



Tuesday, April 09, 2013

Flood watch for Crawfish, Rock rivers

By Lydia Statz
Union staff writer

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JEFFERSON - The National Weather Service in Sullivan has issued a flood watch for the Rock and Crawfish rivers in Jefferson County.

The watch will be in affect from Wednesday afternoon until further notice, as pro

jections indicate that minor flooding is possible on the Rock River in Fort Atkinson and near Lake Koshkonong, and on the Crawfish River near Milford.

The alert indicated that flood stage might be reached in those areas by early Thursday afternoon.

Several rounds of rainfall and isolated thunderstorms throughout the week were forecast to drift into northern Wisconsin, with 2 to 3 inches of precipitation to fall on top of already-saturated soil or frozen ground. This, in addition to the rain that occurred Monday morning and today, could bring rivers across southern Wisconsin to minor or moderate flooding stage.

However, Donna Haugom, Jefferson County emergency management director, said many areas of the county already have been experiencing flooding.

"There are different gauging stations," she said. "We're probably close to moderate flooding on all of the gauging stations that I'm looking at right now. The water seems to be coming up rather quickly, and that's what concerns me."

Haugom echoed the National Weather Service in saying that residents living near rivers that typically experience flooding should keep an eye on the water levels this week. People who feel it might be necessary to protect their home from rising water should contact their municipality for sandbags.

"I'm not sure if anybody is to that point yet," she said. "The last time I spoke to an individual on Blackhawk Island, they were still OK, but with the water levels rising, I'm not sure if that's going to remain that way or not through the remainder of the week. So I will keep in contact with those individuals in the lower portion of the county to keep track of what they're doing."

Haugom pointed out that river levels in the county were not a concern just one week ago; however, the water has risen quickly in a short amount of time.

"I think it's coming down from our northern counties; plus with the rain that we're having, it's jumped up quite a bit," she said. "I looked at the forecasts and we're still only to a moderate flooding on all the gauges, but it's higher than I'd like."

A gauge reading at 10 p.m. Monday indicated that the Rock River was at 15.25 feet in downtown Fort Atkinson. Minor flood stage is at 16 feet, and the river is expected to reach that level Thursday afternoon, and crest at 16.1 feet on Saturday.

At Lake Koshkonong, where the minor flood stage is 10 feet, the river measured at 9.74 feet Tuesday morning. The Rock River is expected to reach flood stage by Thursday morning, and crest at 10.6 feet Saturday before slowly receding.

Downstream at Newville in Rock County, the river already has reached minor flood stage, measuring at 5.91 feet at 6 a.m. Tuesday. Flood stage at that point is 5.5 feet. No future projections were available for that location.

The Crawfish River at Milford measured at 6.44 feet Tuesday morning, where minor flood stage is 7 feet. The weather service said flood stage may be reached by Thursday afternoon.

The portion of the Rock River in downtown Jefferson is not included in the flood watch, but National Weather Service projections do show that water levels might rise into the minor flooding stage this week.

The river in Jefferson measured at 9.06 feet at 6 a.m. Tuesday. Minor flood stage in Jefferson is at 10 feet, and the river is expected to crest at 10.3 feet on Sunday, according to current projections.

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