

Town of Hardwick – Flood Recovery and Resilience Update

Prepared for the August 7, 2025 Select Board Meeting

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1. Economic Development Administration (EDA) Grant – River Modeling

- **Status:** River modeling of the Lamoille River and Cooper Brook is on track to be completed by fall 2025.
 - **Consultant:** SLR International
 - **Milestone:** Five flood mitigation alternatives have been selected for refinement and prioritization.
 - **Purpose:** Provides the technical foundation for Hardwick’s flood mitigation priorities, supports local permitting and infrastructure decisions, and feeds directly into regional planning efforts.
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2. Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Relief (CDBG-DR)

- **Applications Submitted:** Two federal disaster recovery pre-applications submitted for flood mitigation and downtown Lamoille River planning.
 - **Status:** Applications due at the end of September, 2025.
 - **Note:** Creative framing used to meet eligibility given Hardwick’s State MID status.
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3. Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) – NRCS

- **2024 Projects:** Five sites—three private, two municipal (41 Brush Street and former Inn by the River).
 - **Update:** Engineers hired; construction anticipated by late 2025.
 - **Note:** May be final year of program availability due to national-level constraints.
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4. Property Buyouts

- **Progress:** Five more structures acquired; Nine property owners have received disbursements.
 - **Total Funded:** 20 properties (FEMA + FRCF combined).
 - **In Progress:** 41 Brush Street demolition slated to begin in September; additional town-owned properties moving forward.
 - **Status:** Program remains closed to new entries until new funding sources are secured.
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5. Municipal Planning Grant (MPG) – Granite Street Historic District

- **Consultant:** SLR hired following Steering Committee and Select Board approval.
 - **Next Steps:** Field inventory with CAE is active (25 responses received); public workshop series to begin later this month at Atkins Field.
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- **Focus:** Emergency response coordination, historic structure resilience, and community-driven preparedness.
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6. Jackson Dam Feasibility Study

- **Lead:** Caledonia County Natural Resources Conservation District (NRCD)
 - **Consultant:** SLR International (same firm leading the EDA river modeling)
 - **Purpose:** Evaluate the future of the Jackson Dam, including potential removal or redesign options, with a focus on upstream/downstream flood risk, sediment management, and resilience implications for infrastructure and ecological health.
 - **Structure:** A multi-partner steering committee is engaged in the review process.
 - **Next Steps:** Site visits, modeling scenarios, and stakeholder engagement through the fall of 2025.
 - **Cost Benefit:** No direct cost to the Town; long-term benefit may include elimination of maintenance burdens and reduced downstream hazard exposure.
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7. Stream Gauge Initiative – Lamoille Watershed

- **Partners:** LCPC, USGS, watershed towns, HED.
 - **System:** Manual gauges being explored for multiple locations to support watershed-scale flood monitoring.
 - **Rationale:** Provides essential data to inform floodplain management and forecasting without the high O&M costs of satellite-linked systems.
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8. Volunteer MOUs & Surge Capacity Coordination

- **Organizations Involved:** NEKO, KURRVE, LeARN.
 - **Drafted Elements:** Volunteer tracking, mutual aid deployment, SignUpGenius training, crisis cleanup coordination.
 - **Goal:** Strengthen surge capacity and clarify responsibilities during future events.
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9. Emergency Response Infrastructure – Supply & Support Center

- **Update:** A new mobile trailer has been acquired and is staged at the Hardwick Police Department.
 - **Function:** Serves as a flexible field base for shelter supplies, emergency equipment, and volunteer coordination during events.
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10. Watershed-Based Planning Strategy

- **New Focus:** Working with Watersheds United Vermont to develop a whole-watershed resilience framework that connects upstream actions to downstream vulnerabilities.
 - **Purpose:** Coordinate upstream/downstream flood solutions and long-term restoration.
 - **Linkages:** Jackson Dam study, StreamWise outreach, VLT conservation, EDA modeling
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11. Emergency Management Seminar Participation

- **Hardwick Role:** Highlighting integrated municipal–community hybrid model.
 - **Focus:** “The Hardwick Plan” and volunteer-driven components such as Local Volunteers, neighborhood response, and the Emergency Supply and Support Center
 - **Materials Shared:** The Hardwick Plan, volunteer playbooks, shelter agreements, and neighborhood response structures.
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12. River Corridor Bylaws

- **In Process:** HPC working to present for a 2025 Unified Development Bylaws update.
 - **Application:** Regulates mapped river corridors of the Lamoille River and Cooper Brook and other perennial streams.
 - **Impact:** Reduces risk, ensures Act 57 compliance, and opens access to future state/federal resilience funds and Tier 1A eligibility.
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13. Outreach – Tax Bill Insert

- **Distributed:** One-page recovery insert included with all August 2025 tax bills.
 - **Includes:** Project list, upcoming forums, contacts, and ways to get involved.
 - **Intent:** Maintain transparency and invite further community input.
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14. Ripple Effects: Watershed Forum

- **Dates:** September 3, 10, 24 and October 1 at Jeudevine Memorial Library.
 - **Themes:** Climate, Beavers, Dredging, and Dam Removal
 - **Speakers:** Regional experts, community leaders, partner organizations.
 - **Access:** Free and open to all.
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15. Regional & Statewide Leadership

- **VCRD Leadership Summit:** Hardwick selected to present on volunteer emergency response and hybrid governance strategies.
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- **NVDA NFIP 101 Training:** Town staff invited to speak on floodplain administration, resilience zoning, and post-flood permitting.
 - **Impact:** Reinforces Hardwick's role as a model for proactive, community-embedded flood recovery.
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16. Additional Highlights

- **Education:** "Writing for Flood Recovery" workshop completed.
 - **Media:** Ongoing Hardwick Gazette articles to inform residents.
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Summary

Hardwick continues to implement a comprehensive, layered flood recovery and resilience strategy that leverages federal and state programs, community partnerships, and proactive planning. With CDBG-DR pre-applications submitted, EWP engineering underway, MPG efforts active in the Granite Street district, and river modeling nearing completion, the Town is steadily advancing both immediate recovery and long-term adaptation goals. The Jackson Dam feasibility study and stream gauge initiative reflect a growing commitment to watershed-scale coordination. Meanwhile, continued work on river corridor bylaws, installation of emergency equipment, and preparation of MOUs with volunteer partners ensure that Hardwick is operationally ready for future events. Through outreach efforts like the Ripple Effects Watershed Forum and statewide leadership engagements, the Town is setting a strong example for how rural communities can build resilience from the ground up.