



News Release

WISCONSIN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Joint Force Headquarters ▪ 2400 Wright Street ▪ Madison WI ▪ 53704

DATE: September 27, 2010
2:00 p.m.

TO: Governor Jim Doyle

FROM: Mike Hinman
WEM Administrator

SUBJECT: Situation Report #9 on Severe Weather/Flooding

Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) is currently in Level 4 activation due to the flooding in the State. A Duty Officer and Senior Duty Officer are monitoring the events and responding to inquiries and requests for support from county emergency management departments and state agencies. A State of Emergency remains in effect for Buffalo, Jackson, Columbia, Clark, Trempealeau, Marathon, Portage and Wood Counties.

Below is the latest update:

Columbia County:

Press Release from WI Department of Natural Resources

The situation along the century-old Caledonia-Lewiston Levee has deteriorated overnight. There are numerous boils – water bubbling through the levee itself -- and seepage under the toe of the 14-mile-long levee. Of particular concern is a boil in the Blackhawk area located south and east of State Highway 33. Despite taking precautionary measures, including building what is called a sandbag chimney around it, the boil has grown larger and is passing water and sediment through the dike. Department of Natural Resources engineers report there is a possibility of collapse, but none has occurred at this time. No section of the dike – locally known as levees – has collapsed.

“Blackhawk area of Portage is our major area of concern. This structure is wood, dirt and sand, constructed by farmers and horse teams 120 years ago,” said Greg Matthews, public affairs manager for the Department of Natural Resources. “Should the dike fail, it is very hard to predict how quickly or how wide the collapse would be. For this reason we are urging people to listen to instructions from Columbia County emergency authorities.”

Matthews reports that the entire 14-mile Portage dike system is saturated and in poor shape.

“Our crews are on 24-hour surveillance. When we see a problem we immediately act to repair it,” he said. Forty staff are monitoring the dike system and numerous sandbagging operations are in process.

The Wisconsin River is at an all-time flood high at 20.6 feet, flooding from heavy rains in the western and northern parts of the state. The river is expected to crest as early as today, but is expected to take several days after crest to recede from current flood levels. DNR's Incident Management Team will continue to maintain surveillance not only in the Blackhawk area but along sections of the 14-mile-long levee for several more days.

I-39 is open. There may be traffic delays due to construction, not flooding issues.

Mississippi River Counties: Counties along the Mississippi River are experiencing minor to moderate flooding. Runoff from last week's heavy rain is now entering the Mississippi River, causing the river to rise. Many locations along the Mississippi River are expected to crest at or above flood stage, with a few spots reaching moderate flood.

Wood, Portage and Marathon Counties: As flood waters continue to drop, local officials have begun damage assessments on Tuesday.

Trempealeau County: Trempealeau County had widespread damage from last week's heavy rains. Over the weekend, local emergency management officials have been conducting damage assessments.

Eau Claire County: County Emergency Management reports 6 homes in the Altoona area are reporting basement flooding.

Chippewa County: About a half dozen residences along the Chippewa River on 86th Street, 26th Avenue and 27th Avenue in the Village of Hallie, Chippewa County, were flooded on Saturday and Sunday.

Pepin County: Approximately 20 businesses on the riverside of Main St. in Durand all have water in the basement. Officials report the river is cresting now and will be up through Monday afternoon. The city lost one of its wells but is still running on other wells. City of Durand sanitary system is running at capacity and has three backup pumps ready to use if need be. Two county roads are closed because of Chippewa flooding.

Taylor County: The County is reporting a number of county and town road closures due to flooding.

Juneau, Sauk and Iowa Counties: Report scattered minor flooding and plan to conduct damage assessments this week once the water recedes.

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE: Counties along the Mississippi River, the Eau Claire area and Columbia County are under a flood warning. Several of the rivers have crested or are expected to crest in the next few days.

Road Update: For current road conditions, dial 511 or visit <http://www.511wi.gov>