January 2025

New Study Looking at Long-Range Solutions for Brook Road area

Brook Road in Middlesex today

After devastating floods and washouts two years in a row, Brook Road in Middlesex has been rebuilt with travel along the road, and access to homes again possible. However, if you drive or walk along the road with an eye toward the brook, it is easy to see the continued risks of more erosion and landslides.



Looking to the future, what can we as a community do to:

- best provide access to properties
- maintain a route that is safe to travel,
- avoid expensive and time-consuming rebuilding after rain events

Some community members have come together to begin answering this question.

The *Great Brook Futures Project*

The *Great Brook Futures Project* is being led by Mike Kline, a river ecologist who lives in Middlesex and knows Great Brook well. The work is being sponsored by the Middlesex Road Committee, a local committee of volunteer neighbors.

Over the next two years, the *Great Brook Futures Project* will work with University of Vermont and Norwich Engineering faculty and students, Vermont Agency of Natural Resources staff, local residents and volunteers to collect and analyze river, road and weather data and geology to help find long-term solutions to curb ongoing erosion. Middlesex is doing its homework to help show what is needed to keep people and property safe in the long run.

The *Great Brook Futures Project* will:

1) *Collect data* and evaluate alternative engineering or natural solutions that will stabilize the brook and its hillslopes to reduce future hazards and costs to the town and property owners

2) *Provide benefit-cost information* to the town and property owners wanting to explore home buyouts or alternate road and drive alignments to protect against future flood or landslide damage.

Work has already begun at no cost to the town. This includes:

- Aerial drone imagery and fine scale topography maps to support stream and slope stability studies.
- Collecting data on road infrastructure, stream movement, and maintenance and stream stabilization costs to support possible restoration projects.
- Collecting geologic and river information needed to develop cost-effective solutions.

What's Next?

The data collection listed above will take place over the next year and will put us in a good position to obtain the hazard mitigation funding that is typically available. Assuming that we are successful with getting grants, it may take another year or so to look at alternatives and complete restoration designs. If there are more cost-effective ways to stabilize the brook and avoid/minimize the type of post-flood maintenance we are caught up in now, then we will seek additional funding to do on-the-ground projects.

Stay Informed

We plan to keep you up-date with what is happening with the Great Brook Futures Project.

- Updates on Front Porch Forum
- Periodic informational meetings
- Project information on the Whats Next Middlesex website: https://www.whatsnextmiddlesex.org/great-brook-futures-project.html