

# Rivers predicted to crest

By Alexa Zoellner [azoellner@dailyunion.com](mailto:azoellner@dailyunion.com) | Posted: Friday, April 7, 2017 10:11 am

JEFFERSON — Heavy rainfall and northern snowmelt during the past week have area rivers running high, but not approaching major flood levels.

None of Jefferson County's rivers have reached flood stage, though levels are projected to crest over the weekend and early next week before slowly declining.

“(The waterways) are all high right now,” said Donna Haugom, director of Jefferson County Emergency Management. “This isn't uncommon.”

Three parks in Jefferson County have been closed due to high water: Kanow Park on Rock River Road, Town of Ixonia; Rock River Park on County Highway B, Johnson Creek, and Cappie's Landing on Jefferson Road, Watertown.

Bark River Road and Kutz Roads, both east of Fort Atkinson, are closed to traffic.

Haugom said areas generally at risk for flooding are near Blackhawk Island west of Fort Atkinson, where the Rock River enters Lake Koshkonong, and the confluence of the Bark and Rock rivers on Fort Atkinson's east side.

“There are three rivers that I generally monitor within the county and that's the Rock, Crawfish and the Bark rivers,” Haugom said. “We have monitors for the Rock River in Watertown, Jefferson, Fort and Lake Koshkonong. Then the Crawfish and Bark have their own monitors.”

The monitor for the Crawfish River is in Milford and the Bark River's monitor is in Rome.

“The Rock River is (monitored) in four different spots,” Haugom said. “It'll crest in Watertown on Friday, Jefferson on Saturday, and is scheduled to crest in Fort Atkinson on Sunday and then by Lake Koshkonong on Monday. You generally wait a day because the water flows down.”

Along the Rock River in Watertown, the water levels were at 4.41 feet this morning, below flood stage of 5.5 feet. At flood stage, there is widespread lowland flooding in rural areas around Watertown. Current projections show a rise this week.



## HIGH WATER

HIGH WATER — Jefferson County rivers have been experiencing their usual spring rise, but not near any major flood levels. Water levels are projected to crest over the weekend and early next week before slowly declining. The three rivers generally monitored by Jefferson County Emergency Management are the Rock, Crawfish and Bark rivers. For more photos, [click here](#). — Daily Union photos by Alexa Zoellner.

Flood stage is labeled as a 10-year flood by the National Weather Service office.

Historical high-water marks in Watertown include 7.81 feet in 2008, 6.96 feet in 1997, 6.32 feet in April 1959 and 6.19 feet in March 1979. A high of 6 feet was recorded in April 2013, for the seventh-highest on the list.

Downstream in the City of Jefferson, the Rock River water gauge remains below the 10-foot flood stage at 8.79 feet. Water levels are projected to rise into the weekend and then decrease early next week.

Based on available records, the 2008 flood, which peaked at 15.64 feet, marked the first known time the water levels had ever surpassed the major flood stage level.

The previous record in Jefferson, according to National Weather Service, was 12.84 feet set on April 2, 1979. Additional high-water records were in April 1993 with 12.29 feet, June 2004 with 11.51 feet and April 2008 with 11.35 feet.

The water level in Fort Atkinson was recorded at 15.11 feet this morning. It is projected to rise to around 15.6 feet by Sunday, before declining later into next week. Flood stage is 16 feet.

Record levels were seen in June 2008 when the water reached 20.9 feet in Fort Atkinson.

All current river forecasts take into account past precipitation and any rain expected within the next 24 hours.

Prior to 2008, based on Daily Union archives, it was the flood in 1929 that topped the record books in Fort Atkinson. The recording gauge at the Rock River in Fort Atkinson was installed in 1998 and the method of recording the levels was altered.

Historically, crests in 1929, 1979, 1959 and 1993, respectively, generally have been considered to be among the highest levels recorded. Additional high-water marks occurred in April 2008, June 2004, April 2009 and July 2010.

Downstream on Lake Koshkonong, water levels were recorded at 9.52 feet. At 10 feet, water spreads into low-lying areas around Lake Koshkonong and is considered flood level. The record level is another 5.6 feet higher, set in June 2008, at 15.12 feet. Water levels peaked at 12.39 feet in April 2013.

Current projections show water levels hitting about 10.1 feet around Monday, maintaining that level for a few days before slowly declining later in the week.

At Newville in Rock County, the water levels were recorded this morning at 5.68 feet. Flood stage is 6.5 feet.

No accurate records are available to reflect the water levels achieved during the 1929, 1979 and 1959 floods at Newville. However, the levels were recorded at 8.51 feet in April 23, 2013.

For the Crawfish Fiver at Milford, the latest gauge reading was 5.59 feet, below the minor flood stage

level of 7 feet.

As with other monitoring stations within Jefferson County, the record high along the Crawfish River was recorded in June 2008 at 13.59 feet. Previous records were in 1959, 11.15 feet, and 1979, 10.06 feet.

Haugom said that the Crawfish River is expected to crest today, April 7. Also, the Bark River was reported at 2.91 feet, far below the record high of 4.59 feet in 2008 and just below “action” stage.

For those living in low-lying areas, local municipalities have sandbags available.

For further information about river levels, contact the local municipality or Haugom at (920) 674-7450 or [dannah@jeffersoncountywi.gov](mailto:dannah@jeffersoncountywi.gov).