

2009 Highway Department Report

The Winter of 2008-2009 was interesting. It started late (2 days before Thanksgiving) and ended early (1 day after Town Meeting). There were only 29 events (17% less than normal) but we received 112" of snow (9% more than average). We had a bad ice storm in December, 41% of the winter storms included rain (last year it was 50%), and the largest snowfall was only 16 1/2". We posted roads from March 13 to April 20, but "mud season" wasn't that bad.

Spring actually started in mid March and allowed us an early start on cleanup. We started sweeping winter sand and making gravel road repairs in late March (about 1-2 weeks early). Painting crosswalks and parking stalls was done in late April. Road grading, with dust control additives, was started in April and finished the first week of June. The Treatment Plant Road Bridge, which was opened to traffic in mid-December, was completed in mid-May. In June, we paved Hamel Road, Cross Road, and the rest of Lake Avenue. Also during June, we cleaned all the catch basins.

With the arrival of Summer in the middle of June, we erected the now infamous "One-way Loop". The trial period lasted 2 weeks and suspended due to citizen complaint, lack of need, and the wrong direction of travel. The positive aspect of this trial was it didn't work, but was tried. June and July were very rainy months and quite difficult for both the tourist industry and the Highway Dept. In July we did all the roadside mowing. We also replaced a lot of culverts that were rotted and/or in failure. During August, the weather was much better. This allowed us to regrade all the gravel roads, which were in terrible shape due to all the rain.

Fall arrived in September and ushered in beautiful weather. We continued with drainage projects and did some miscellaneous paving. We grader shimmed Angel Brook Road, the short section of Nutting Road, Bradford Road, the 1st mile of Jobs Creek Road, and the first hill on Trow Hill Road. In October, we installed a "Sunapee Swirler" at Burkehaven Harbor. This project was a joint venture with LSPA to protect Lake Sunapee. They provided the materials and we provided the labor and equipment. A win-win situation. In November, we started our annual contest of cleaning the ditches of leaves and debris before the winter snows prevented us doing the work. This year we added a new tool to the campaign. A high speed blower was mounted on the Kubota which allowed us to just blow the leaves away instead of picking them up. This machine saved us about 2 weeks of time and we got all the ditches cleaned before snowfall. The first plowable snow arrived on December 5th.

This year we received 50.88" of precipitation, which is 27% above normal. During the last 5 years we have been between 27% and 59% above normal. This above average moisture has caused changes in drainage patterns and additional wear and tear on our infrastructure. The damage from these rains has resulted in a lot of extra costly repairs to the roads.

Should you have any questions or comments related to our operations, please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached at 763-5060.

Sincerely submitted,
J. Anthony Bergeron (Tony)
Road Agent