

Preparing for Flooding Especially in Downtown Fairfax

Heavy rains and high tides force water flowing through Corte Madera Creek to back up overflowing its banks starting in Fairfax and running downhill from there. The Merwin Street bridge and the culvert running underground through downtown are choke/restriction points forcing the volume of water in the creek to exceed the flow of water running under the bridge and through the culvert. The result is water overflows the creek bed and spills into the streets causing low lying commercial and residential property flooding. I've seen this happen. Back in the late 80's (or early 90's) the back half of the lumber yard flooded. You can just imagine what that excess water did to downhill properties.

Businesses on Bolinas and Broadway should build "flood gates." This is simply a plywood panel cut to fit in the doorway of a store front. What I have seen are an aluminum channel, that fits the thickness of the plywood, mounted vertically to the walls that the ply slips into. Next have at the ready a number of sandbags to stack up against the plywood. Collectively this is not waterproof but it goes a long way to preventing total flooding.

Next, plan what you will do in the event of a flood developing... flashlights, batteries, lanterns, rain gear, plastic sheeting, charged cell phone, duct tape, move cars to high ground, pumps (make sure they are in working order), helping your neighbors, move anything that could be severely damaged if wet to counter or tabletop height (files, computers, printers, etc). I recall that we had a good 3' of water running down Bolinas, from the park, and turning down Broadway during past floods.

In terms of Fairfax Lumber the power can go out but we stay open. We use generators and lanterns to run things. We stock all sorts of disaster supplies and take pride that when things get dicey we were there taking care of business.

- Augie Venezia, *Fairfax Lumber and Hardware*