

# Flooding (Continued from page 1A)

the dam eroded on Monday. "There were a lot of wet areas downstream, but no serious flooding."

Massive amounts of water cascaded across adjacent Rockfish Road up to about 2 a.m. Tuesday. Earlier erosion of its overflowing banks crumbled portions of an interior access road on the backwaters of the lake between a smaller pond next to McLaughlin subdivision. It created gullies and potholes.

According to Schwarzbher, only about one-foot of water remained on the bottom of McLaughlin's basin after it emptied. The two lakes cover an area of approximately 25 acres.

According to the National Weather Service in Raleigh, the southeastern area of Hoke was hardest hit from Sunday through Monday until about 8 a.m. Approximately 4-5 inches of rain also fell in other areas of Hoke. Lashing out in a west to easterly direction, the storm primarily affected central areas of Hoke, Scotland and Cumberland counties, where the majority of the rainfall was sustained, a weather official said.

A spokesman from the N.C. Highway Patrol reported no fatalities occurred from accidents on Hoke's highways during the stormy weekend.

Schwarzbher said the N.C. Department of Transportation closed Phillip Church Road because a culvert passed underneath the roadway which was flooded from waters from McLaughlin Lake. Rockfish Road was also closed due to flood precautions. Detour signs were posted for both roads. Phillip Church was still closed to traffic Tuesday, he added.

"The Department of Transportation reopened Rockfish Road at 5:30 Tuesday morning because it was determined it was safe for school buses to pass through," Schwarzbher said. "At this point, Hoke has not been

declared a disaster area by the state."

Schwarzbher said residents downstream in the eastern section of the county such as those in the Country Walk subdivision were notified that the dam at McLaughlin would likely fail. Rockfish Volunteer Fire Department and the Hoke Sheriff's Office sent firefighters and deputies door-to-door in the low-lying areas, calling for a voluntary evacuation around 10:30-11 p.m. on Sunday.

"We warned residents there would be excessive water, but if the dam broke that it should not be a threat to life or property," Schwarzbher said. "It was their option whether to stay or leave their homes. We did not want them to become isolated without knowing what could potentially occur."

As water began overflowing McLaughlin's banks Sunday night at several points, Schwarzbher steadily monitored the situation along with deputies. He periodically observed the dam on Monday night prior to its eventual destruction Tuesday morning.

"I was satisfied that a sufficient amount of water had already spilled over the dam so it would not be a threat," Schwarzbher said. "We did have a six-inch water line burst from the dam washing away, but I do not think anybody was without water for very long. Most of those affected were in the McLaughlin subdivision."

"Right now there is no danger of more flooding because of the low water left in the lake. The road between the two lakes is not a major problem because residents have a back access road to use."

County Manager Mike Wood confirmed some complaints were received from Eulon Loop of people being out of water. He was updated on Tuesday morning by Mike Dean, Hoke's utilities director.

"I believe everybody's water is back on, the repairs have been done, and the

crews have valved off everything," Wood said.

Schwarzbher said he also kept Cumberland County officials apprised of the status of potential flooding of Rockfish Creek because there had been a concern it might cause Upchurch Pond to overflow on the Cumberland side. He said Sunset Lake near Arabia fared well because it was five-feet below the normal level when the rainstorms began.

"We still have some high areas of water at bridge levels on some of the roads down stream of McLaughlin," Schwarzbher said. "People should just be cautious."

"I do not know if McLaughlin dam will be rebuilt because it is privately owned. It would probably be up to the owner to decide that."

Schwarzbher said McLaughlin Lake burst several years ago after Hurricane Floyd, but was rebuilt. It previously burst during Hurricane Fran, and overflowed during Hurricanes Bonnie and Irene, he added.

In February 1998, the dam, containing the waters of the two lakes, burst shortly after repairs were completed at the request of the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

The dam was left with a gaping hole in its dike until it was later repaired.

In Hope Mills just across the Hoke border, the waters of Hope Mills Lake rose so rapidly that its dam broke on Monday. The local fire department evacuated 30 residents at Happy Valley Retirement Center prior to the failure of the dam.

"I want to thank all of the volunteers from Rockfish's fire department, deputies, the N.C. Highway Patrol, and employees of the DOT who helped during this time of emergency," Schwarzbher said. "What a Memorial Day!"



McLaughlin Lakes residents are stranded when the road between the twin lakes is eroded by flood waters.



Scene on Phillip Church Road, which was closed due to flooding.

## Government meetings are listed

Listed here are the regularly scheduled Hoke and Raeford meetings. Meeting dates and times may be changed due to holidays and other conflicts.

### County

The board of commissioners meets the first and third Mondays of each month at 7:30 p.m. Public input sessions are held immediately after business is conducted during the first-of-the-month meetings.

The planning commission meets the second Thursday at 7 p.m. The board of adjustment meets the first Wednesday at 7 p.m.

County meetings are conducted in the commissioners' meeting room of the Pratt Building at 227 North Main Street.

The board of elections meets the second Tuesday of the month at 5 p.m. in the board of elections office in the Pratt Building.

The Raeford/Hoke Economic Development Board meets the second Tuesday of each month at 8 a.m. in the Depot (Chamber of Commerce Building).

The Hoke County board of education meets the second Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m.

The phone number for county offices is 875-8751.

### City

Listed here are the regularly scheduled City of Raeford government meetings.

Meeting dates and times may be changed due to holidays and other conflicts. (September's meeting has been rescheduled to September 10 due to the Labor Day holiday.)

City of Raeford council meetings are held the first Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. However, this month's meeting will be held the second Monday, September 12, at the usual time.

Board of adjustment and planning board meetings are held when there are matters before the boards to be addressed. The planning board meets the third Tuesday at 6 p.m., and the board of adjustment meets the second Monday at 6 p.m.

All meetings are held in the Council Chamber, City Hall, 315 Main Street.

The phone number is 875-8161.

**NOTICE**  
**Call of Special Information Meeting of Members**

A special information meeting of **Raeford-Hoke Museum, Inc.**, a North Carolina nonprofit, is hereby called to be held on Wednesday, June 11, 2003, at 9:00 a.m. at Raeford-Hoke Museum located at 111 South Highland Street, Raeford, State of North Carolina, for the transaction of business of said nonprofit, for the purpose of securing a loan from Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture, desired by the nonprofit and a resolution of the Board of Directors, recommending that said loan be secured in order to obtain sufficient funds for the purchase of the facility. In order to secure these funds to accomplish the purpose of the nonprofit, all or substantially all the assets and property of the nonprofit, whether presently owned or hereafter acquired, shall be encumbered to secure any loan obtained.

Rural Development  
P.O. Box 250 • Elizabethtown, NC 28337  
(910) 864-3179, ext. 4

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