

Brook Report Spring 2023

Rainfall and drought conditions

The good news is conditions have improved in Maine. On Thursday, the U.S. Drought Monitor updated its map for the state, shining a light on the fact that the state is now nearly 100 percent drought-free. (US Drought Monitor report May 2, 2023)

This is the report of rainfall for Oxford County from the May 1, 2023 storm. (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration 5/1/23)

...Oxford County...

2 NE Waterford 4.78 in 1014 AM 05/01 Trained Spotter

Peru 4.31 in 0919 AM 05/01 CWOP

Hartford 1.4 N 4.28 in 0910 AM 05/01 COCORAHS

Otisfield 3.84 in 0915 AM 05/01 CWOP

Bethel 6 SSE 3.76 in 0721 AM 05/01 COOP

Andover 3.8 W 3.65 in 0730 AM 05/01 COCORAHS

Oxford 5.3 SW 3.51 in 0800 AM 05/01 COCORAHS

Lovell 3.24 in 0915 AM 05/01 CWOP

Demark 3.16 in 0915 AM 05/01 CWOP

4 WNW Newry 3.14 in 0545 AM 05/01 Trained Spotter

Rumford 2.97 in 0915 AM 05/01 USGS

Fryeburg 2.59 in 0919 AM 05/01 ASOS

As a result of so much rain in a 24-hour period all the brooks were radically changed, and roads were washed out.

Sucker Brook May 14

I started my observations at the culvert on Mill Hill. The tannin is not as dark as in previous years, due to the heavy rainfall earlier in the month. This brook usually has quite a bit of debris and while there is some scattered down the brook again this year, I believe due to the storm surge being so high there is less blockage this spring. It is easy to see the high-water mark and new channels carved into the bank that are now dry. I pulled a tire out of this part of the brook.

The culvert on Amy Trail looks solid. The banking on the brook levels out here and there isn't as much run off. The Canada mayflower (*Maianthemum canadense*) is carpeting the banks down here. As I approach the campground's first set of trailers, I am pulling more garbage out of the brook. Bottles, toys, and food wrappers. I note other loose building materials on the banks.

The brook has little undercut along the banking.

Johnson Brook May 14

Starting up stream close to the Waterford Rd seen through the trees. This part of the brook tends to have deeper pools and is sandier. There is little undercut along the bank, the high-water mark is spread out on each side of the brook because it's so flat. The water is running well, little debris is blocking the flow. At the culvert on Johnson Road one side of the brook is blocked and the other side is clear.

Crossing the road, the brook continues to run freely, the alders are bent over but not in the brook. This side rarely has debris. Where the stone wall crosses the brook some of the big rocks have been pushed out of place. It is amazing to think of the force it took for this to happen. The bank is still soggy on each side. The water did not reach high enough to ruin a cool fort someone had built or the little faery houses. At the mouth of the brook geese are feeding and the reeds are growing.

Kedar Brook May 14

This brook has changed dramatically from the bridge down to the lake! The Struck's retaining wall by the lawn will need work to push the granite blocks up against the bank again. The first bend is now a huge rock island, the channel is much smaller now and there are a couple trees down and a couple with the roots exposed. The second bend is a much larger beach with a heavy sand deposit and deep pools. The brook broadens as it flows closer to the mouth, the water is quiet, there isn't any debris blocking the flow all the way to where the mouth empties into the lake. The water is clear throughout.

Stony Cove Brook May 21

The deluge has made an amazing transformation of this normally quiet and disappearing brook. The pools are deep in places and there are new channels, some of which are starting to dry up. One can see the water line from the storm in early May, the mouth of this brook is currently accessible by canoe which is unusual any time of the year. There is little evidence of debris in the channels, where the water level has started to recede. The brook is moving back underground. An abundant amount of greenery with moss and the low-lying plants, and there are holes to watch out for when leaping from one rock to the other. A noticeable darker color of tannin than usual. There is no garbage in this brook.

Lenassi Brook May 21

This brook always runs fast but the combination of the severe storm in early May with the less powerful storms the brook is running higher than normal. The pools are well past my knees, there are a couple of new channels further away from the mouth that are still running strong. This brook rarely has any significant amounts of debris in the water itself. The force of the water from the storm earlier has uprooted large trees that have snagged on trees across the brook, water is now running freely under the roots. A great deal of sand has been moved to the wider portions of the brook, more than I have seen in previous years. Significant wildlife activity is evident by the prolific amounts of deer, raccoon, and turkey tracks. The tannin is very dark which is unusual for this brook in late May. There is not any garbage in this brook.

Once again, this year we enjoyed experiencing the change from winter to spring. A Maine spring is always so variable and we saw it all, from summer-like temperatures, ice out on April 14, the return of the peepers and loons, the crazy deluge that saw water everywhere and debris washing down roads and trails, a mid-May freeze warning, the smell of the clean crisp air (and pollen), and then that almost overnight burst of green. The lovely thing about living here is that we all roll with the punches enjoying whatever Mother Nature throws at us and adapting to the less pleasant aspects... like ticks and blackflies!

Happy Spring and onward to a joyous Summer!

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Struck

T'ing-T'ing Doore