

THE VIEW FROM THE SWAMP—GARLAND SWAMP

By Russ Moat

On Tuesday, May 6th, I had the pleasure of taking a stroll along Garland Swamp Road with our new Town Manager, Dana Lee, and our new Road Supervisor, Jim Scott. I stroll this road several times each and every day, rain or shine, in the service of escorting my long-nosed lovelies, Grace and Diane. (I am the one carrying the poop bag.) I have walked up and down the road over 1,000 times and have watched how the water flows, or doesn't. Erosion, both mechanical and hydro, and other stuff -- that is for another story. Sooo, back to this story. The three of us walked and talked and some of us waved our arms about rather frenetically to celebrate the arrival of the mayflies. Dana told me that at some point in the past an "assessment" had been done on the roads in Poland and plans were developed regarding maintenance, repairs, upgrades, etc., for the many miles of roads within Poland. The dirt roads were conspicuously absent from this process, so there was no plan for our beloved Garland Swamp Road nor for other dirt-encrusted brethren. What has ensued has been lots of deferred maintenance and what might be categorized as crisis intervention.

We looked at the two culverts that go under GSR and noticed that they were somewhat clogged, perhaps collapsed, and the debris and gook (technical term) were impeding the water flow and seemed to be creating an environment for the growth of some green slimy stuff. We looked at the cutting away of the road surface by the yearly "grading" and the snowplows. We looked at the stagnant lake across from 51 GSR that was the result of last year's attempt to divert water flow. We talked about the chronic drainage problems, the sandy/salty piles on the sides of the road, the dangerous entrance/exit at the north end of GSR, the poor and/or lacking signage, and the problem of speeding.

The short-term plan is to clean up the past winter's mess along the side of the road, replace signage, and repair the culvert areas, including cleaning/straightening the streambeds to improve the water flow. The road itself has several problems that will require long-term planning, budgeting, and assistance/cooperation of the owners to develop a plan to really fix the road and to deal with the chronic erosion issues. Mr. Lee hopes to engage the services of an engineer to look at the road and its issues and to assist in developing a plan for the northern entrance to GSR.

I left the meeting feeling very encouraged and that both Dana and Jim are men of action. They are dealing with many alligators in the bigger swamp, but I think that we will see some improvement before summer's end. Dana will be at the annual meeting in July. This will be, in part, an opportunity to get to know each other, an opportunity to further discuss the Jordan Shore Drive rebuilding, and to begin a dialogue about GSR and other issues that may be of concern to the Tripp Lake community.

And now my sermon on speeding. The posted speed limit on GSR is 25 MPH. I have tried driving at 25 and it feels too fast. It is too fast because it beats the crap out of my vehicle and there are dogs, cats, mothers, fathers, grandmothers, grandfathers, children, grandchildren and perhaps other unnamed creatures that may cross my path. Many of the houses are very close to the road, creating blind spots for both the driver and the aforementioned creatures. The speeders are not always "them" (from away); the speeders are often "us" who live here. No names listed, but, if your name has any of the letters between A and Z, it is you....so please slow down and drive as if your loved one might step out in front of your vehicle. ~The Major of 17 Garland Swamp Road.

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