

Rock River overflows banks at Lake Koshkonong, flooding homes

By [NEIL JOHNSON](#) ([Contact](#)) Thursday, April 18, 2013 - 2:15 p.m.

NEWVILLE—Dozens of Edgerton-area residents are still filling sandbags in Newville along the deluged banks of the Rock River at Lake Koshkonong, where the flooded river has surged over its banks, leaving streets and homes under feet of water.

In low-slung areas of the Mallwood subdivision on the lake's west end, several homes are flooded. Residents were sandbagging other spots in an attempt to staunch floods at their property, which they hoped wasn't as futile as it was in the flood of 2008.

A crew of 75 volunteers will be filling sandbags all day and late into the evening today as flood waters continue to rise at Newville, said Ellendale Road resident Mary Sherman.

“If it keeps coming up, it'll be a disaster area again, for sure,” Sherman said.

The United States Geologic Survey predicts that the river at Lake Koshkonong could reach 13 feet by early next week. But trees along the flooded shores at the Mallwood subdivision offer perhaps the most telling measure of flooding there.

On trees in low parts in the subdivision, high water marks on the trunks stop about 3 feet below flood marks still visible on the trees from 2008's flooding.

Still, residents such as Greg Swenson from 1747 E. Road Five in the Mallwood subdivision are feeling the effects of flooding.

Swenson, who is from Rockton, Ill., just closed on his lakefront home Monday. It now has a basement full of Lake Koshkonong flood water, and with the lake still rising, he said water is only a few inches from coming up through the floorboards.

Swenson, who bought the home as a summer retreat, sloshed through thigh-deep water in his yard in hip waders. He was chomping a Cohiba

cigar after he and friends finished clearing out furniture from the house and putting appliances on blocks.

He was smiling and seemed in good spirits despite the fact he's owned a house just three days and already it's on the verge of being swallowed by flood waters.

He was told the lake would never come up like it did in 2008.

"Well, here we are," he said.

Swenson said if there is major damage to the house, he would likely make an insurance claim and use some of the cash to raise his house a few feet.

Swenson hitched his cigar toward a two-story home next door with foundation that had been raised after the 2008 flood.

"We might do what's done there," he said.

Crews working to move furniture in a residence next door said they had seen water rise along the shore Wednesday as rainfalls of nearly three inches overwhelmed the already sodden ground.

Nearby, dozens of coots, a breed of backwater fowl, had found a new home in Swenson's submerged front yard.

"They're never up here unless it's flooding," said Cathy Milhouse, who lives just up the hill from Swenson on East Road Five.

Milhouse said during 2008, she was the only person left on her street. She had water up under the deck of her two story home, but she was able to stay there without power.

Today, flood waters were about 40 feet shy of her deck.

"I don't think it'll come up as high as it did that year (2008)," Milhouse said. "At least I hope it doesn't."

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