversation between a bridge maintenance crewman and an area resident exemplified DOT's cooperation. E.J. Ledford, in charge of the DOT crew replacing a bridge on Hooker's Gap Road in Buncombe County was approached by a lady on foot. She asked, "Will you fix a place for the kids to get across the creek this afternoon so they won't have to walk all the way around?" Ledford's crew was busy at work in knee-deep water, but he replied, "Yes ma'am, we'll fix a place for them." He later explained that they would place planks across the creek as a temporary walkway for the children.

A brief chat with Segal Phillips, who lives on unpaved Bloody Fork Road in Yancey County, summed up DOT's efforts quite well. As he trekked down his muddy road completely destroyed by a nearby stream, he stopped in the midst of DOT crews at work to say, "These boys done a good job."



INSTALL PIPE -- Two of DOT's bridge maintenance employees replace with pipe a bridge located on a dirt secondary road near Enka Village in Buncombe County. A pump draws water out of the working area as the men build a headwall.

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During The Period From

Jan. 3 — Jan. 31, 1978

LISTING BEGINS

Tuesday, JAN. 3, 1978 (Due To Holidays)

Notice is hereby given all persons owning Real or Personal Property that they appear before the taxlisters for their township between Jan. 3 and Jan. 31 and make return to them of all property for purposes of taxation. Failure to list will subject taxpayer to a fine of \$500.00 or imprisonment not to exceed six months. All property owned January 1, 1978 must be listed. All Mobile Home Park and Aircraft Storage Facility Operators must furnish to the Tax Supervisor the name of the owner of each mobile home or airplane and a description of each by January 15, 1978. Extensions for reporting Inventory may be granted upon written request. All mobile home owners must register with the Tax Supervisor's office to obtain a registration decal.

REAL ESTATE...

All taxable real property, including buildings and improvements and machinery permanently affixed to the Real Estate.

HOUSEHOLD, KITCHEN FURNITURE, FARM Household furniture and goods, including electrical appliances and tools of trade. All farming equipment, swine, livestock, poultry, farm supplies and farm products produced prior to 1974.

OTHER PERSONAL PROPERTY

Radios, televisions, air conditioners, guns, bicycles, jewelry, diamonds, typewriters, boats and motors, golf equipment and office equipment.

MOTOR VEHICLES...

All automobiles and trucks in your possession or registered in your name. Mortgages do not change the ownership or affect the listing. Also house trailers, airplanes, scooters and motorcycles.

STOCK, FIXTURES, EQUIPMENT...

Merchandise, finished goods, equipment, furniture, fixtures goods in process, raw materials and samples.

ALL OTHER TANGIBLE PROPERTY NOT SPECIFIED

Applications for the Use Valuation and Assessment of Agricultural, Horticultural or Forest Lands must be submitted to the Tax Supervisor by January 31, 1978.

WHERE TO LIST PROPERTY — (By Township)

ALLENDALE - Miss Willa McLaughlin at home
Monday thru Friday 8 A.M. to 5 P.M.

RAEFORD TOWNSHIP - You can list your taxes Monday thru Friday
8 A.M. to 5 P.M. and Saturdays 8 A.M. to 12 Noon
at the Courthouse Annex directly behind the Courthouse

BLUE SPRINGS, ANTIOCH, McLAUHLIN,
QUEWHIFFLE, and STONEWALL TOWNSHIPS will be listed in the
NEW COUNTY LIBRARY, Main Street, Raeford, N. C.

8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. and
Saturdays 8:00 A.M. to 12 Noon.

PENALTY FOR FAILURE TO LIST CARRIES A FINE
OF \$500.00 OR IMPRISONMENT NOT TO EXCEED SIX MONTHS.

L. G. Simpson Jr., Tax Supervisor



REPAIR BRIDGE -- A DOT maintenance crew struggles to replace the washed-out span on the bridge over Turkey Creek just north of Leicester in Buncombe County.

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