



COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
Iowa Flood Center
C. Maxwell Stanley Hydraulics Laboratory
Iowa City, IA 52242-1585
319-335-5841
319-335-5238 Fax

For Immediate Release: March 2, 2020

Contact: Breanna Shea (breanna-shea@uiowa.edu, 319-384-1729) or Jackie Hartling Stolze (jackie-stolze@uiowa.edu, 319-335-6410)

Spring Flood Outlook Heightens Flood Risk Awareness — Iowa Flood Center Stands Ready to Help

The National Weather Service warns that above-normal winter precipitation on top of already saturated soils is making Iowa vulnerable to spring floods (NWS Spring Outlook). NWS predicts widespread flooding in Iowa throughout the spring, with a better than 50-50 potential for major flooding on Iowa's eastern border.

The Iowa Flood Center at the University of Iowa is prepared and ready to help with tools and resources to help Iowans when waters begin to rise.

With the 2020 flood season only weeks away—Flood Awareness Month began on March 1—it's essential for Iowans to prepare for flooding now.

The IFC developed and maintains the Iowa Flood Information System (IFIS) (<http://ifis.iowafloodcenter.org/ifis/en>), a free online suite of tools that allows all Iowans to access the latest local flood information. This user-friendly system uses interactive visualizations to share up-to-the-minute community-specific information on rainfall, stream levels, and more, including:

- Flood alerts and stream forecasts for more than 1,000 Iowa communities;
- Weather conditions including current, past, and future rainfall accumulations;
- Real-time and historical stream-level data;
- Statewide flood map coverage for all 99 counties; and
- Scenario-based flood inundation maps for dozens of communities.

Following the 2019 floods that affected more than 14 million people throughout the Midwest, the Iowa Flood Center is taking proactive measures to expand its services. Working in collaboration with the Iowa Silver Jackets team (a group of statewide interagency partners), the IFC will add over 35 stream sensors to the statewide network to improve flood monitoring and forecasting. The stream sensors measure river levels every 15 minutes and communicate this information to IFIS. IFC will deploy the new stream sensors, most of which were funded by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, by summer 2020.

IFIS also provides flood inundation maps for 30 flood-prone communities across Iowa, with more on the way later this year. These maps allow users to see what a forecasted flood crest would mean for their home or business and prepare accordingly. Maps are available for Ames, Cedar Rapids, Charles City,



Clarksville, Columbus Junction, Decorah, Des Moines, Elkader, Fort Dodge, Greene, Hills, Humboldt, Independence, Iowa City, Kalona, Lake Red Rock, Manchester, Maquoketa, Mason City, Monticello, Ottumwa, Palo, Plainfield, Red Oak, Rock Rapids, Rock Valley, Spencer, Waterloo/Cedar Falls, and Waverly. The IFC develops new inundation maps every year—watch for new community maps set for release in 2020.

“We share this information not to scare people, but to help us all be better prepared for potential flooding this year,” says Witold Krajewski, director of the Iowa Flood Center. “The IFC is committed to helping Iowans deal with this new normal, which includes increasingly extreme weather and more frequent flooding. We serve the state by providing the facts, expertise, tools, and resources of the Iowa Flood Center, and by continuing to expand and deepen our flood forecasting and resilience efforts.”

Doing nothing is not free, Krajewski says. “Better to invest money up front in flood control and mitigation rather than face economic loss, clean-up, and devastation that occurs as a result of a flood,” he says. “At the Iowa Flood Center, we believe in being proactive to reduce the overall cost of flooding for Iowans across the state—in cities, towns, and rural areas alike.”

###