

Dyke construction to cost \$1.6-million

BRADFORD - Protecting the Holland Marsh from another Hurricane Hazel will cost at least \$1.6-million, according to figures released by the South Lake Simcoe Conservation Authority.

Information officer Peter Seibert said the project is expected to cost that much because marsh roads, which run on top of the dykes, must also be reconstructed.

The authority estimates that the marsh dyke will be breached in three places if another storm like Hazel were to occur under similar soil conditions: near Springdale where the North Schomberg River enters the canal, on the south dyke near Concession 5 of King, and on the north dyke near River Rd.

Some protective measures have been started on the Springdale portion of the dyke with the installation of sheet piling.

Estimates vary on potential damage if the marsh is flooded to the same extent, but muck

crops expert Matt Valk believes crop damage alone would amount to \$18-million during the harvest season.

"And that doesn't include machinery or any other property. You know, after Hazel (which hit this area 25 years ago Monday) they had to overhaul every piece of machinery," he said.

Dick Hunter of the ministry of natural resources office in Richmond Hill said reconstruction of the dykes will be phased over the next few years. "The harsh financial reality is you've got just x-number of dollars to work with in any given year."

He said the Ontario government also has requests for funds from other conservation authorities hard hit by Hazel 25 years ago this week.

The authority has asked the ministry for funding for a phase of dyke reconstruction next year.