



Restoration of Rainelle Flood-Control Channel Begins

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Contact Billy Wolfe | 681.205.9418

RAINELLE, W.Va. -- Restoration work has begun on two flood-control channels in the town of Rainelle, which was devastated by flooding last June.

The West Virginia Conservation Agency and its contractors are removing sediment from channel beds and clearing thick brushy growth from banks. Starting Monday, the West Virginia National Guard will begin transporting the debris to a central site for incineration.

For Rainelle Mayor Andy Pendleton, the work is a welcome sign of progress.

“Everybody is calling me amazed and happy that this work is happening,” she said. “They feel a sense of relief.” She specifically thanked WVCA staff and Gov. Jim Justice for allocating funding for the project.

The Sewell Creek and Boggs Creek channels were built between 1959-1961, and have had little maintenance in the years since. Over time, sediment has accumulated and the channels have become overgrown with brush and small trees. This project will restore the channels to as-built conditions.

WVCA hopes to complete the work by mid-June. Contractors will work weekends to expedite progress.

Preliminary work began in January when watershed technicians began recording elevation measurements on the channels. These measurements were then compared to the channels’ original designs to determine how much sediment had accumulated, and how much erosion had occurred along the banks.

Once restored, the channels will be better suited to handle flood waters and divert them away from homes and businesses.

The flood last June was classified as a 1,000-year flood event and would have overwhelmed the channels even if they had been in pristine condition, said Brian Farkas, WVCA executive director.

The original project was designed and constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and turned over to the city in 1962. The channels have lacked proper maintenance since construction.

When designed, the corps said the project would “provide near-complete protection to the town from flood equivalent to the flood of record, and partial protection from infrequent greater floods.”

One mile of the Sewell Creek Channel and more than 3,000 feet of the Boggs Creek Channel will be restored. The total cost of the project is \$209,900.