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CITY OF MUSCATINE PRESS RELEASE

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MISSISSIPPI RIVER IS RECEDING BUT COULD RISE AGAIN

Uncertainty of future precipitation keeps forecasted river levels fluctuating

MUSCATINE, Iowa – The Mississippi River crested April 10 at 21.95 feet, the third crest this spring and the sixth highest all-time at the Muscatine gauge, but the river has been slowly receding with a slow drop expected to continue into the middle of May before dropping below flood stage. The Mississippi River was at 20.37 feet as of 1:15 p.m. Tuesday (April 16) and is forecasted to drop below major flood stage (20-feet) on Monday, April 22.

That forecast can change depending on the amount of precipitation in the Upper Mississippi River Valley.

“Right now the forecast is for the Mississippi River to stay between 20.2 and 20.4 feet through the weekend,” Brian Stineman, director of the Department of Public Works (DPW), said. “Once we get below 20-feet, and have confidence that it will stay below that mark, we should be able to reopen 2nd Street and Mississippi Drive.”

That is all dependent on an unsettled weather pattern that is expected over the next two weeks and additional snow melt across the Upper Mississippi River Valley.

The National Weather Service (NWS) in Davenport anticipates that continued warm temperatures will promote additional melting of the snow pack in Minnesota and Wisconsin

accumulated in last week's winter storm (Winter Storm Wesley). That snowmelt crest should reach Muscatine by late April or early May but should not result in rises higher than the already observed peak crests. Heavy rainfall, however, has the potential to cause higher crests than currently forecasted.

The Mississippi River has been above flood stage (16-feet) since March 15 and above major flood stage (20-feet) since March 22.

Once the Mississippi River falls below 20-feet, and staff is confident that it will stay below 20-feet, Stineman said the City will open Structure 2 (flood wall on 2nd Street), remove Structure 1 (flood gate at the entrance to HNI off of Mississippi Drive, and reopen Mississippi Drive to traffic.

The flood panels around the historic homes at the intersection of Mississippi Drive and Mulberry Avenue will remain up for the time being as City staff completes the installation and safety checks of the installation. The installation and inspection is required every three years by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Efforts will begin to clean up Riverside Park as the river continues to recede. The park will remain closed, however, until all debris has been removed and all surfaces have been washed down. Public Works, Parks and Recreation, and the Muscatine Fire Department will be involved in the cleanup effort that will not begin until the river stays below 19-feet.

A wet fall followed by heavy snowfall this past winter in the Upper Mississippi River Valley led to the Spring Flood of 2019. The first crest at Muscatine came on March 18 at 19.34 feet and, after a brief drop, a second crest occurred on March 25 at 20.73 feet. Again the river had a brief drop before rising to 21.95 feet on April 10, the third crest of the spring flood.

That third crest is the sixth highest in history at Muscatine and the third highest April flood. In 1965 following another wet fall and snowy winter, the Mississippi River crested at 24.81 feet on April 29, a level that held the record for the highest crest until the 1993 flood. The second highest April flood came in 2001 when the river crested at 23.50 feet on April 25. The 2001 flood is the fifth highest crest overall.

Six of the top 10 and 14 of the top 25 Mississippi River crests have occurred during the month of April. Three came in July including the record 25.61 foot crest on July 9, 1993, two in junior including the third highest crest at 24.42 feet on June 17, 2008, two in March, two in May, and two in October including last year's 20.73 foot crest on October 13, 2018.

Roads ([Downtown Muscatine Detour Map](#))

- Mississippi Drive is closed between Mulberry Avenue and Iowa Avenue.
- 2nd Street closed at Mad Creek.
- River Road is closed from Cannon Avenue to Sherman Street.
- Highway 22 East is closed between the Fairport Fish Hatchery and Montpelier (Wildcat Den Road area).

Recreation

- Riverside Park is closed.
- Running River Trail System is closed between Cannon Street and Sherman Street, and through Riverside Park.

Facilities

- The floodwall at Mulberry and Mississippi Drive (Structure #1) has been installed.
- The floodwall at 2nd Street and Mad Creek (Structure #2) has been moved into place.
- The flood panels for the Historic Homes (Mississippi Drive and Mulberry Avenue) has been installed.

Events

- No events have been impacted at this time.

Other Measures

Pumps have been set, and appropriate gates closed in various low-lying areas of the city.

Sandbags

The City of Muscatine will provide empty sandbags to residents of Muscatine upon request. It will be the responsibility of residents / business owners to obtain their own sand and fill the sandbags. Empty sandbags can be picked up 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday through Friday, at the Department of Public Works, 1459 Washington Street, Muscatine.

Additional Information

Iowa 2019 flooding www.floods.2019.iowa.gov

Severe Weather Awareness Week and links to local NWS websites www.beready.iowa.gov

National Weather Service – Quad Cities www.weather.gov/dvn/

Levee Breach Study - <http://www.muscatineiowa.gov/745/Levee-Breach-Study>