

AFTERMATH OF JANUARY FLOOD

The flood of January 19-21 was a record. Preliminary discharge measurements from the U.S. Geological Survey gauging station in Willsboro put the Boquet's floodwaters at 12,200 cubic feet per second (cfs). The highest previous recording was 11,800 cfs in 1925, one year after installation of the gauge.

Damage estimates to publicly owned facilities in the County - such as highways, roads, bridges, buildings and water supply systems - are at \$2.4 million. Another \$3.2 million in damages has been filed by residents and businesses. Thanks to Ray Thatcher and the County's Disaster Preparedness Office, extraordinary efforts were made to quickly assess flood damage, thereby enabling Essex County to be declared a national disaster area by Presidential decree.

As a national disaster area, local governments and residents are eligible through the Federal Emergency Management Act (FEMA) for reimbursement for damages sustained during the flood. Now the County is eligible to apply for FEMA "hazard mitigation" funds so that we may be better prepared for the next flood. Project funding, however, is on a competitive basis. Other NY counties were also declared national emergencies, with a total of some \$100 million worth of damage in the State. All disaster counties now compete for the \$15 million available to initiate projects that will significantly reduce future risks to health and safety.