



the HEATH

bulletin | January 2011

Major works necessary on Heath dams and ponds

Over the next weeks and months the City of London Corporation will be talking to Heath users and local residents about essential and costly works which must take place on the pond-dams over the next two or three years.

The first issue is this: three of the ponds on the Heath are classed as large raised reservoirs under the Reservoirs Act 1975. These dams are safe and stable and regularly inspected but new hydrological studies show that the important "spillway" (or capacity for controlled overflow) is inadequate in the rare and worst-case scenario of extremely heavy extended rain, the sort of rainfall that we have a 1 per cent chance of seeing every 100 years. The second issue is that the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 will soon amend the Reservoirs Act 1975. New standards will be imposed to ensure higher levels of security against floods, taking into consideration the likely changes in future storm patterns.

We are following the best advice, and will continue to do so but this is a major project for the Heath and its funder, the City Corporation. Since the details of the main study emerged last year we have been assessing options, under the guidance of Professor Andy Hughes. As the

statutorily-appointed 'Panel Engineer', Professor Hughes is independent of the City Corporation. Although the likelihood of a major flood is very low, the potential consequences are very serious, so Professor Hughes is recommending that work needs to be done on these reservoirs in the next two to three years. This may be forced upon us if we delay.

These works will not just affect anglers and swimmers but all those who enjoy the ponds throughout the year. Nature-lovers concerned about wildlife, habitats, trees

and other Heath users, will also have views. Informal talks with key user groups are starting now, and a formal proposal will be developed in the spring, with a view to a final decision on options in the summer, before a planning application – and formal consultation - next year. The works themselves should start sometime in 2013. They could cost well over £10 million, funded by the City of London and take up to two years to complete.

We hope that Heath users will understand how important these works are if we are to properly manage the risks that a chain of dams in an urban area brings to nearby residents.



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At the conclusion of the main construction period the works will appear raw and crude. However with effective landscape design, Nature will do her work and new landscapes around the ponds will emerge. Leading landscape architects and environmentalists have been engaged to consider ideas to soften the impact of some of the necessary new physical structures. In a few years time everyone will be able to view the Heath with just as much pleasure as they do today but with the added benefit that the risk from extreme flood events is mitigated.

In tackling this issue, the understanding and co-operation of all those who use the Heath and live around it is vital. The aim is to ensure the final result is a safe and beautiful Heath and ponds that can be enjoyed by all.

[Further details including FAQs.](#)

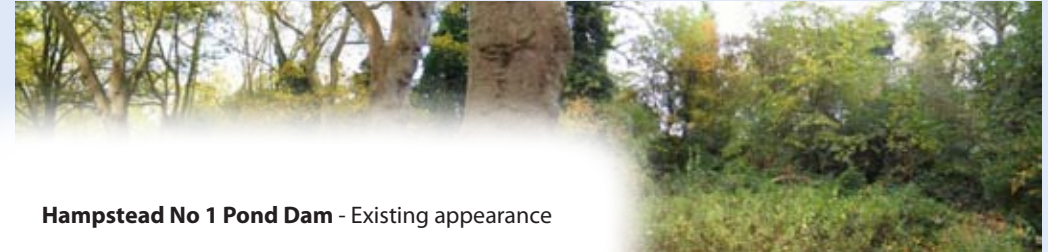
Any comments should be sent to:

damsandponds@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Potential wildlife benefits of dam and pond works

Although there may be short-term effects, in the long term these works are likely to benefit wildlife.

1. Water quality will improve, through increased flow and turbulence in outflows.
2. There is potential for habitat creation, such as marginal flora and reedbeds. This will benefit fauna such as dragonflies and amphibians.
3. We may be able to carry out silt management to improve the long-term health of the ponds.
4. We may find opportunities to improve edge profiles and create islands.
5. Some species, such as frogs and toads, are only in the water for a short period of time, so we will limit damage if we can avoid such times.
6. There may be opportunities to increase people's enjoyment of nature through new viewing opportunities.
7. There will be a full environmental impact assessment which will consider the effects on wildlife and will seek to improve and protect habitats and species.
8. Specific mitigation will be made for protected species.



Hampstead No 1 Pond Dam - Existing appearance



Hampstead No 1 Pond Dam - Possible appearance upon completion



Hampstead No 1 Pond Dam - Possible appearance a few years after completion

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