



March 25, 2009 Flood Status Report: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Mountain-Prairie Region

Our on-the-ground managers stressed the dangerous travel conditions during this morning's situation conference call. Several managers are reporting that the area is experiencing the worst blizzard conditions this year. Roads in much of the state have been closed, and travel is difficult and dangerous on those that are open due to heavy and blowing snow falling on top of ice. Many Fish and Wildlife Service offices in North and South Dakota are closed due to the blizzard conditions. We have several assets (boats and personnel) on stand-by in Montana waiting for the weather to clear before they can deploy.

North Dakota:

Cass County (Fargo area) Sheriff's office has requested multiple airboats and operators. The Service has dispatched 3 airboats to Fargo (Arrowwood, Waubay, and Sand Lake). Other offices are sending airboats to area for staging

Bismarck County: An ice jam south of Bismarck on Missouri river will likely to cause flooding in Bismarck. Burleigh County Sheriffs Office has requested 2 airboats and a flat bottom jet powered boat. Long Lake NWR sent one airboat with two operators. We are working to get an airboat and operator from Lake Andes NWR.

Arrowwood Complex (Arrowwood NWR/WMD, Valley City WMD, Chase Lake NWR): Refuge Complex closed – all roads in Stutsman County are closed. Many roads have standing water or water flowing over them. Complex buildings are beginning to flood. Ice jams are backing water up in addition to raising water levels. Both quarters have water seeping through basement walls and back of main office. Entire auto tour route is under water.

The COE raised the road to the Fish Barrier building yesterday and started on permanent berm around building. Arrowwood is working to build an emergency dike/levee to protect a portion of Arrowwood Complex Office (similar to 1997) along the James River due to anticipated backup and flooding of Jamestown Reservoir. Scraper identified for project is unable to reach Refuge due to road closures. COE has identified immediate need to initiate work on emergency levee and is willing to work with Refuge to initiate work immediately.

Key elevation for station structures is 1442 feet. In worse-case scenario existing levees and WCS to be exceeded by 4 feet. Flooding expected within 4–6 weeks. Meeting with COE this week for updated predictions.

Valley City National Fish Hatchery: Employees in GOV housing are threatened by existing 60 to 80' wide gap in ring dike at hatchery entrance road. Work is proceeding on plugging the gap. Hatchery estimates they have one week to repair dike before flooding becomes an issue for residences. Hatchery NOT in imminent danger, but the river is still rising due to local precipitation. Some staff may be cut off from reporting to work due to flood waters.

Hatchery is receiving requests to help with local evacuations including domestic animals. Airboat and operators from Grand Isle ES office to stage at hatchery. Second airboat arriving from Huron WMD.

Devils Lake Complex (Devils Lake WMD, Sully Hill NGP): The road to Sully's Hill NGP is underwater and traversable only in 4 wheel drive due to at least 4 inches of water and mud. Evacuation plan in place and being executed for all buildings at Sully's Hill NGP except quarters. Property being evacuated to Devils lake headquarters. Field Station adding gravel to assist in ongoing evacuation of gear and equipment from Sully's Hill (facilities at Sully's Hill will be demolished after floodwaters subside - biology building, fire cache, residence, cold storage were all planned for demolition prior to flood).

Local runoff (not area flooding) is beginning to flood the new Sully's Hill visitor center. Water on carpets, in AC/heat ducts, and on all windows and some walls. Sheet rock deteriorating in places. Landscape drains failing due to ice dams and culverts are frozen shut. Water flowing over tour route at Sully's Hill. Small dam at Sully's Hill in imminent danger of breaking, which will cause more flooding of tour route and possibly a State Highway. Culverts are frozen shut.

Flooding is likely at Lake Alice NWR and remains a threat to carpenter shop and cold storage building. Need identified for support to construct a levee around 3-sides of Lake Alice NWR facilities (approximately ¼ mile of levee). A crew is assigned to dike work, but there is still no access to construction fill material or rip rap for lake Alice, and load restrictions are in place on all roads leading to Refuge.

Long Lake NWR/WMD: Refuge without power and is closed. Phone service is intermittent. Historical Stone house and office (CCC work area) threatened to be inundated. Both entrance roads have been inundated, North road is now open.

Received an emergency request from the Burleigh County sheriffs office for airboat assistance to perform evacuations in Bismarck. Two staff from the refuge responded to the request.

Souris River Basin Complex (Des Lacs NWR, J. Clark Salyer NWR/WMD, Upper Souris NWR): No Flooding as of 3/23/09. There is anticipated to be sufficient storage in Lake Darling to handle the majority of floodwater on the upper end of the Basin (at least for the next 30-days). Likely to be roads and levees over-topped on J. Clark Salyer NWR (rural county roads and refuge roads, including auto tour route).

Tewaukon NWR: Water is running over roads in many locations. No travel advised in Ransom County. Water is running over at least two of the main dams on the Wild Rice River through the Refuge. River is running in the emergency spillway (about 2 ft) around the main dam holding Lake Tewaukon. Even with current water levels, Refuge does not anticipate lasting damage. All water levels are still manageable.

South Dakota

Sand Lake NWR/WMD: The James River has begun to flood Refuge lands from the North. South of the Refuge, the Elm River has flooded, causing back flooding from the James River on southern Refuge lands. The water is rising quickly on the refuge. Heavy ice cover is complicating drainage and ice jams could cause additional flooding. Heavy winds are expected over the next 24 hours and flooding combined with high winds may cause extensive damage to dikes, water control structures, and roads throughout the Refuge.

Major flooding is predicted for the area over the next week. The James River is expected to crest early next week, however a second crest and associated flooding could occur as dams are opened in North Dakota to alleviate flooding in ND.

Despite rising water levels and flooding of refuge lands, no buildings expected to be damaged by predicted flood levels at this time. However, buildings may become isolated from one another due to flood waters. Roads expected to be flooded, damage likely to occur.

Sand Lake has dispatched airboat and 2 operators to Cass County.

Waubay NWR/WMD: No threats reported. The refuge is providing an airboat and 2 operators to Cass County, ND.