



CITY OF MUSCATINE
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CITY OF MUSCATINE PRESS RELEASE

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MISSISSIPPI RIVER SLOWLY FALLING BUT CLEANUP WEEKS AWAY

City patiently waiting for river to recede, to begin clean up preparations next week

MUSCATINE, Iowa – The Mississippi River crested at 24.33 feet on Friday (May 3), the fourth highest crest in Muscatine history, and has been slowly falling since. The National Weather Service (NWS) forecasts the river at Muscatine to drop to 21 feet by Friday with just a slight bump to 21.2 feet over the weekend before falling once more.

The Mississippi River is currently at 22.29 feet (as of 11:15 a.m. Tuesday, May 7).

The National Weather Service has lowered the forecast for predicted rainfall in the upper Mississippi River Valley basin and that means that Muscatine will see only a slight rise next week but nothing approaching the most recent crest. Changes in the amount and location of precipitation could impact river levels.

The recent probability information released by the National Weather Service indicates that there is a 50 percent chance the river will be below 18 feet on May 20 and below flood stage by May 27.

The Department of Public Works is continuing to walk the levee system in Muscatine on a 24 hours per day basis with no problems being reported.



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As the river continues to fall, the City will begin to plan for cleanup of Mississippi Drive and Riverside Park, the two areas most affected by the flooding Mississippi River.

"There is a lot of river mud that has been deposited, especially in areas that have been underwater for an extended period of time," Randy Howell, Street Maintenance Supervisor for the Department of Public Works, said. "We will begin to put plans together next week on the cleanup."

Some areas of Riverside Park have been under water since the Mississippi River reached flood stage on March 15. Other sections of the park and portions of Mississippi Drive have been under water since March 23.

As the river recedes some areas of Mississippi Drive are drying out but the City does not anticipate opening up the street until the flood waters are gone, the street is cleaned and inspected, and the traffic signals are reactivated.

"We are fully confident that we will find the street came through this extended period of being underwater in great shape," Jim Edgmond, City Engineer, said. "This event (flood) is exactly what the street was designed to handle."

Once the flood waters recede below major flood stage (20 feet) Mississippi Drive, the Mad Creek bridge on 2nd Street, and River Drive can be inspected.

"Once we complete our inspections and are confident that the river will not rise again into major flood stage we will open the flood gates and remove the berms," Brian Stineman, Public Works Director, said.

The post flood cleanup may take longer than people would like but the longer parts of the city remain under water, the more debris is deposited and the longer the cleanup time.

"People will need to be patient and let our City staff do the work necessary to clean up from this extraordinary event," Kevin Jenison, Communications manager, said.



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RECORD SETTING?

- The Mississippi River has been above flood stage (16 feet) for 53 straight days and that is just two short of the longest consecutive stretch of days above flood stage (55 set during the 1993 flood. The 2019 Spring flood will break that mark on Friday.
- The 1993 flood actually had the top two consecutive days of being above flood stage (16 feet) separated by a three-week period below flood stage. The Mississippi River was over flood stage at Muscatine for 44 days (April 5 through May 19) before going 55 straight (June 10 through August 4).
- In 2019, the Mississippi River at Muscatine has been at major flood stage (20 feet or higher) for 46 straight days dating back to March 23. The old mark was 32 days set in 1993 (June 27 through July 28). That streak will continue to build at least over the course of the next 7-10 days.
- The 1993 flood had a total of 103 days above flood stage during a stretch of 121 days that lasted from April 5 through August 4. Current forecast does not support breaking this record.

MULTIPLE CRESTS

The Mississippi River has crested three times during the 2019 Spring flood with the first crest coming on March 18 (19.34 feet), the second on April 29 (21.95 feet) and the third on May 3 (24.33 feet). The latest crest was just inches short of the third highest crest in Muscatine history of 24.42 feet on June 17, 2008.

There were two crests for the 1993 flood with the first coming on April 25 (21.29 feet) and the second on July 9 when the river crested at a record setting 25.61 feet breaking the previous record of 24.81 feet set on April 29, 1965.

RAILROAD TRACKS RAISED

Canadian Pacific raised the railroad tracks from the switch for the Heinz spur east of the Cedar Street crossing to just west of the Iowa Avenue crossing during the height of the flooding last



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week much the same as Canadian Pacific did in 2014 after the river crested at 23.81 feet on July 4, 2014. Canadian Pacific worked with the City of Muscatine during the track raising event last week

SPRING 2019 FLOOD RECAP

The Mississippi River has been above flood stage (16-feet) since March 15 and above major flood stage (20-feet) since March 22. The record for consecutive days above flood stage is 55 set in 1993 (June 10-August 3). Muscatine has had 53 consecutive days above flood stage in 2019.

The Great Flood of 1993 had 103 days above flood stage during a stretch of 121 days that lasted from April 5 through August 4.

Flood gate Structure 1 (flood gate at the entrance to HNI off of Mississippi Drive, and flood gate Structure 2 (flood wall on 2nd Street) has been closed since March 22. Structure 1 has been opened twice, briefly, to allow Canadian Pacific to move rail cars to and from the Heinz plant.

The flood panels around the historic homes at the intersection of Mississippi Drive and Mulberry Avenue were installed April 9. Although it is not anticipated that the river level will reach high enough for the panels to come into play, City staff completed the installation and safety checks of the installation that is required every three years by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

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 Muscatine history 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.



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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 June 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 Pine Street.
- 2nd Street closed at Mad Creek.
- River Road is closed from Cannon Avenue to Sherman Street.

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.
- Berms have been installed at the #1 Alley on Mississippi Drive and at the Public Works Yard on Washington Street.

Events

- No events have been impacted at this time.



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Other Measures

Seep 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>