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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – photos included

Exhibit Commemorating Historic Flood of 2000 in the Works

Lake Hopatcong, N.J. (August 12, 2020) – Twenty years ago, this week, on August 12, 2000, Lake Hopatcong residents awoke to a stormy Saturday morning. There had been a bit of rain the day before but there was no warning or forecast to prepare the area for what the day had in store. A severe thunderstorm swept in at approximately 9 a.m. and continued for close to six hours, with the rain, at times, coming down at a rate of two to three inches per hour.

Occasional downpours continued for the next couple days and by the time the last rain fell on August 14, Jefferson Township had recorded 18.6 inches of rain and the gage height at the Hopatcong State Park dam reached 11.80 feet, the highest level recorded since the dam was built in 1828. The storm concentrated on a 10-mile radius of Sparta, dropping some four times the average rainfall for the entire month of August in just a few short days, leaving homes and businesses flooded throughout the region. It was Lake Hopatcong’s “1,000-year event.”

To commemorate the twentieth anniversary of this historic flood in northwest New Jersey, a photography exhibit with accompanying video is being researched and designed by the Lake Hopatcong Foundation (LHF) in partnership with the Lake Hopatcong Historical Museum. The exhibit is being funded by a New Jersey Council for the Humanities (NJCH), a state partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

“This project fits perfectly into our work encouraging a culture of sustainability and stewardship on and around New Jersey’s largest lake,” said LHF Executive Director Jessica K. Murphy. “It provides a unique opportunity to use local history to increase awareness and provide a better understanding of the importance of climate resiliency.”

In preparation for the exhibit, the Lake Hopatcong Historical Museum is seeking photographs and video of the flood to add to their archives. Submissions can be made by contacting LHHISTORY@att.net.

"The 'Great Flood of 2000' was a truly historic event, one which we will probably never see the likes of again," said Lake Hopatcong Historical Museum President Marty Kane. "Doing an exhibit of an event many people remember and utilizing images and video obtained from the community will be great fun for all."

Intended for display this year at the LHF Environmental & Cultural Center, 125 Landing Road, Landing, NJ, the exhibit has been postponed, due to COVID-19 until sometime between August and October 2021. The photo collection and video will then be made available to other interested organizations for exhibition and programming purposes.

"We thank the NJCH for their consistent support for programming and exhibits at the LHF Environmental & Cultural Center," said LHF Grants and Program Director Donna Macalle-Holly. "We also appreciate their flexibility in allowing us to postpone this exhibit to a time when we can gather again safely."

The Lake Hopatcong Foundation is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to protecting the lake environment and enhancing the lake experience by bringing together public and private resources to encourage a culture of sustainability and stewardship on and around New Jersey's largest lake, for this and future generations. To learn more, visit lakehopatcongfoundation.org.

The Lake Hopatcong Historical Museum, located in a 19th century building, which originally served as a Morris Canal locktender's house, offers an engaging and informative look at the history of New Jersey's largest lake. To learn more, visit lakehopatconghistory.com

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Dow's Boat Rental & Bait Shop during the flood of 2000. Photo courtesy of the Lake Hopatcong Historical Museum.



Main Lake Market during the flood of 2000. Photo courtesy of the Lake Hopatcong Historical Museum.