

High water complicates life along the Rock

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By Danielle Letenyei/Gazette Staff

NEWVILLE -Living on the Rock River in Newville for more than 23 years, Leo Bryant, 84, is no stranger to high water.

The river has risen to meet him at his back door at least four different times since he has been in his home at 715 Ellendale, located on the eastern shore of the river.

Losing your yard to the overflowing river is expected when you live on the water, Bryant said.

"You're aware, if you see the rain coming, then you're going to have problems," Bryant said Saturday.

The Rock River crested at 11.48 feet on Saturday, almost to the level the National Weather Service defines as a moderate flood-12 feet.

The water flooded Bryant's basement.

Experience has taught Bryant to store things off the floor, including his washer and dryer.

"I rode out a typhoon in the South China Sea , so this is no problem for me," Bryant said.

Bryant and many other residents living along the river and the banks of Lake Koshkonong had a hard time getting their boats in the water because their docks were underwater.

Danny Deegan, of 642 Ellendale, has delayed putting his pontoon boat in the river because of the high water.

"Right now I don't have a pier so I can't put it in," Deegan said.

Some less fortunate residents lost their docks to the swift currents.

Deegan said he saw part of a dock float down the river with a cinder block used to weight it down still on it.

At the Anchor Inn, located on the west side shore of the river, three piers plus one with a sailboat still attached to it, floated downstream and got caught on the tavern's pier, Outside Manager Tim Squire said. Saturday afternoon, Squire was helping people launch their boats into the lake. His main task was to keep them off the ramp, which was under water.

Despite the water levels, the number of boaters was still pretty steady, Squire said.

"The current is unbelievably strong out there," Squire said. "There are boats hitting piers and causing a lot of damage."

At the nearby Rock River Marina , buoys in the water mark where piers are located underwater.

"We advise people not to even go out because there is so much debris in the water," Jim Lytle, sales manager at

the marina, said.

The marina is pretty quiet these days, co-owner Dale Nastala said. Typically the business is extremely busy this time of year.

But the piers are under water and the dock is unavailable to the public for launching because of the dangerous conditions, Nastala said.

On a typical weekend at this time of year, the marina sells about \$1,500 in fuel for boaters. With their pumps under water, it has not had a sale yet, Nastala said.

Marina employees have been busy, however, rescuing stray boats that float away from their docks. Nastala said he rescued 10 boats last week.

The Department of Natural Resources has designated the Newville river area as a no wake area, Nastala said.

"The DNR is giving tickets left and right," Squire said.

Edwin DeJesus of Milwaukee is upset about the almost \$300 in tickets he got boating on the river last weekend. There were no signs posted in the area telling boaters about the wake restrictions and business owners didn't know they existed, DeJesus said.

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