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Preparing for the Next Flood

Floods in Iowa are changing. We have entered a period of more widespread extreme rainfall, with storms projected to double in intensity by 2050.

Last year was Iowa's second wettest since such records have been kept. Statewide average precipitation was almost 10 inches above normal, and 27 counties across northern Iowa experienced their wettest year on record. From the end of August through October, Iowans dealt with repeated rainfall and ongoing flood threats for weeks, ranking this period as the third wettest fall (2018 Water Summary, IDNR). From 1988–2016, Iowans endured floods that generated \$18 billion in damages to property and lost crops and nearly 1,000 Presidential Disaster Declarations. [View flood-related disaster information for your county.](#)

Iowans are no strangers to floods. In recognition of March Flood Awareness Month, Iowa Flood Center experts want Iowans to be aware of the innovative tools and technology available to help them understand their flood risks and make informed decisions in advance of a flood. The IFC's Iowa Flood Information System (IFIS) (<http://ifis.iowafloodcenter.org/ifis/en>) is a free online suite of tools that allows all Iowans to access the latest local flood conditions. This user-friendly system displays up-to-the-minute community-specific information on rainfall, stream levels, and more, including:

- Current flood warnings and stream forecasts
- Real-time rainfall maps displaying current conditions and past accumulations
- Real-time and historical stream-level data
- Interactive visualizations

IFIS also provides flood inundation maps for 25 flood-prone communities across Iowa. These maps allow users to see what a forecasted flood crest would mean for their home or business. Maps are available for Ames, Cedar Rapids, Charles City, Clarksville, Columbus Junction, Des Moines, Elkader, Fort Dodge, Hills, Humboldt, Independence, Iowa City, Kalona, Manchester, Maquoketa, Mason City, Monticello, Ottumwa, Red Oak, Rock Rapids, Rock Valley, Spencer, Waterloo/Cedar Falls, and Waverly. The IFC develops new inundation maps every year, including up to four new maps this year (Plainfield, Greene, Shellrock, and New Hartford).



The Iowa Flood Center is based at the University of Iowa and is the nation's only academic center devoted solely to flood research. With the 2019 spring flood season only weeks away, Iowa communities should begin thinking about how to prepare for rising waters.

“With extreme weather and flooding trends on the rise worldwide, now is the time to reinforce our flood forecasting and resilience efforts,” says Witold Krajewski, co-founder and director of IFC. “My vision is to continually expand our services and to do more to serve Iowa and its people.”

With this in mind, the IFC is looking to further develop its network of federal, state, and local partners and is currently establishing new alliances with other states and communities across the nation. As IFC celebrates its 10th anniversary in 2019, the team will participate in numerous outreach events statewide, including the Iowa Water Conference, Iowa State Association of Counties annual conference, the Iowa League of Cities annual meeting, and many more. Watch for IFC at an event near you!

For more information, visit www.iowafloodcenter.org or contact Breanna Shea (breanna-shea@uiowa.edu).

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