

# Floods move off river

Low spots engulfed; holiday events might face changes

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**Gazette staff**

JANESVILLE

When Greg Isler got to his father's property Wednesday morning, rainwater was just starting to reach the backyard garden. Within the hour, almost all of the land surrounding the house was under water.

Just three hours later, the basement had 6 feet of water in it.

The Isler family was one of many in the area dealing with Mother Nature's downpour Wednesday morning that left city and county roads across Rock County flooded and farm fields with standing water.

With just a 30 percent chance of showers and storms overnight, area officials were hoping this morning's commute would be less waterlogged. The Rock River is expected to keep rising through the weekend, which could mean sandbagging and changes for Fourth of July events next week.

Since Friday, Janesville has received 6.69 inches of rain at the city's wastewater treatment plant, often a couple inches in a matter of hours. The down-pours have created new flood victims in low-lying areas, rather than those used to the rising Rock River patterns.

"It's kind of unusual when we started getting the calls for areas up east of Evansville ... then down south, kind of east of Clinton," Rock County Sheriff's Capt. Gary Groelle said.

"It was just too much (rain), and it came up on the roads," he said. "It was different than what we experienced in the past where the river was seeing the results of the flood. Now, it was more inland, which was unusual."

Residents along Highway 14 east of Janesville in Emerald Grove tried to remain calm. Water at the home that Isler's father rents out at 1426 S. Cemetery Road was 6 inches short of reaching the kitchen, but the Islers maintained the water with pumps.

The property is at the bottom of hills and open farmlands, so water streamed into the house even after the rain stopped.

Another problem was a tree that fell a few weeks ago in a nearby creek, creating a dam. Water streaming downhill backed up and kept flooded basements from clearing out.

The sheriff's office continues to monitor more than a dozen roads facing flooding, and areas such as Lake Leota Park in Evansville were closed Wednesday.

Water in the park was deep and moving fast, and City Administrator Dan Wietecha said it could be days before water recedes and the park reopens. He predicted the flooding will be gone by next week and will not interrupt Fourth of July celebrations scheduled to begin Wednesday.

The National Weather Service is forecasting a chance of showers and thunderstorms through Saturday. By then, authorities will know whether sandbags will be needed or events should be relocated.

"I think we'll have a better idea on Friday what we're dealing with," Groelle said.

Janesville Parks Director Tom Presny guessed that sandbags would be needed in Traxler Park and likely along the river wall downtown, but those decisions will be made Friday or into the weekend. The city has an "ample number of filled sandbags" prepared in April that were not used, he said.

Today, Presny anticipated the city would close the public boat launches in Traxler and Riverside parks and monitor the Ice Age Trail. By the weekend, officials should know whether roads within the parks will close.

The Rock Aqua Jays' Independence Day on the Rock events at Traxler Park remain in place, President Joel Shapiro said, but possible changes will be discussed at a board meeting tonight.

Flooding caused the water ski team to cancel its show Wednesday night.

A slow, no-wake restriction remains on the Rock River throughout the county.

Kayakers in Walworth County got a taste of the fastmoving water Wednesday afternoon on the White River near Grand Geneva Resort in the town of Lyon, when a woman was thrown from her kayak.

The woman grabbed a tree branch, and a man from another kayak jumped in to save her but became pinned between the woman and the branch because of the water's force, said Sgt. Ken Brand of the Walworth County Sheriff's Office. Brand and another sergeant used a life preserver to rescue the man and woman. The woman was treated at an area hospital for a leg injury.

Brand advises people not to travel on any river or creek because they are "way beyond flooding stage and extremely dangerous."

Russell Schwartz of 1418 S. Cemetery Road took precautions against flooding after the 2008 flooding that caused cracks in his basement walls and floor. Those improvements five years ago saved his two beloved jukeboxes this time.

Isler and Schwartz can only hope the rainstorms diminish so their homes can dry out.

"It's only water," Isler said. "We just have to wait for it to subside and keep pumping, and no one got hurt. Now we just need Mother Nature to cooperate."



Photos by Nick Agro/ [nagro@gazettextra.com](mailto:nagro@gazettextra.com)

Above: Rock County Sheriff's Department Deputy Dwayne Shaw carries Carly the guinea pig and bags belonging to the Mueller family as Hayden Mueller, 12, watches from the doorway Wednesday in Emerald Grove. Hayden and his sister left their home with the help of Shaw to go to their grandmother's until the waters subsided.



Photos by Nick Agro/ [nagro@gazettextra.com](mailto:nagro@gazettextra.com)

Greg Isler shovels debris left by receding floodwaters on Cemetery Road in Emerald Grove on Wednesday. Isler's father rents a home that had six feet of water in the basement after torrential rains early Wednesday hit an already soggy southern Wisconsin.



Presny



Cornstalks rise out of the water in a flooded field off Highway 14 near Emerald Grove on Wednesday. Only crops in low-lying areas will be seriously hurt by the recent rains, but officials say that if the area gets much more rain, there could be crop losses.

## HOW MUCH WATER?

Area water levels are:

Rock River at Newville: 4.97 feet. Flood stage is 6.5 feet. Rock River at Lake Koshkonong: 8.87 feet and expected to reach 10.7 feet by next week. Flood stage is 10 feet. Rock River at Afton: 8.82 feet and expected to reach 10.1 feet by Sunday Sugar River at Brodhead: Minor flooding at 7.08 feet and expected to reach 7.9 feet by today Turtle Creek at Clinton: Flooding at 8.74 feet. Flood stage is 8 feet Turtle Creek at Beloit: 11 feet. Flood stage is 9 feet Yahara River at Fulton: 8.52 feet. Flood stage is 10 feet

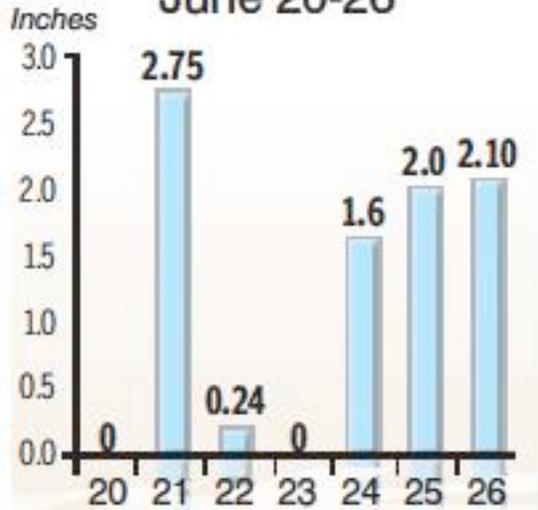
Authorities are monitoring the following areas for flooding concerns:

Highway 59, between Highway 138 and East Union Road, which was closed South Carvers Rock Road from East Creek Road to East Larsen Road, which is closed Highway 14 from Evansville to Union Highway 14 and Carvers Rock Road Highway 14 and Emerald Grove Road Turtle Creek in Clinton Sugar River Park in the town Avon County G and Philhower Road County X for a mile east of Clinton Clinton Corners Road between County X and the state line Highway 67 and Pearson Road West Avon North Townline Road and South Avon Store Road Tolles Road north of County M Area of 10503 Kidder Road

JANESVILLE

# Janesville precipitation

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SOURCE: Janesville Wastewater Treatment Plant

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Below: Vehicles drive through water on a flooded Highway 14 in Emerald Grove. The road was down to one lane due to the flooding.