

Summer Updates 2025

from Joe Pete Wilson, Town Supervisor

Community Day and Fireworks

Keene Community Day on July 5 was amazing. The weather was perfect, there was a great crowd, and the fireworks were outstanding. Thanks to all who attended and made the event so lively! It took a big team of volunteers to set up and manage the event; thank you for working in the heat! The membership and leadership of the Ausable Club were very generous in sponsoring the fireworks. Thanks so much for your generosity. We are already working on plans for next year. If you want to be involved, give the town hall a call or look for announcements, 518-576-4444.

Hurricane Road Bridge Replacement

Replacement of the Hurricane Road bridge off Route 9N, across from Baxter Mountain trailhead, is set to begin. The bridge span has been purchased and the contract for construction has been awarded to Alpine Construction, LLC. Alpine will begin mobilization at the end of July and plans to complete the bridge this year. The new span will be considerably longer in order to handle the flow of water generated by the intense rainfall we experience on a regular basis.

Details: Essex County owns this bridge and the project is managed by the County; funding is through an \$850,000 grant from the NYS Bridge New York program. Thanks to all the residents on Hurricane Road who have been patient while we put together the engineering and funding to build right-sized bridges and begin to break the cycle of repairing infrastructure that is too small for the demands placed on it.

Townwide Road and Culvert Resiliency Planning

The Hurricane Road bridge is just one example of the vulnerability of our road infrastructure here in Keene. Many of our roads are constructed of gravel, they traverse steep terrain, and they are located along streams and rivers. This means we have lots of culverts, bridges, and ditches to maintain. The Town of Keene has twice as many bridges as any other town in Essex County. Over the past few years, the town has been eligible for FEMA funding to help us repair storm damage to our roads, culverts, and bridges. Last year, Highway Superintendent Reggie Whitney and I developed a Townwide Road & Culvert Resiliency Plan and the Town Board unanimously adopted it. The plan identifies vulnerable roads and culverts and will provide solutions for improvements designed to meet the demands we face. The goal is to keep our roads and culverts from being washed out rather than having to respond to emergencies on a year-round basis. When roads wash out, there is a significant safety risk and emergency repairs are expensive. The Resiliency Plan will position the town to be eligible for grant money for bridges and culverts, it will qualify us for FEMA mitigation funds to upgrade our existing infrastructure, and it will provide plans for smaller projects that we can fund on an annual basis. If we don't try to get ahead of the storm damage, we will have difficulty keeping our roads safe and we will always be spending on emergency repairs.



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Wild Parsnip Management at Marcy Field

The invasive species Wild Parsnip is present at the south end of Marcy Field. The main concentration is alongside Airport Road at the end of the runway and along the first 100 feet of the walking path. Last year growth in a few areas was alarming, so we started a treatment program.

Expert advice was contributed by Essex County Soil & Water and an invasive species expert.

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The plan we chose to follow involves mowing in the early summer before plants go to seed and then mowing again in late summer. We started last year and the immediate result was that smaller wild parsnip plants grew, so they are easier to avoid.

We are in our second round of mowing now, and the size of the wild parsnip plants is smaller and some areas show a much smaller patch of regrowth. We will continue to mow at the appropriate time and monitor the results. If the spread continues, we can evaluate the need for more intense management.

If you find Wild Parsnip or other invasive species on your property, below are resources that can help you.

<https://adkinvasives.com/Invasive-Species/>

<https://www.adirondackstewardship.org/invasive-species>

Jackrabbit Trail Parking Lot

A new parking lot has been constructed at the end of Alstead Hill Road, and parking for the Old Mountain Road/Jackrabbit Ski Trail is going to be a little easier from now on. A new trail connecting the parking lot directly to the ski trail will be built this Fall. This new trail will keep people from having to walk or ski down the road. This will make it safer, especially on busy weekends. This project was made possible due to the generosity of the landowner, Ed Palen, who donated the land via an easement, and a private donor, who paid for the construction costs. This parking lot is off the road so parking is safer, and it provides and protects access to a popular ski and hiking trail on state land.



Community Center Planning

The Community Center is currently closed due to the discovery of Vermiculite and asbestos. As part of the planning process to map out the future of the building, an environmental assessment was conducted to check for hazards. The report found Vermiculite in the attic had spread to the basement. We are now exploring the cost of options for dealing with the problem so we can make plans for future.

In the meantime, we are taking steps to make sure the skating rink can operate and that a warming room will be available. We will keep the community informed as we learn about options for the future of the community center.



Town Board:

Joe Pete Wilson, *Town Supervisor*, Robert Biesemeyer, Teresa Palen, Christopher Daly, Ann Hough

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Mon.–Thurs., 7:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.