



NEWS photo Paul McGrath

WEST Vancouver District crews survey damage to Spencer Drive in West Vancouver that resulted when Pipe Creek overflowed and sent a half metre (two feet) of water cascading down the road Tuesday evening.

## Water, water everywhere

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WHILE emergency crews performed the grim task of digging through a massive landslide in North Vancouver Wednesday, elsewhere on the North Shore torrential rains continued to wreak havoc with roads, sewer and water mains.

In North Vancouver District, one of the huge GVRD water mains that serves both the North Shore and the Lower Mainland south of Burrard Inlet broke Wednesday morning, sending a plume of water about three metres (10 feet) into the air and forcing public works crews to scramble to route the flow of water around the break.

Crews worked through Wednesday and Thursday morning to drain water from the 54-inch (1.4-metre) pipe in order to get at the break to repair it, while a section of Mount Seymour Parkway was closed to traffic for part of Wednesday morning.

Bill Morrell, spokesman for the GVRD, said utilities staff don't yet know what caused the break, but it's possible recent cycles of freezing and thawing combined with extreme rain caused soil movements that stressed the pipe.

Capilano College cancelled classes for its 14,000 students and all evening events at the campus on both Wednesday afternoon and Thursday, after water to the North Vancouver campus was shut off as crews worked to repair the broken water main.

Authorities also closed

Lynn Canyon Park as well as access roads and trails in the Lower Seymour Conservation Reserve because of flooding and the potential for landslides.

In West Vancouver, public utilities crews didn't fare a lot better.

On Tuesday night around 7 p.m., residents of Spencer Drive in the Altamont area found a river running through

their street after Pipe Creek burst its banks and flooded the street with about a half metre (two feet) of water.

The river was running right down Spencer," said Nai Jaffer, superintendent of utilities for West Vancouver District.

Crews dammed the road and diverted the creek back to its original location. But they continued to fight a battle

with flooding on Wednesday, digging to get at a one-metre-wide (3.3-foot) rock that was blocking a culvert. "It's just washing out the road constantly. We're watching that for more danger."

Jaffer said there was no danger to residents, but a water main, gas lines and electrical wires that run under the


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# Sewers flood WV basements

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road were threatened.

If the road washes out completely, the damage could be very expensive, said Jaffer.

The last time a similar event happened in February 2001, it cost the municipality \$120,000.

He added that flusher and pumper trucks have been on the scene, sucking up water from flooded basements in the area.

Elsewhere in West Vancouver, residents dealt with nasty situations as the

volume of rainwater overwhelmed the sewer pipes, causing toilets to back up in Ambleside and flood half a dozen basements in the 1400- to 1700-blocks of Argyle with "dirty water." Flooding was also reported in the Glenmore Drive area of the British Properties. Collingwood school closed its elementary school campus on Wentworth Avenue Wednesday pending assessments on nearby slope stability from geotechnical engineers.

Roger Wright, headmaster of the private school, said,

"We're just exhibiting extreme caution. We just want to make sure it's 100 per cent safe."

The school is just below Hollyburn Mountain, where land clearing has been taking place on a nearby development on British Pacific Properties land.

The 480 students who attend the school had the day off Wednesday while engineers assessed nearby slopes.

The school was open yes-

terday. Engineers planned to check culverts in the development above the school while heavy rains continue.

Jaffer said West Vancouver utilities crews were operating on emergency-shift levels, with crews working around the clock to clear culverts and drains and keep the water flowing downhill. "The minute we have a blockage anywhere it's going to result in huge damage," he said.

