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https://lacrossetribune.com/community/westbytimes/news/kickapoo-river-reaches-epic-levels-in-readstown-in-vernon-county/article_9b0fd3c2-9223-5070-91d6-731f050d1312.html

Kickapoo River reaches epic levels in Readstown in Vernon County

From the Stories, photos and videos: August floods cause damage across La Crosse area series

Dorothy Robson, Westby Times Aug 31, 2018

99¢ FOR THE FIRST MONTH



Kickapoo Creekside was surrounded by water in Readstown on Aug. 29.

Dorothy Robson, Westby Times

Hell has no fury like Mother Nature, and the raging aftermath of a flash flood is just one example of how unpredictable the weather can be.



The Readstown Park shelter was underwater on Aug. 29. Flood waters forced the community to cancel its annual Labor Day celebration.

Dorothy Robson, Westby Times

The village of Readstown and its residents are not strangers when it comes to dealing with the Kickapoo River overflowing its banks. What they weren't prepared for was dam failures further upstream on Aug. 28 and the river to crest to record levels at 22 feet above flood stage on Aug. 29.

Readstown residents Rodney and Crystal Howell said they expected the Kickapoo River to reach the 19-foot mark, but never in a hundred years did they expect it to crest three feet higher leaving a foot of water in their mobile home.



Rodney Howell of Readstown uses a kayak to reach his home on Wednesday.

Dorothy Robson, Westby Times

Shortly before noon on Aug. 29, Rodney Howell received permission to paddle his kayak into the swollen backwaters to check out his home. As his kayak disappeared behind other buildings his wife and mother-in-law, Heidi Schmidt, paced along the water's edge impatiently waiting for him to return or at least show them some sign that he was okay.

Minutes seemed like hours, to the point that Schmidt was threatening to swim out and find him herself if they didn't see a sign soon. Shortly after, Rodney gave a thumb's up sign from the front door of his mother's house, which he checked out first before venturing a short distance away to his own home.

With no water on the first floor of his mother's house he had high hopes heading to his own property, but when he noticed the deck was no longer attached to the building, his hope began to fade. Reality set in when he opened the door to find a foot of muddy muck throughout and everything trashed inside. He carefully made his way to the back bedrooms to retrieve some clothes from dresser drawers that weren't under water. In the process he found a silver lining when the families three cats were scared, but alive and sitting on top of a dresser.



Crystal Howell is comforted by her mother, Heidi Schmidt, after she learned their Readstown home suffered extensive water damage and almost everything inside was destroyed.

Dorothy Robson, Westby Times

Crystal broke down in tears when her husband broke the news to her that their home was not salvageable and almost everything inside was destroyed. Despite their loss, the couple embraced each other and thanked God that what they lost was replaceable, unlike a human life.

Dionne Cary, owner of Kickapoo Corners in Readstown, was disheartened by what she saw as she checked her cell phone app and watched a security video in her business show the water rising higher than ever before.



Kickapoo Corners and other businesses nearby were surrounded by flood water on Aug. 29.

Dorothy Robson, Westby Times

Cary is not new to this type of rodeo and has weathered flood clean-up in Readstown more than she cared to remember. The silver lining for Cary this time around was that the water inside her business appeared to be free of debris, unlike in 2016 when the flood waters were littered with everything from trees, branches and potted nursery plants by the hundreds.

Cary, who just recently finished repairs to the building from the last flood, plans to get the business up and running again come hell or high water — which unfortunately at the moment was calling the shots.



Water has never overflowed the road on the east end of the Readstown Bridge.

Drivers who ignored the road closed barricades on the west side of the Readstown Bridge were soon forced to turn around with several feet of water running over the road on the east side. One man, who simply wanted to do things his way, was ticketed \$310 by law enforcement after he decided not to drive through the water, but to walk across the Readstown Bridge, jump in, and try to swim across the flooded park.



Conservation wardens, Nick King (left) and Nick Caputo from Madison were on hand in Readstown to assist after the Kickapoo River reached record levels on Aug. 29.

Dorothy Robson, Westby Times

It might have been cheaper for him to hop on board the rescue boat which was also set up on the east side of the Readstown Bridge to ferry people across. Madison area conservation wardens, Ryan Caputo and Nick King manned the boat to assist Readstown officials with flood relief efforts. Both of them said they were happy to help.

Clean-up efforts are currently underway in Readstown and in all communities along the Kickapoo River as the water recedes.

📷 +143 From Tribune files: Photos show damage caused by August flooding

Sep. 5: Coon Valley



Debris covers a bridge crossing Coon Creek on Knudson Lane in rural Coon Valley Wednesday.
Peter Thomson, La Crosse Tribune

Sep. 5: Chaseburg



Floodwater from Coon Creek flows over Swain Street in Chaseburg on Wednesday. Gov. Scott Walker tweeted Thursday that the flooding and storms that began on Aug. 17 have caused at least \$208.7 million in damage, including \$98.2 million in damage to homes, \$40.8 million in damage to businesses and \$69.6 million to public infrastructure.

Peter Thomson, La Crosse Tribune

Sep. 5: Chaseburg



Park Drive in Chaseburg is closed Wednesday where washout damage from Coon Creek flood water has made the road unpassable.

Peter Thomson, La Crosse Tribune

Sep. 5: Coon Valley



Corn stalks lie flattened from Coon Creek floodwater Wednesday in a field off Knudson Lane in rural Coon Valley. For more photos and stories from this year's flooding, go to lacrossetribune.com.

Peter Thomson, La Crosse Tribune

Sept. 4 Coon Valley



A street sweeper cleans the mud off of Hwy 162 near Coon Valley.

Erik Daily

Sept. 4 Coon Valley



A pile of debris lies in Coon Valley's storm-battered Veteran's Memorial Park.

Erik Daily, La Crosse Tribune

Sept. 4 Coon Valley



Coon Creek runs through Veteran's Memorial Park in Coon Valley.

Erik Daily

Sept. 4 Coon Valley



Veteran's Memorial Park in Coon Valley has sustained heavy damage from multiple rounds of heavy rain.
Erik Daily, La Crosse Tribune

Sept. 4 Coon Valley



Roger Anderson hoses down folding tables as the members of Coon Valley's American Legion Post 116 clean up after Monday night's high water.

Erik Daily, La Crosse Tribune

Sept. 1 Coon Valley



Anderson Street in Coon Valley.

Erik Daily

Sept. 1 Coon Valley



Jeff Guin, left, and Tim Candahl load destroyed items from the house of Roy and Joyce Stephan of Coon Valley.
Erik Daily

Sept. 1 Coon Valley



Shelby Fire Department volunteer Jerry Roesler cleans mud Saturday from the sidewalk of a home on Anderson Street in Coon Valley.

Erik Daily, La Crosse Tribune

Sept. 1 Coon Valley



Volunteers help load up wrecked items from the house of Roy and Joyce Stephan of Coon Valley.
Erik Daily, La Crosse Tribune

Sept. 1 Coon Valley



Tim Candahl, left, and Mark Skolos of the Shelby Fire Department, load destroyed items from the house of Roy and Joyce Stephan of Coon Valley.

Erik Daily

Sept. 1 Coon Valley



Mark Skolos of the Shelby Fire Department clears a driveway of mud Saturday at a home on Anderson Street in Coon Valley.

Erik Daily, La Crosse Tribune



Sept. 1 Coon Valley



Anderson Street in Coon Valley.

Erik Daily, La Crosse Tribune

Sept. 1 Coon Valley



Volunteers remove the basement contents of the house of Roy and Joyce Stephan on Saturday of Coon Valley.
Erik Daily, La Crosse Tribune

Sept. 1 Coon Valley



Anderson Street in Coon Valley.

Erik Daily, La Crosse Tribune

Aug 30: Ontario



Madelyn Lamb, 17, cleans items pulled from the offices Thursday at Lamb Hardwood Lumber in Ontario.
Erik Daily, La Crosse Tribune

Aug 30: Ontario



Jeff Rueckheim cleans mud-caked lumber Thursday at Lamb Hardwood Lumber in Ontario. The company is trying to salvage what it can of the lumber that was caught in the flood.

Erik Daily, La Crosse Tribune

Aug 30: Ontario



Arturo Aguilar uses a fire hose to clean a bundle of lumber Thursday at Lamb Hardwood Lumber in Ontario. The northern Vernon County village is recovering after heavy flooding triggered by storms Monday night and early Tuesday morning.

Erik Daily, La Crosse Tribune

Aug. 30: Leon



The Greeno family pool is seen pinned up against a shrub outside their home in Leon Thursday as family member Conner, 11, right, views flood damage from when the Little La Crosse River flowed over its banks overnight Monday. Peter Thomson, La Crosse Tribune

Aug. 30: Leon



A message of support for flood victims is displayed outside of the First Congregational Church of Leon Thursday.
Peter Thomson, La Crosse Tribune

Aug. 30: Leon



Lance Greeno, 9, walks his bike away from the family garage Thursday while helping his family clean up in the aftermath of being flooded by the overflowing Little La Crosse River overnight Monday. The garage took in about five feet of water.

Peter Thomson, La Crosse Tribune

Aug. 29: Coon Valley



A house along Old Mill Road in Coon Valley shows damage Wednesday from the force of flood water from nearby Coon Creek which went over its banks during torrential rains overnight Monday.

Peter Thomson, La Crosse Tribune

Aug. 29: Coon Valley



Bree Breckel helps clean up Wednesday at the flooded home of Eleanor Ekern on Nelson Street in Coon Valley. . Most of the neighborhood experienced severe flooding overnight Monday from nearby Coon Creek.

Peter Thomson, La Crosse Tribune

Aug. 29: Coon Valley



The contents of a basement room of the Coon Valley home of Eleanor Ekern show how high the water got when nearby Coon Creek flooded overnight Monday.

Peter Thomson, La Crosse Tribune

Aug. 29: Coon Valley



Debris, including riding lawn mower, lay in silt Wednesday on the banks of Coon Creek in Coon Valley.
Peter Thomson, La Crosse Tribune

Aug. 29: Coon Valley



Traffic once again traverses the Hwy. 14/61 bridge Wednesday over Coon Creek in Coon Valley. The bridge was closed for over 24 hours after the creek flash flooded overnight Monday.

Peter Thomson, La Crosse Tribune

Aug. 29: Coon Valley



With many of the contents of her home now outside to dry, Eleanor Ekern stands in her driveway Wednesday on Nelson Street in Coon Valley. Most of the neighborhood experienced severe flooding overnight Monday from nearby Coon Creek.

Peter Thomson, La Crosse Tribune

Aug. 29: Coon Valley



Dave Phillips, owner of DC Kustoms on Central Avenue in Coon Valley, cleans out his flood-damaged business Wednesday. Coon Creek flooded much of the town overnight Monday after torrential rains fell.

Peter Thomson, La Crosse Tribune

Aug. 29: Coon Valley



David Schultz helps load files Wednesday from his mother's business, Coon Valley Tax Service and Accounting, onto a trailer. The building on Central Ave. was overtaken with over four feet of flood water early Tuesday from nearby Coon Creek.

Peter Thomson, La Crosse Tribune

Aug. 29: Coon Valley



Gov. Scott Walker speaks with members of the Coon Valley Volunteer Fire Department Wednesday, when he traveled to the Vernon County town to visit with residents and view flood damage. Walker has declared a state of emergency for the entire state of Wisconsin.

Peter Thomson, La Crosse Tribune

Aug. 29: Genoa



Sediment flows down the Mississippi River Wednesday near Genoa.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Genoa



The Dairyland power plant in Genoa.

Erik Daily, La Crosse Tribune

Aug. 29: Gays Mills



Flooding in Gays Mills on Wednesday Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Stoddard



Crews work to repair railroad tracks near Stoddard on Wednesday.

Erik Daily, La Crosse Tribune

Aug. 29: Gays Mills



Flooding in Gays Mills on Wednesday Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Gays Mills



Flooding in Gays Mills on Wednesday Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Gays Mills



Flooding in Gays Mills on Wednesday Aug. 29.
Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Gays Mills



Flooding in Gays Mills on Wednesday Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Soldiers Grove



Flooding in Soldiers Grove on Wednesday Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Soldiers Grove



Flooding in Soldiers Grove on Wednesday Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Readstown



Flooding near Readstown on Wednesday, Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Soldiers Grove



Flooding in Soldiers Grove on Wednesday, Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Soldiers Grove



Flooding in Soldiers Grove on Wednesday, Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Hokah



Caution tape blocks off the entrance to Como Park after heavy rains caused massive flood damage earlier this week.
Chuck Miller, Winona Daily News

Aug. 29: Hokah



Flooding earlier this week from heavy rains caused massive damage to Como Park in Hokah even destroying Como Falls.

Chuck Miller, Winona Daily News

Aug. 29: Hokah



A kid walks through the remains of Como Park in Hokah after heavy rains caused massive flood damages earlier this week.

Chuck Miller, Winona Daily News

Aug. 29: Hokah



Flooding earlier this week from heavy rains caused massive damage to Como Park in Hokah even destroying Como Falls.

Chuck Miller, Winona Daily News

Aug. 29: Hokah



Mangled benches damaged by flood waters at Como Park in Hokah.

Chuck Miller, Winona Daily News

Aug. 29: Hokah



Flooding from heavy rains last summer caused massive damage to Como Park in Hokah, even destroying Como Falls. Chuck Miller, Winona Daily News

Aug. 29: Hokah



The Como Falls sign is reflected in the flood waters that destroyed the falls in Hokah last summer.
Chuck Miller, Winona Daily News

Aug. 29: Hokah



Flooding earlier this week from heavy rains caused massive damages to Como Park in Hokah even destroying Como Falls.

Chuck Miller, Winona Daily News

Aug. 29: Hokah



Residents walk through Como Falls Park in Hokah on Wednesday to survey the flood damage.
Chuck Miller, Winona Daily News

Aug. 29: Hokah



Flooding earlier this week from heavy rains caused massive damage to Como Park in Hokah.
Chuck Miller, Winona Daily News

Aug. 29: Hokah



Stephanie Ritter, bottom left, holds her arms behind her head as she looks in disbelief at the place where the Como Falls, also commonly known as Hokah Falls, once poured water before being destroyed by flooding.

Chuck Miller, Winona Daily News

Aug. 29: Hokah



Still water where the Como Falls once flowed at Como Park in Hokah.

Chuck Miller, Winona Daily News

Aug. 29: Readstown



Flooding in Readstown on Wednesday, Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Readstown



Flooding in Readstown on Wednesday, Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Readstown



Flooding in Readstown on Wednesday Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Readstown



Flooding in Readstown on Wednesday, Aug. 29.
Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Readstown



Flooding in Readstown on Wednesday Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Readstown



Highway 131 near Readstown on Wednesday, Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Readstown



Highway 131 near Readstown on Wednesday, Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Ontario-Rockton



Hwy. 131 between Ontario and Rockton on Wednesday, Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Ontario



Highway 131 near Ontario on Wednesday, Aug. 29.
Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Ontario



Hwy. 131 near Ontario was one of many area roads to sustain heavy damage in the flooding.
Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Ontario-Rockton



Hwy. 131 between Ontario and Rockton on Wednesday, Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Ontario



Ontario on Wednesday, Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Ontario



Ontario on Wednesday, Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Viola



Water flows over Hwy. 56 near Viola on Wednesday, Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Viola



Flooding in Viola on Wednesday, Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Ontario



Ontario on Wednesday, Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Ontario



Ontario on Wednesday, Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Viola



Flooding in Viola on Wednesday, Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Viola



Flooding in Viola on Wednesday, Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: La Farge



Flooding in La Farge on Wednesday, Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Viola



Flooding in Viola on Wednesday, Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: La Farge



Flooding in La Farge on Wednesday, Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: La Farge



Flooding in La Farge on Wednesday, Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: La Farge



Flooding in La Farge on Wednesday, Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

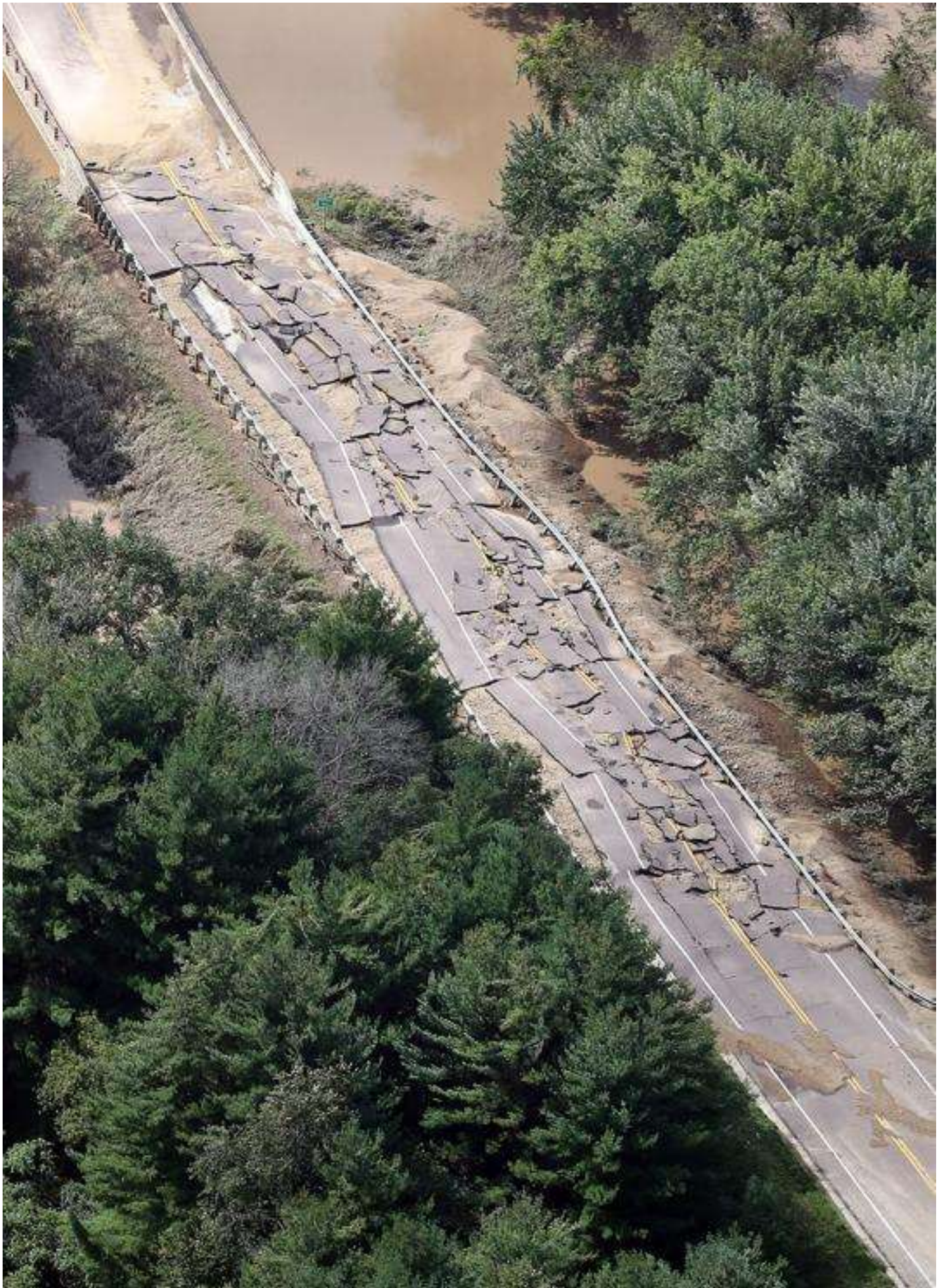
Aug. 29: La Farge



Flooding in La Farge on Wednesday, Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Ontario-Rockton



Hwy 131 between Ontario and Rockton on Wednesday, Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: La Farge



Flooding in La Farge on Wednesday, Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Coon Valley



The 14/61 bridge in Coon Valley on Wednesday, Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Chaseburg



Chaseburg on Wednesday, Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Chaseburg



Chaseburg on Wednesday, Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Coon Valley-Chaseburg



Flooding between Coon Valley and Chaseburg on Wednesday, Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Chaseburg



Chaseburg on Wednesday, Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Coon Valley



Coon Valley on Wednesday, Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 29: Coon Valley



Coon Valley on Wednesday, Aug. 29.

Erik Daily

Aug. 28: Vernon County



Bryce and Linda Pederson pulled this deer out of the water and mud Tuesday morning in Spring Coulee near Coon Valley after it was fighting the terrain all night. He rested most of the day, but by the evening the deer made its way back into the woods.

Jay Olson photo

Aug. 28: Town of Shelby



This BNSF rail in the town of Shelby washed out Tuesday morning due to flooding.

Contributed Photo

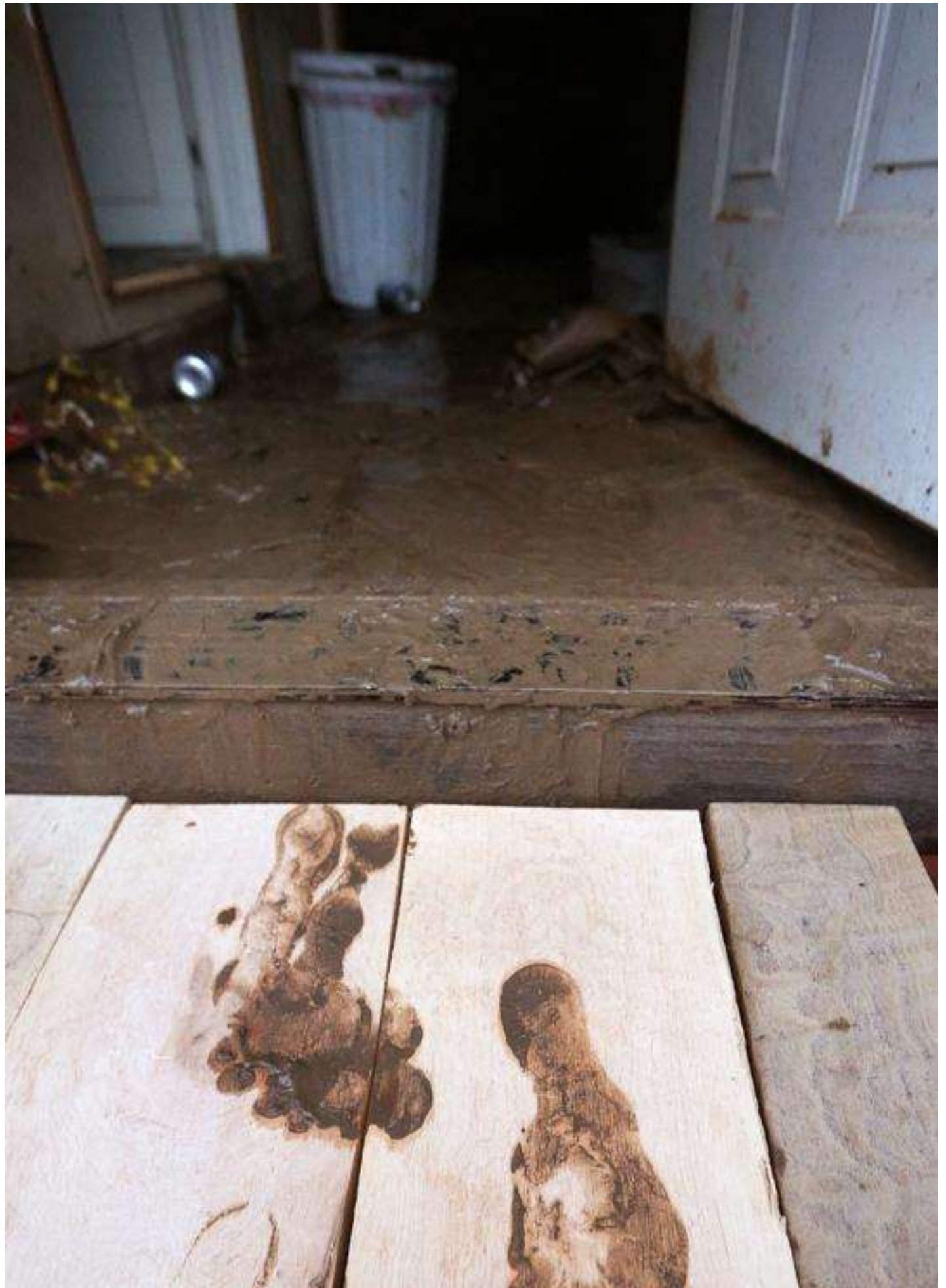
Coon Valley Flooding



Baseball player Bo Milutinovich, 13, of Coon Valley takes in the flood damage Tuesday at Veterans Memorial Park in Coon Valley where torrential rains caused widespread flooding.

Peter Thomson, La Crosse Tribune

Aug. 28: Coon Valley





Muddy footprints lead out of the Coon Valley home of Bill and LouAnn Wolff . Flood water from nearby Coon Creek moved into the house late Tuesday, prompting a rescue of the couple from a second-story window.

Peter Thomson, La Crosse Tribune

Aug. 28: Coon Valley



A recreational vehicle lay askew Tuesday in Veterans Memorial Park in Coon Valley where torrential rains caused widespread flooding from Coon Creek.

Peter Thomson, La Crosse Tribune

Aug. 28: Coon Valley



LouAnn Wolff stands Tuesday outside her flood-ravaged home in Coon Valley with her dog, Ivory. The two along with Wolff's husband, Bill, were rescued from a second-story window in the middle of the night.

Peter Thomson, La Crosse Tribune

Aug. 28: Coon Valley



LouAnn Wolff photographs her flood-ravaged house Tuesday in Coon Valley where she, husband Bill and dog Ivory were rescued from a second-story window in the middle of the night amid flash flooding on nearby Coon Creek.

Peter Thomson, La Crosse Tribune

Aug. 28: Coon Valley



A flooded field behind Coon Valley Dairy Supply in Coon Valley

Peter Thomson, La Crosse Tribune

Aug. 28: Coon Valley



A section of washed-out pavement from Hwy. 14/61 in Coon Valley is seen submerged Tuesday in flood water from Coon Creek.

Peter Thomson, La Crosse Tribune

Aug. 28: Coon Valley



Debris, including a gazebo from nearby Veterans Memorial Park is seen pinned up against the Hwy. 14/61 bridge Tuesday in Coon Valley, put there by flood water from Coon Creek.

Peter Thomson, La Crosse Tribune

Aug. 28: Coon Valley



Pumpkins and other debris are seen against the guard rail on the Hwy. 14/61 bridge Tuesday in Coon Valley where water from Coon Creek caused widespread flooding.

Peter Thomson, La Crosse Tribune

Aug. 28: Coon Valley



A gazebo from nearby Veterans Memorial Park is seen pinned up against the Hwy. 14/61 bridge Tuesday in Coon Valley, put there by flood water from Coon Creek.

Peter Thomson, La Crosse Tribune

Aug. 28: Coon Valley



Wisconsin Department of Transportation bridge inspector Mike Olson works Tuesday in Coon Valley where water from a flooding Coon Creek piled debris on the Hwy. 14/61 bridge.

Peter Thomson, La Crosse Tribune

Aug. 28: Coon Valley



Central Avenue, the main thoroughfare in Coon Valley, is covered in mud Tuesday, left by the flash flooding of nearby Coon Creek.

Peter Thomson, La Crosse Tribune

Aug. 28: Coon Valley



The Bill and LouAnn Wolff house and garage were heavily damaged by floodwaters.
Dorothy Robson, Westby Times

Aug. 28: Coon Valley



Richard Mixer of Coon Valley is missing the entire back wall of his basement after it was blown out by flood waters.
Dorothy Robson, Westby Times

Aug. 28: Coon Valley



Peter Nestingen's home on Old Mill Road in Coon Valley was destroyed by Tuesday's floodwaters.
Dorothy Robson, Westby Times

Aug. 28: Coon Valley



Tim Seland had water running across the floor of the flooring business in downtown Coon Valley.
Dorothy Robson, Westby Times

Aug. 28: Coon Valley



A displaced and unhappy red bull roamed Central Avenue in Coon Valley on Tuesday, Aug. 28, following flash flooding the night before.

Dorothy Robson, Westby Times

Aug. 28: Coon Valley



The park gazebo was lodged against the Coon Valley Hwy. 14/61 bridge on Tuesday, Aug. 28.

Dorothy Robson, Westby Times

Aug. 28: Coon Valley



The baseball field in Coon Valley was destroyed once again by flood waters.

Dorothy Robson, Westby Times

Aug. 28: Tomah



Fireman's Park in Tomah was mostly under water Tuesday morning.

STEVE RUNDIO, Tomah Journal

Aug. 28: Ontario



Danny Koeller walked up the hill behind his house for an overview of the flooding near Ontario.

Danny Koeller photo

Aug. 28: Ontario



Danny Koeller said his aunt and uncle lost more than 50 sheep from the flooding. Only a few had turned up as of late Tuesday morning. Koeller said cattle had to leave their pastures and take refuge on higher ground, as pictured here.

Danny Koeller photo

Aug. 28: Coon Valley



This aerial drone photo taken early Tuesday morning shows flooding of Coon Creek with Coon Valley in the background.

Garland McGarvey photo

Aug. 28: Coon Valley



Garland McGarvey, who lives three miles outside Coon Valley on Hwy. P, used his drone to take this photo early Tuesday morning looking up Timber Coulee as if you were going from Coon Valley to Snowflake Ski Club near Westby.

Garland McGarvey photo

Aug. 28: Ontario



Danny Koeller took this photo Tuesday morning on his property on the Kickapoo River outside Ontario on Downing Road off Hwy. 131. He said a horse in his barn was up to its head in water Tuesday morning.

Danny Koeller photo

Aug. 28: Ontario



Danny Koeller and his family were among those who were stuck at home, due to flooding of the Kickapoo River near Ontario from the storms that came through Monday and Tuesday.

Danny Koeller photo

Aug. 28: Ontario



Danny Koeller walked up the hill behind his house for an overview of the flooding near Ontario.

Danny Koeller photo

Aug. 28: Cashton



Tucker and Becky's Pumpkin Patch at 7649 Oboe Ave. near Cashton suffered major damage in the storms. Buildings were destroyed and equipment washed away in flash flooding early Tuesday.

Contributed photo

Aug. 28: Vernon County



Floodwaters cover a large area Tuesday, Aug. 28, 2018, between the Vernon County municipalities of Chaseburg and Coon Valley.

Mark Hoffman, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Aug. 28: Vernon County



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A bridge on Hwy. 14/61 is covered with sediment and debris as floodwaters cover a large area Tuesday, Aug. 28, 2018, between the Vernon County municipalities of Chaseburg and Coon Valley.

Mark Hoffman, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Aug. 28: Vernon County



The remains of a trailer home smolder as floodwaters cover a large area Tuesday, Aug. 28, 2018, between the Vernon County municipalities of Chaseburg and Coon Valley.

Mark Hoffman, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Aug. 28: Vernon County





Floodwaters cover a large area Tuesday, Aug. 28, 2018, between the Vernon County municipalities of Chaseburg and Coon Valley.

Mark Hoffman, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Aug. 28: Vernon County



A bridge on Hwy. 14 is covered with sediment and debris as floodwaters cover a large area Tuesday, Aug. 28, 2018, between the Vernon County municipalities of Chaseburg and Coon Valley.

Mark Hoffman, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

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The remains of a trailer home smolder as floodwaters cover a large area Tuesday, Aug. 28, 2018, between the Vernon County municipalities of Chaseburg and Coon Valley.

Mark Hoffman, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Aug. 28: Vernon County



A trailer home smolders (foreground) while floodwaters cover a large area Tuesday, Aug. 28, 2018, between the Vernon County municipalities of Chaseburg and Coon Valley.

Mark Hoffman, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

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Mark Hoffman, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Aug. 28: Vernon County



A tree is uprooted in front of a house in Coon Valley.

Aug. 28: Coon Valley



The wall of an attached garage in Coon Valley was knocked out when flooding Monday and Tuesday washed an SUV into it.

Contributed photo

Aug. 28: Coon Valley



The wall of an attached garage in Coon Valley was knocked out when flooding Monday and Tuesday washed an SUV into it.

Contributed photo

Reach Dorothy Robson at dorothy.robson@lee.net or 608-606-0811.

← Previous

Next →

7 DAY FORECAST



Wednesday

64° / 46°



Thursday

72° / 54°



Friday

79° / 63°



Saturday

79° / 61°



Sunday

73° / 55°



Monday

77° / 56°



Tuesday

79° / 61°

Dorothy Robson

Westby Times editor

Dorothy Robson is editor of the Westby Times. Contact her at 608-637-5625.

In this Series

Stories, photos and videos: August floods cause damage across La Crosse area

Sep 21, 2018 collection

From Tribune files: Photos show damage caused by August flooding

Aug 31, 2018 collection

12 videos: Flood damage in Coon Valley, Hokah, Readstown and Stoddard

Sep 7, 2018 article

Wisconsin flooding damage estimated to be \$209 million ... so far

✓ 28 updates



Date and Time: Wednesday, June 12, 2019 6:18:00 PM CDT

Job Number: 90814958

Document (1)

1. [RECORD FLOODING DEALS NEW BLOW TO GAYS MILLS; LONGTIME MERCHANTS WORRY FOR THE FUTURE; ON WISCONSIN | KICKAPOO RIVER](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: kickapoo flooding

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
US News

Narrowed by
Timeline: After Jan 01, 2018

RECORD FLOODING DEALS NEW BLOW TO GAYS MILLS; LONGTIME MERCHANTS WORRY FOR THE FUTURE; ON WISCONSIN / KICKAPOO RIVER

Wisconsin State Journal (Madison, Wisconsin)

September 23, 2018 Sunday, ALL EDITION

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Section: LOCAL; Pg. C1; On Wisconsin

Length: 1132 words

Byline: BARRY ADAMS , badams@madison.com

Dateline: GAYS MILLS

Body

Floods here are measured in black, permanent marker on the worn, white door of the Lion's Club picnic shelter.

The 2016 and 2017 events are marked a few inches apart, about 3 feet up from the ground. The **floods** of 2007 and 2008 are another 2 feet higher and about an inch apart.

This year's surge of water didn't make the door. Instead, the high-water mark can be seen in the rafters of the shelter's roof where sprigs of grass remained three weeks after the **Kickapoo** River went 3 feet higher than has ever been recorded.

The record **flood** of late last month has left 37 homes uninhabitable, reached Main Street businesses located on a rise in the downtown that have been spared water damage in the past and has pushed some events and exhibits for next weekend's 60th Gays Mills Apple Festival to the Crawford County Fairgrounds. Thousands of people are still expected to crowd the once **flooded** downtown for food, music and a Sunday parade, all to benefit area nonprofits.

Flooding is a part of the bargain and a gamble for those who live, own businesses or attend church in the village's low-lying neighborhoods. Since 2008 some businesses, residents and village offices have abandoned the old downtown for higher ground along Highway 131 on the village's north side. But for those that remain, last month's **flood** has brought more discussions about the future of the valley that sits below The Ridge, home to some of the largest apple orchards in the region.

"We don't know what's going to happen," said Harry Heisz, a lifelong resident, firefighter and village president. "A lot of people want to move out where they didn't (want to move out) before."

Of the 57 homes in the valley, 50 had **flood** damage, including some that had their foundations raised years ago. As many as 30 of those homes may need to be removed, Heisz said. Officials with the Federal Emergency Management Agency are scheduled to be in the region this week, but it's unclear what kind of money might be available to assist those who need repairs or who want to move to higher ground, Heisz said.

Many don't have **flood** insurance because the annual premiums can range from \$1,600 to \$3,000, above and beyond the regular insurance that covers, for instance, fire and hail damage. Heisz thinks the village may have \$10 million in **flood** damage.

RECORD FLOODING DEALS NEW BLOW TO GAYS MILLS; LONGTIME MERCHANTS WORRY FOR THE FUTURE; ON WISCONSIN | KICKAPOO RIVER

"We didn't expect 3 feet of water going above from what our record was," Heisz said. "If the two dams wouldn't have broke north of us they wouldn't have had water in their houses."

The record rains hit particularly hard north of Gays Mills, swelled the Kickapoo River and caused two dams to fail near Cashton and Westby. The water moved down stream flooding La Farge, Viola, Readstown, Soldiers Grove, Gays Mills and Stueben. Damage is estimated in the millions of dollars and includes agricultural losses like crops, barns, machinery, fences and livestock.

In Gays Mills, Heisz said about 10 businesses remain in the valley. The laundromat remains closed but beer is again being served at Halver's Town Tap and J& J's on Main, the only two taverns in the village. The Red Apple Inn restaurant was shuttered in early 2017 and the Kickapoo Locker closed its meat business about nine months ago.

Joe Brandt has owned and operated the Village Greenhouse for nearly 35 years. The front of the business was a bounty of color last week thanks to white and orange pumpkins, pots of chrysanthemums and hanging baskets filled with flowers. Brandt had 17 inches of water in his business for the first time but he has no plans to vacate his downtown perch, although he's now looking for more wall space to hang flood photos with those from past years.

"I was required by law to build this place 3 feet above the flood plain 34 years ago and I've never had a drop in here," said Brandt, 60, as Carole King music played in the background.

"I'm too old. What am I going to do, move? The place is paid for. Or at least it was. For me to move the whole operation it would cost me \$100,000. But believe me, as we were putting it all back together I thought to myself, 'I wonder if I'm a fool.' But this is my livelihood."

It's a different story just a few doors away at the Kickapoo Exchange Natural Foods Cooperative Grocery. Since its founding as a food buying club in 1975, the business has been twice destroyed by fire. Last month's flood issued a soaking blow that destroyed about \$6,000 worth of food products after about 18 inches of water inundated the building, constructed in the early 1990s.

The hardwood floors may need to be torn up to remove moisture underneath while all of the wainscoting that rims the base of the walls has been removed and has been laid out to dry on shelves that once held organic and natural foods. For now, the business has relocated to higher ground in the village-owned Mercantile Center, created after the 2008 floods.

The board of directors for the co-op and its 100 or so member-households are weighing their options. They include moving the building to higher ground, abandoning the building in favor of existing space elsewhere or building out of the flood plain.

"It's not really habitable and the consensus is that most members don't want to stay in the flood plain down on Main Street," said Bob Van Hoesen, the co-op's president and a civic leader in the village. "The risk and the stress of being in the area where it could be flooded is just too great."

The 15,600-square-foot Mercantile Center is home to a mix of businesses, some that relocated from Main Street. Tenants include barber Robert E. Lee, a hair salon, insurance company, the Crawford County Independent newspaper, a second-hand clothing store and a food pantry. A combination Cenex fuel station and The Marketplace grocery store are just to the north while a building that houses the village offices, library and a community kitchen are across Highway 131.

The Kickapoo Exchange's retail floor on Main Street was 1,300 square feet but the Mercantile Center space is 1,900 square feet. However, there is limited shelving, most of the food items are displayed on folding tables and the non-refrigerated produce section was limited last week to a half bushel of potatoes, a small basket of garlic and a single butternut squash. The refrigeration and freezer spaces are limited to two stand-up units that are smaller than most found in a typical home.

The former store had a full produce section, a three-door freezer, walk-in cooler and a prep area with a sink.

RECORD FLOODING DEALS NEW BLOW TO GAYS MILLS; LONGTIME MERCHANTS WORRY FOR THE FUTURE; ON WISCONSIN | KICKAPOO RIVER

"There's a lot of things that we're running out of but I don't have sinks or the right coolers and the right receiving spaces to start reordering," said Denise Benoit, the co-op's manager since 2013. "We were very well equipped in that small space (on Main Street) and we had a very good selection. I'd like to get back to that as soon as we can."

Graphic

BARRY ADAMS PHOTOS, STATE JOURNAL Harry Heisz, a lifelong resident of Gays Mills and now its village president, stands on a high section of Main Street that typically is safe from **flooding**. Joe Brandt built his Village Greenhouse in downtown Gays Mills in 1984 and has never had water in his business until last month. Brandt, 60, said it would be too expensive to move and he is close to retirement. But other businesses and residents are reconsidering their future in the downtown that is under regular threat of **flooding** from the nearby **Kickapoo** River. The **Kickapoo** Exchange Natural Foods Cooperative Grocery was **flooded** for the first time last month in downtown Gays Mills and is now on higher ground in temporary space at the Gays Mills Mercantile Center. The space provides a larger retail sales floor but lacks adequate shelving, prep areas, refrigeration and freezer space. Bob Van Hoesen, president of the board of directors of the **Kickapoo** Exchange Natural Foods Cooperative Grocery, surveys the **flood** damage to the co-op's building on Main Street in downtown Gays Mills. A scenic overlook along Highway 171 provides a view of downtown Gays Mills, which has a long history of **flooding** from the **Kickapoo** River. The door of the Lions Club picnic shelter has been used over the years to mark the high-water levels of **floods** from the nearby **Kickapoo** River. The 2016 and 2017 **floods** are marked just below the door knob and the 2007 and 2008 are about two feet higher. Lauren Knutson, right, said this year's floodwater surpassed the height of the door. Since 2008, when the village of Gays Mills was inundated with record floodwater from the **Kickapoo** River, homes, businesses and village offices and the library have moved to higher ground on the village's north side. The temporary home of the **Kickapoo** Exchange Natural Foods Cooperative Grocery in Gays Mills has since Labor Day been in the village-owned Mercantile Center. The facility, on the village's north side and on a hill far from the **Kickapoo** River, was built after the record **flood** of 2008 and designed to house businesses that wanted to escape the **flood** plain on Main Street. Life is at a different pace in Crawford County but its valleys, steep hills and the **Kickapoo** River, when combined with heavy rain, can make for dangerous conditions. ERIK DAILY, LA CROSSE TRIBUNE **Flooding** in Gays Mills reached record proportions last month.

Classification

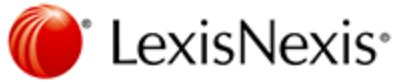
Language: ENGLISH

Publication-Type: Newspaper

Subject: **FLOODS & FLOODING** (90%); FESTIVALS (78%); DISASTER & EMERGENCY AGENCIES (78%); NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS (78%); #wsj, barry adams, #on_wisconsin, gays mills, **flooding**

Industry: FESTIVALS (78%)

Load-Date: September 24, 2018



Date and Time: Wednesday, June 12, 2019 6:21:00 PM CDT

Job Number: 90815092

Document (1)

1. [MUCH OF STATE CLEANING UP; FLOOD WARNINGS REMAIN IN EFFECT AS RIVERS RISE ACROSS WISCONSIN; FLOODING | AFTER THE DELUGE](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: kickapoo flooding

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
US News

Narrowed by
Timeline: After Jan 01, 2018

MUCH OF STATE CLEANING UP; FLOOD WARNINGS REMAIN IN EFFECT AS RIVERS RISE ACROSS WISCONSIN; FLOODING | AFTER THE DELUGE

Wisconsin State Journal (Madison, Wisconsin)

August 31, 2018 Friday, ALL EDITION

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Section: FRONT; Pg. A1

Length: 1364 words

Byline: ASSOCIATED PRESS, CAPITAL NEWSPAPERS

Body

The buzz of chainsaws could be heard around Wisconsin on Thursday as residents worked to clean up from this week's damaging storms. The National Weather Service confirmed there were 16 tornadoes spread across seven counties as storms rolled through Wisconsin on Tuesday into Wednesday.

Eight tornadoes touched down in Fond du Lac County. Green Lake, Dodge and Marquette counties each saw two. Oostburg in Sheboygan County experienced one, and one touched down north of Kiel along the Calumet-Manitowoc county line and destroyed a barn. No one was reported injured in any of the tornadoes.

Despite a day of quieter weather Wednesday, **flood** warnings remained in effect for the Baraboo River in Sauk County, the Wisconsin River at Portage, the La Crosse River in La Crosse County, the Rock River at Waupun, the Crawfish River at Milford and the Milwaukee River in Ozaukee County.

State emergency officials said some areas have received more than 14 inches of rain over the past two weeks. Communities across the state were still wrestling with **flooded** roads, downed trees and power outages Thursday evening.

Forecasts call for more thunderstorms to move into the region Friday evening into Saturday morning. Authorities are bracing for rainfall of 2 inches or more in some spots.

"We're hopeful the storms will stay down in Illinois or other areas," said Lori Getter, a spokeswoman with Wisconsin Emergency Management. "It's pretty wet, pretty bad. Today's going to be just cleanup and sandbagging efforts."

A rush to safety

As the rising Baraboo River crept toward their backyard in North Freedom Wednesday night, Howard Tarnowski and his wife were out celebrating their ninth wedding anniversary.

They decided there wasn't much they could do to prevent the inevitable, so they enjoyed the evening and awaited their fate.

Then, in the wee hours of Thursday morning, Tarnowski awoke to the sound of firefighters sandbagging his neighbor's home. A few hours later, local crews were joined by Wisconsin Army National Guard troops.

They quickly moved to Tarnowski's home and several others, building protective barriers as the water continued to rise. That's when the severity of the situation sunk in, and Tarnowski began preparing the inside of his home for the prospect of intruding floodwater.

MUCH OF STATE CLEANING UP; FLOOD WARNINGS REMAIN IN EFFECT AS RIVERS RISE ACROSS WISCONSIN; FLOODING | AFTER THE DELUGE

"Everybody that came out and helped was fantastic," Tarnowski said Thursday afternoon as he stood in his backyard, waiting for the river to crest. "We're going to try to hang out as long as we can, but I don't want to be swimming when I leave."

After barricading several homes, firefighters from North Freedom, Baraboo and Prairie du Sac proceeded downriver to Baraboo to help with sandbagging efforts there.

North Freedom Fire Chief Frank Anstett said first responders have been working around the clock to assist residents.

"We knew it was coming," Anstett said. "We didn't know it would come this quickly."

'Turned on the hose'

Between nine and 12 people were evacuated in nearby Rock Springs Wednesday night, Sauk County Emergency Management Director Jeff Jelinek said. Ryan Mane and Timothy Schmidt were among them. After helping their neighbors head to higher ground, they headed to a hotel in Baraboo, returning Thursday to retrieve their three cats.

Walking back to his apartment on Broadway Street, Mane got about waist deep before officials told him to turn around. He and Schmidt said they would try to find a boat or inflatable raft and come back.

Similar stories repeated themselves all along the banks of the Baraboo River in Sauk County.

"It was like someone turned on the hose and away it came," said Carol Brylla, a Rock Springs resident who has lived in the village her whole life. "Nobody wants to see this happen."

The Baraboo River is expected to crest sometime Friday morning. Officials anticipate the water will come within 1 foot of the level it reached in 2008, when **floods** soaked much of southern Wisconsin.

Already Thursday, the river had reached 26.4 feet in Rock Springs, more than 2 feet below the record set in 2008, but more than 3 feet above the established "major" **flood** stage.

Most of downtown Rock Springs was underwater Thursday, including several businesses, apartments and Fireman's Park.

"It's just a mess. I didn't think I'd see another like it again in 10 years," said Rock Springs resident Keith Bender, whose home escaped damage.

As emergency management officials move from the response to the recovery phase, officials said it's crucial that people call their local government disaster agency or the statewide 211 help line to report damage. That will help determine how much counties get in disaster aid.

Heavy damage to west

The blast of La Farge's siren about 3:30p.m. Thursday was no cause for alarm but rather a reason to whoop it up: The village power plant was back online for the first time since **Kickapoo** River floodwaters damaged it at about noon Tuesday.

The plant suffered major damage after the **Kickapoo** roared from its banks Monday and **flooded** about a third of the village ? along with cities, towns and landscapes up and down the river.

Even now, the plant's equipment is able only to accept electricity the village buys from Dairyland Power Cooperative and disperse it to customers. It is unable to generate its own power, said public works director Wayne Haugrud.

MUCH OF STATE CLEANING UP; FLOOD WARNINGS REMAIN IN EFFECT AS RIVERS RISE ACROSS WISCONSIN; FLOODING | AFTER THE DELUGE

La Farge's conditions mirrored those of other municipalities, although others had power, as the **Kickapoo** began receding from record highs Wednesday, reaching as much as 26 feet in areas where the **flood** stage is 13 feet.

Almost 30 miles to the north, in Ontario, residents said the **flooding** was the worst they had seen. The area is considered a haven for canoeists but its reputation now is for the mud on the west side of Ontario, where **Kickapoo** tributary Brush Creek rose so high that it sent 4 to 5 feet of water into Lamb Hardwood Lumber, where co-owner Sandra Lamb worried Thursday that "it may bankrupt us."

"We don't have any insurance," she said, because no one would sell it to her and her husband, co-owner Chuck Lamb, who have owned the business for 32 years.

The plant, which kilndries green wood to make it suitable for flooring, molding and other specialized uses, turned out 60,000 board feet a month, she said.

The business has four kilns, with a computerized boiler that was inundated, ruining the computer, Sandra said.

Dane County dries out

Dane County was largely spared from the rain that pummeled much of western and southern Wisconsin earlier this week, but Madison is still recovering from rainfall the week of Aug. 20.

In order to manage the water level on Lake Mendota, the water flow through the Tenney dam has been increased, which is once again leading to rising water levels on the Isthmus and causing ponding on roadways and possible lane or road closures.

Some lane closures can be expected on East Washington Avenue, though officials said they hope to keep two lanes open in both directions. On North First Street, lane closures are expected, but at least one lane in each direction should stay open. North Livingston Street will be closed between East Washington Avenue and East Dayton Street.

Visit cityofmadison.com/flooding for road closures and other updates.

State Journal reporter Kelly Meyerhofer, Capital Newspapers reporters Tim Damos and Erica Dynes, and La Cross Tribune reporter Mike Tighe contributed to this report.

BEWARE THE NEXT THREAT: MOLD

Residents in **flood**-damaged areas where the water has receded should be on the lookout for harmful mold growth, according to Public Health Madison and Dane County.

Proper clean-up reduces the health risks associated with mold exposure.

Officials recommend cleaning and drying your home thoroughly within 48 hours of **flooding**. Remove wet, **flood**-damaged building materials, furnishings and personal items. Do not use fans if mold has already started to grow, as that can cause mold particles to become airborne.

If you have visible mold growth, wash contaminated surfaces with a mixture of one cup of household bleach and one gallon of water. If you do not have visible mold growth, wash surfaces with a mixture of one cup of household bleach and five gallons of water. In either case, rinse with clean water and air dry.

Graphic

MUCH OF STATE CLEANING UP; FLOOD WARNINGS REMAIN IN EFFECT AS RIVERS RISE ACROSS WISCONSIN; FLOODING | AFTER THE DELUGE

ERIK DAILY, LA CROSSE TRIBUNE Jeff Rueckheim cleans mud-caked lumber at Lamb Hardwood Lumber in Ontario Thursday. The company is trying to save what they can of the lumber that was caught in **flooding** this week. PETER THOMSON, LA CROSSE TRIBUNE The First Congregational Church in the town of Leon in Monroe County had words of support for **flood** victims Thursday.

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Publication-Type: Newspaper

Subject: TORNADOES (93%); **FLOODS & FLOODING** (90%); SEVERE WEATHER (90%); WEATHER (90%); COUNTIES (90%); NATURAL DISASTERS (89%); EMERGENCY SERVICES (78%); RIVERS (74%); ANNIVERSARIES (63%); #wsj, wisconsin river, lake wisconsin, reedsburg, dane county **flooding** 2018, north freedom, sauk county, wisconsin, rock springs, baraboo river, evacuation

Industry: POWER FAILURES (73%)

Geographic: MILWAUKEE, WI, USA (79%); WISCONSIN, USA (94%); ILLINOIS, USA (79%)

Load-Date: September 1, 2018



Date and Time: Wednesday, June 12, 2019 6:48:00 PM CDT

Job Number: 90816387

Document (1)

1. [*FLOODING IN WEST: ?THIS IS THE WORST ONE?*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: kickapoo river

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Timeline: After Jun 01, 2018

FLOODING IN WEST: 'THIS IS THE WORST ONE'

Wisconsin State Journal (Madison, Wisconsin)

September 2, 2018 Sunday, ALL EDITION

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Section: LOCAL; Pg. C11

Length: 741 words

Byline: KYLE FARRIS La Crosse Tribune

Body

Western Wisconsin is still wading through the aftermath of record-setting flash floods, which reduced the region Tuesday and Wednesday to a mess of swamped neighborhoods, ravaged cropland and washed-out roads.

In Vernon and Crawford counties, where the effects of torrential rain and overflowing rivers could be felt the hardest, officials and volunteers are scrambling to clean up their communities and determine the extent of the damage.

Early reports indicate more than \$4 million of damage to homes in Vernon and more than \$5 million of damage to homes and businesses in Crawford.

"The water is starting to recede in some areas, and people are busy cleaning out their homes, getting ready to decide what to do with their homes," said Linda Nederlo, public information officer for Vernon County's emergency management department. Even for a region that has grown accustomed to floods, she said, this week's devastation stands out.

"All of us who have worked these floods since 2007 have said this is the worst one," Nederlo said. "The water just got so high."

The Kickapoo River, which runs through the eastern part of the county, rose to 25 feet in some areas after roughly a foot of rain.

Communities including La Farge and Viola spent days without power.

And some roads were closed indefinitely due to structural damage from the floodwaters.

Coon Valley, near the northwest corner of Vernon County, became a gathering place for media and elected officials to see the worst of the damage ? from crushed gazebos and mudcaked houses to crumbling bridges.

Gov. Scott Walker toured Coon Valley on Wednesday, vowing to work with local officials "to make sure people are safe in the area."

Up to 10 inches of rain hit the area, requiring residents to evacuate first to Coon Valley Village Hall, then Coon Creek Fire Station, and ultimately to Coon Valley Elementary School, as safe havens successively succumbed to the rising waters.

With many Coon Valley firefighters dealing with damage to their own homes, Shelby firefighters stepped up Tuesday and Wednesday to help with rescues before moving on to damage control, sucking up water from basements, hauling soaked couches and mattresses to dumpsters, and clearing sludge from driveways.

FLOODING IN WEST: 'THIS IS THE WORST ONE'

"This is probably the worst damage I've seen from any of the floods we've had," said Tim Candahl, Shelby Fire Department captain and town chairman in La Crosse County. "The scope of damage is going to take a lot of time. ... The amount of water they had is just astronomical."

In Crawford County, the village of Gays Mills was almost completely engulfed by floodwater in the hours after the storms.

Jim Hackett, the county's emergency management coordinator, credited roughly 400 workers and volunteers for responding to the disaster and preventing its effects from "being a lot worse."

According to Hackett, that can be chalked up to experience.

For the past decade, Crawford and nearby counties have been caught in a cycle of devastation and reconstruction caused by floods that seem to rush into towns every August.

"We were able to prepare," Hackett said, "for what we knew was going to come."

But it's not just infrastructure that has been damaged or altogether destroyed.

The University of Wisconsin- Extension in La Crosse County expects farmers to contend with major crop losses in the coming weeks.

Corn is at high risk of fungal or bacterial contamination, officials say, and soybeans could be in rough shape, depending on how long they were under water.

Kaitlyn Lance, an agriculture agent for the Extension, said farmers should be careful when deciding what to feed their animals, and gardeners should be careful when deciding whether to eat their homegrown produce.

"If your garden was flooded, it's important to know where the floodwater came from ? whether it was river or sewage," she said. "Even if it came from a river, that water went over lawns or roads that might have had curbside residue or treatments. It's probably best to just avoid eating those fruits and vegetables."

While western Wisconsin had a chance to dry out late in the week, forecasts for rain over Labor Day weekend and into next week threaten to produce even more flooding.

Thunderstorms are possible Sunday through Thursday, according to the National Weather Service, though it's difficult to predict the precise path of each cell.

Asked whether Vernon County could absorb another inch or two of rain, Nederlo sighed.

"Probably not," she said.

Notes

La Crosse Tribune reporter Emily Pyrek contributed to this report.

Graphic

ERIK DAILY, LA CROSSE TRIBUNE Flooding in Viola is shown on Wednesday.

Classification

FLOODING IN WEST: 'THIS IS THE WORST ONE'

Language: ENGLISH

Publication-Type: Newspaper

Subject: FLOODS & FLOODING (90%); WEATHER (90%); NATURAL DISASTERS (89%); DISASTER & EMERGENCY AGENCIES (89%); FIREFIGHTERS & FIREFIGHTING (89%); SEVERE WEATHER (78%); **RIVERS** (78%); FIRE DEPARTMENTS (77%); CLOSINGS (65%); US PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES 2016 (64%); #wsj

Person: SCOTT WALKER (58%)

Geographic: WISCONSIN, USA (79%)

Load-Date: September 3, 2018

End of Document

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Wading out the Kickapoo River Flood

By: **Emma Lundberg**, **Caroline Gottschalk Druschke** and **Eric Booth**

Posted on: September 27, 2018

Ominous clouds percolated above the horizon. The long rumble of thunder reminded me to check my phone for an update on the radar: there were thirty minutes before it was absolutely necessary to scramble up the steep river banks, pack up the survey equipment, and escape out of the valley. As I finished my last few **transect elevation measurements**, a tedious process that involves taking about 50 height measurements every few inches across a stream channel, the rain came pouring down. After the brief time it took to pack up in the torrential rain, Conway Creek had already begun to swell. I had been told flash floods happened quickly, but it was difficult to understand just how fast the water would rise. In less than an hour, the knee-deep water I had been wading in would be over my head.

This was my introduction to flooding in the **Kickapoo River Watershed**, but the risk and devastation that accompanies floods and saturated floodplains is not a new reality for those who call this place home. In fact, the history of the entire **Driftless Area** has been woven, in part, from the fabric of catastrophic flood events.

Edge Effects is a digital magazine produced by graduate students at the **Center for Culture, History, and Environment (CHE)**, a research center within the **Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies** at the **University of Wisconsin–Madison**.

Subscribe below to receive Edge Effects posts by email. Visit the **Center for Culture, History, and Environment** to receive updates about CHE news and events.

TOP POSTS – 30 DAYS

The American Recycling Myth
by **Jon Hazlett**

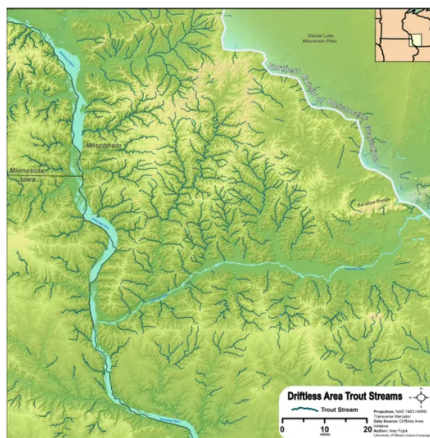
Plantation Legacies
by **Sophie Sapp Moore**

Multispecies Ethics are Messy: Five Questions for William Lynn
by **Francisco J. Santiago-Ávila**

When We Repealed Daylight Saving Time
by **Kate Wersan**

Where Disability Rights and Animal Rights Meet: A Conversation with Sunaura Taylor
by **Caelyn Randall**

The Kickapoo River Watershed is situated in the southwestern corner of Wisconsin, in a tri-state region known more broadly as the Driftless, because of its singular absence of glacial drift. The Driftless region's iconic upland plateaus, steep valley sides, and dendritic stream systems—picture waterways spread like the branches of a tree—are unique topographic features of this unglaciated landscape, and together they have shaped the history of Driftless flooding. When it rains, all that water coursing through the landscape builds in strength and quantity as it rushes downstream into the valleys.



Abundant streams flow through Wisconsin's Driftless Area. Image from [Wikimedia Commons](#).

Human action has made its own mark on this landscape. In the 19th century, Anglo-settler communities brought with them agricultural practices that initiated widespread erosion, washing upland sediment into the region's valleys. This sediment, referred to as "post-settlement alluvium," coats valley floors throughout the region, in some areas [raising the valley floor up several meters above levels from only 150 years ago](#)—a problem that is only exacerbated by continued land use practices that cause erosion beyond what would occur through natural processes of erosion. By raising stream banks and disconnecting floodplains, post-settlement alluvium decreases the ability of these systems to respond to flood events. The riparian banks raised by sediment deposits reduce the stream's ability to slow the flow and dissipate the energy of the water, which often results in powerful flash floods.

The frequency of powerful and destructive flood events has increased over the last decade, as [Curt Meine](#) described in a recent [blog post](#). This most recent event broke records across the Driftless, causing damage similar to or worse than that wrought by the historic 2008 floods. Increasing rainfall and storm severity have exacerbated regional flooding problems in the Driftless, which is becoming a regular casualty of a changing, and intensifying, climate. Between [August 26](#) and [September 5](#) of this year, portions of southwestern Wisconsin received up to a staggering 23.42" of rainfall. The intensity of this flood event left communities across the region cleaning up and mucking out their farms, homes, businesses, and community shared spaces.

Kickapoo Buffer Project

Given this history of catastrophic flooding, you might be wondering what I was doing in Conway Creek, in the middle of the Driftless, with a historic storm approaching, fielding frantic text messages from my advisor, [Dr. Caroline Gottschalk Druschke](#), and project co-director, [Dr. Eric Booth](#). As a graduate research assistant new to the University of Wisconsin-Madison, my job since July has consisted of fending off cattle (including one especially terrifying bull) from transects and measuring tapes, identifying [riparian plants](#), taking photographs, and using laser survey equipment to collect bank and streambed relative elevation points, which are used later to recreate stream transect profiles. The stream transects that I meticulously measured and cataloged over the weeks prior to the August 2018 flood would cease to exist within the next few hours as the flood waters and cascades of displaced sediment remade the river banks entirely.

My work is part of the two-year-long Kickapoo Buffer Project, led by Booth and Druschke in collaboration with the [Trout Unlimited Driftless](#)

The history of the Driftless Area has

TOP POSTS – ALL TIME

The Flint Water Crisis: A Special Edition Environment and Health Roundtable

by [Christopher Sellers](#)

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by [Brian Hamilton](#)

The Anthropocene: The Promise and Pitfalls of an Epochal Idea

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How a \$750 Down Jacket is Dividing College Campuses

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Reflections on the Plantationocene: A Conversation with Donna Haraway and Anna Tsing

by [Gregg Mitman](#)

EDGE EFFECTS ON TWITTER

been woven from the fabric of catastrophic flood events.

Area Restoration Effort, Valley Stewardship Network, and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Since Valley managers, conservationists, anglers, and landowners often hold differing views about how to best lessen flood impacts in the Kickapoo Valley, the project takes a social-ecological approach. This approach combines biophysical stream assessments with

social science interviews and cross-disciplinary workshops that aim to provide a holistic view, integrating knowledge of the streams' ecosystems and human perspectives on how best to manage these local resources.

My part in this project gave me a front row seat to August's catastrophic floods. I was fortunate enough to wait out the worst of the torrential rainfall on high ground, and once the storms passed, I went back to our research sites. The photographs that follow share some of what I witnessed in the late-August flood events in the Kickapoo River Watershed as the river poured into homes, pastures, and town streets and re-shaped the river banks that I'd spent the summer getting to know. These images do not illustrate the personal tragedies and losses faced by so many people who live in the Driftless region—those stories are not mine to tell. Instead, the following images offer a snapshot of the flood's effects on landscapes of everyday life that are important to local human and nonhuman communities.

Soldiers Grove Community Green

When I stay overnight on field visits, I camp in the **Soldiers Grove** community green space, in what historically was the downtown area. The historic downtown was **moved to higher elevation in 1978** following a series of catastrophic floods years prior. When I returned to Soldiers Grove to see my normal campsite the morning after the rains, the fields were an extension of the Kickapoo River, flowing through the community park that had offered not only a campground but a rodeo arena, public restrooms and showers, large ball fields, and a community picnic area and playground.



A Cattle Pasture

Each time we drive to our research sites, we pass this pasture, which typically accommodates grazing cattle. On my way out of the Valley at the beginning of the rainfall, I watched a farmer work earnestly to move their cattle from this pasture to one on higher ground. If the cattle hadn't been moved, many may have died or escaped as



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the entire pasture flooded—in some places, feet above the fence—and sections of fencing were broken or swept away completely with the rising waters. When the skies cleared and I returned, the empty pasture was filled with the Kickapoo River all the way to the edge of the road.



The Beaver Dam

After the flood waters receded, I returned to our study sites to find myself embarking on a journey down unfamiliar river corridors. Before the storm, the end of our Conway Creek site was marked by an old beaver dam, located just above the confluence with Tainter Creek. This dam did not have any recent beaver activity and had held back a large amount of sediment. The beaver dam blew out during the flood, sending much of this sediment downstream into Tainter Creek. Such a sudden cascade of sediment could pose real problems for Tainter Creek fish by smothering the substrates they need to reproduce or filling the pools they had previously lived in. However, it is also important to acknowledge that stream systems and habitats are fluid and that change, good and bad, is bound to occur—particularly as storm and rain events intensify in the “new normal” of climate change.



Conway Creek

Thanks to the frequent photographs I have taken as part of our survey protocol, we have a small but very visible record of micro-scale flood impacts in the Kickapoo Valley. While Wisconsin residents, and some readers across the country, have no doubt seen some birds’ eye views of this summer’s flooding, Dr. Druschke, Dr. Booth and I wanted to share this unique view of what happens on a small stream when the flood waters recede—both the damage and the glimmers of resilience that emerge.

The following two photographs make visible the flood-induced changes that occurred along the banks of a small creek. The photograph on the left shows the riparian vegetation prior to the flood, while the photograph on the right shows the impact of the flood on the streambank vegetation. Much of the vegetation has been washed away or knocked over, leaving exposed cobbles, gravels and soil. Banks with exposed soil are not as stable as those with deep-rooted vegetation. Without a system to hold the soil in place, it cannot resist the erosive power of the stream. Because the banks are composed partly of post-settlement alluvium, the sediment that will continue to rush into the water system is a natural aspect of the erosion process that has been exacerbated by historical—and continued—land use practices. In this close-up view, the entangled complexities among multiple realities and worlds emerge.



The following three photos show in-river changes at the same location—transect 050—before and after this summer's flood. During the initial survey, a downed **box elder** crossed the stream directly below the transect. In the second photograph (taken directly after the rain stopped), the downed elder has been washed downstream, which has left an open pool and steep banks within view. The third photograph shows how the flood has eroded the banks and caused the shallow roots of the box elder (visible in the second photograph) to collapse into the stream, taking with it the habitats that had developed there.



Yet this micro-scale look at the creek also tells a more complicated story. In the first photographs of these series the water appears turbid. With the flood event, much of that sediment and silt material was swept downstream and deposited elsewhere. The subsequent photographs make visible the cleaned cobbles through clear water. Though the flood, being one extreme aspect of the **hydrologic cycle**, brought damage to property, homes, and businesses, it can also offer a renewal for substrate of the river bed and flush sediment and organic material through the system. And this flushing of the system offers the potential for a good salmonid spawning season; both native and nonnative trout species who reside in the Driftless region find exposed gravels a desirable spawning habitat. The staggering rain that wreaked havoc on the Kickapoo Watershed this summer is—but is not only—a story of loss.

Responsibility of Place-based Research

As cross-disciplinary and socio-ecological scientists, much of our research is attuned to the flows between social and ecological, biotic and abiotic worlds. We trace engagements and interactions and work to both understand and illuminate the entangled complexities among multiple realities and worlds: in this case, the recent flooding in the Kickapoo Watershed and the strength of the Driftless communities (human and non-human) to remain resilient in the face of destruction.

Witnessing this flood take shape and move through the communities that we have come to care about through research and recreation has made us acutely aware of the simple fact that we can leave and go home. While my material life was safe just two hours to the east, this flood has left behind muck-filled homes and barns, broken

*Research
coincides with
privilege.*

fences, stagnant flood water, and pastures covered with debris and sediment. Being a researcher inherently coincides with privilege: privilege and access to knowledge, power to interpret and make meaning, and privilege to leave. As we grapple with these questions of ethics, responsibility and connections to place, as embedded researchers in the Driftless region, we advocate for owning the responsibility that comes with conducting place-based research and for searching out the opportunities to contribute back and support the communities and landscape that fuels our research, careers, and passions.

We hope that in sharing these photographs and this experience, we may compel readers interested in becoming involved, through monetary or material donations, or hands-on community service work, to attend fundraising events, and to offer support to flood-impacted communities. [We have included a list of resources that can guide you through that service.](#) We by no means have all the answers for how to balance research, privilege, ethical compassion, and obligation to communities in which we work, but we do believe that supporting communities we work with through times of disaster is necessary, as researchers and human beings.

The research described here is part of the two-year Kickapoo Buffer Project, led by Booth and Druschke in collaboration with the [Trout Unlimited Driftless Area Restoration Effort](#), [Valley Stewardship Network](#), and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and funded through the UW-Madison [College of Agricultural & Life Sciences' Kickapoo Valley Reforestation Fund](#) with further support from the [Global Health Institute](#) and the [Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education](#).

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Emma Lundberg is a graduate student in the Environment and Resources program through the Nelson Institute at University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her dissertation research focuses on identifying and deconstructing settler logics that permeate through natural resource management. She uses social and ecological research approaches in salmonid management and river restoration. She takes a critical approach toward engaging with the space where humans and fish meet and offers a multispecies perspective on species interactions, human subjectivity, and environmental conflict. [Twitter](#). [Contact](#).

As a faculty member in the Department of English's Program in Composition and Rhetoric and a current M.S. student in the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Dr. Caroline Gottschalk Druschke uses her training in rhetoric to build critical theory and conduct social and ecological research and public outreach about stream restoration, migratory fish passage, trout conservation, dam removal, wetlands restoration, and watershed-based agricultural outreach. Druschke's work has been funded through the US Environmental Protection Agency, AAUW, the National Park Service, the National Science Foundation, and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. She is co-editor of the new book [Field Rhetoric: Ethnography, Ecology, and Engagement in the Places of Persuasion](#) (University of Alabama 2018). [Website](#). [Twitter](#). [Contact](#).

Dr. Eric Booth studies the interactions between water, land, climate, and humans primarily using biophysical models and field monitoring. He also utilizes integrated scenarios (qualitative and quantitative) as a tool to explore possible futures of complex social-ecological systems at the watershed scale with a focus on the food-energy-water nexus. His research involves a strong public outreach component not only to disseminate relevant findings but to better understand local knowledge, experiences, and perspectives related to water and land. [Website](#). [Twitter](#). [Contact](#).

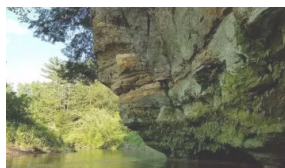


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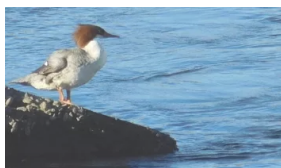
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Comments: 1

By: Emma Lundberg, Caroline Gottschalk Druschke and Eric Booth

Categories: Fieldnotes

Tags: Climate, Floods, Photography, Rivers, Wisconsin

1 COMMENT

Bent Lauge Madsen

September 28, 2018 at 1:12 am ·

Said the father of floodplain governance, Gilbert Fowler White 1945: "Floods are acts of God but flood losses are largely acts of men". Man has stolen the floodplains, where the river would store the water. Prudent floodplain governance is to enhance the retention capacity in the catchments small streams (tributaries) and to restore the floodability of the larger streams floodplains. Good examples are emerging in the Charles River Catchments the upper Mississippi river basin, and European Elbe Catchment. In a smaller scale, Denmark has taken a bold step in a forthcoming new Watercourse act: Concerted catchment governance and reestablishment of "Water parking places" upstream floodprone areas. A new political insight is dawning : The floodplain belongs to the stream. "What nature has joined together man should not tear asunder"

← [W. E. B. Du Bois and the American Environment](#)

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In the Vortex of Climate Change



(<https://wlgreenfire.org>)
WI Green Fire, August 30, 2018



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Over eleven days in late August, four major storms raked across central and southern Wisconsin, each dumping multiple inches of rain. Late in the afternoon of August 20, a record-breaking deluge of more than eleven inches in just four hours hit western Dane County.¹ On August 26-27, parts of Ozaukee and Washington Counties north of Milwaukee received nearly nine inches of rain.² On the evening of August 27, portions of Jefferson, Vernon, Wisconsin and Juneau Counties were struck by between five and twelve inches of rain.³ Flooding has inundated communities across the state, from the Mississippi River in the west to the Madison lakes to Lake Michigan in the east.

Such extreme precipitation events have occurred with increasing frequency over the last decade. In August 2007, up to twelve inches flooded over the coulees of western Wisconsin. In June 2008, twelve inches of rain—with some localities reporting sixteen inches—fell in Sauk County, where I live. Seven inches in June 2009 in Milwaukee County. Seven more there again in



ross the state in June 2013.⁴ Up in Douglas and Bayfield Counties, extreme rainfall events have (https://www.greenfire.org) of these, when fifteen inches of rain fell in three days, Minnesota (https://www.greenfire.org) trest significant flash flood event tore up roads and bridges in northeastern Minnesota and northwestern Wisconsin.⁵ Wisconsin Public Radio countered with: "Once-In-A-Lifetime Rains Falling Frequently on Northern Wisconsin."⁶ The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources State Climatology Office reported that, over the years 2000-17, nearly three times as many "mega-rain" events in that area occurred compared to the years 1973-99.⁷ The most recent (2014) National Climate Assessment reported a comparable and significant 37% percent increase in the amount of precipitation falling in very heavy events in the Midwest between 1958 and 2012.⁸

Ever conservative in linking specific events to long-term climate patterns, scientists are cautious in assessing the statistical significance of even such increasingly compelling data points. They are more willing, however, to make broad statements of concurrence along the lines of: "These trends are consistent with the probability that our region will receive more precipitation, and experience more frequent extreme precipitation events, in response to rising global temperatures and the increasing moisture-holding capacity of the atmosphere." Increasingly scientists find themselves in the position that NASA's James Hansen found himself in when he famously testified on climate change before the U.S. Senate in the summer of 1988. They are deeply aware of scientific uncertainty, yet equally conscious of probabilities involving the future we face, based on the most sophisticated scientific methods and advanced climate models.

These days, in Wisconsin, no one in any position of authority in state government is able or willing to speak of the impacts—real or potential—of climate change. However, dedicated scientists and other citizens may still compile information, weigh evidence, analyze patterns, and consider likely futures. The Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts, a consortium of

state and university scientists, concluded, long before these most recent events, that the region will likely experience wetter conditions and more intense rainfall episodes. (Along with other trends, including significant increase in heat waves, warmer nighttime and winter temperatures, and increased rain during the winter.⁹)

Steve Vavrus, an atmospheric scientist at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, addresses the constant and difficult matter of attributing cause. "It's so difficult to give a 'yes' or 'no' answer to the question I frequently get: Can we attribute extreme events to global warming? The answer is usually yes and no. We can never prove that a certain event occurred because the climate is changing, but hopefully, we can determine that climate change has loaded the dice for these events to occur."¹⁰

Episodes like those that we are witnessing now—and that we experience with increasing frequency—bring the message home. We find ourselves at the outer edge of the intensifying global storm of climate change. Human awareness and understanding rawn increasingly into the vortex of daily events and personal experience. As summer's intense heat grips us in Wisconsin do, now, to respond to the change that is upon us.

urt is a member of Wisconsin's Green Fire's Climate Change Work Group. He lives and works in Sauk County.



¹ "Dane Co. breaks state record for heaviest rainfall in 24 hours (<http://www.nbc15.com/content/news/Dane-County-breaks-record-for-heaviest-rainfall-in-24-hours-491340531.html>)," WMTV/NBC15, 21 August 2018,

² James B. Nelson and Jeff Ramage, "Storm drops nearly 9 inches of rain and more – maybe much more – is on the way (<https://www.jsonline.com/story/weather/2018/08/27/wisconsin-flooding-weekend-rains-drop-up-6-inches-area/1108318002/>)," *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, 27 August 2018.

³ Dorothy Robson, "Flash flooding devastates Coon Valley (https://lacrossetribune.com/flash-flooding-devastates-coon-valley/article_5fbd9ed3-3d3a-5d18-bdd1-2e8f46a97201.html)," *La Crosse Tribune*, 27 August 2018.

⁴ See the National Weather Service's webpage "Historical Events Across Southern Wisconsin (<https://www.weather.gov/mkx/documented-storms>)."

⁵ Paul Huttner, "Another 1 in 1,000-year rainfall event (https://blogs.mprnews.org/updraft/2018/06/another-1-in-1000-year-rainfall-event)," *MPR News*, 19 June 2018.

⁶ Danielle Kaeding, "Once-In-A-Lifetime Rains Falling Frequently on Northern Wisconsin (<https://www.wpr.org/once-lifetime-rains-falling-frequently-northern-wisconsin>)," *WPR News*, 20 June 2018.

⁷ Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, "Historic Mega-Rain Events in Minnesota Promoting Science-Based Management of Wisconsin's Natural Resources (https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/climate/summaries_and_publications/mega_rain_events.html)," accessed 29 August 2018.

⁸ Melillo, J.M., Richmond, T.C. and Yohe, G.W. 2014. *Climate Change Impacts in the United States: The Third National Climate Assessment* (Washington, DC: U.S. Global Change Research Program). See Ch. 2 discussion "Heavy Downpours Increasing (https://nca2014.globalchange.gov/report/our-changing-climate/heavy-downpours-increasing#intro-section-2)." Member Login (https://wigreenfire.z2systems.com/login.jsp) Donate Now (https://wigreenfire.org/make-a-difference/make-a-donation/)

⁹ See the WICCI website at https://www.wicci.wisc.edu/climate-change.php (https://www.wicci.wisc.edu/climate-change.php). (https://www.facebook.com/wigreenfire/) (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvX2ONR2agCeT5f)

¹⁰ Quoted in Carolyn Rumery Betz, "Coping with Extremes," WICCI website at https://www.wicci.wisc.edu/Extremes.php (https://www.wicci.wisc.edu/Extremes.php)



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1 Comment

Scientists Reflect on the Kickapoo River Flood of 2018 (http://edgeeffects.net/kickapoo-river-flood-2018/) on September 27, 2018 at 8:31 am

[...] destructive flood events has increased over the last decade, as Curt Meine described in a recent blog post. This most recent event broke records across the Driftless, causing damage similar to or worse than [...]

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Date and Time: Wednesday, June 12, 2019 6:46:00 PM CDT

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1. [Rain, floods deliver one-two punch](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: kickapoo river

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Rain, floods deliver one-two punch

Star Tribune (Minneapolis, MN)

August 29, 2018 Wednesday, METRO EDITION

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1B

Length: 643 words

Byline: MATT MCKINNEY; TIM HARLOW; STAFF WRITERS, STAR TRIBUNE (Mpls.-St. Paul)

Highlight: Counties in southeastern Minn. and southwestern Wis. hit with downed trees, evacuations after downpours.

Body

As heavy rains pummeled the region, a waterlogged earthen dam near Cashton, Wis., gave way with a roar overnight Monday, unleashing a wall of water through a narrow coulee filled with cabins, farm machinery, sheds, barns, fences, and the 100-year-old wood stove that Becky Gretebeck's family had restored for her.

The flash flood left nothing behind.

"It was a wall of water, probably 20 feet high, that came down," said Tucker Gretebeck, the owner of the nearby All Seasons Farm. "And just like taking your hand and wiping it through a snowbank, it took everything."

It was some of the worst damage reported so far as a fresh round of storms freighted with heavy rain and hail barreled across southeast Minnesota and southern Wisconsin Tuesday afternoon just hours after the region woke to flooded roads, swamped houses and washed out bridges from the previous night's downpour.

The one-two punch had the National Weather Service warning local residents to avoid flooded areas and move indoors. Meteorologist Paul Douglas tweeted that the area may be witnessing a 500-year "mega-rain" event, as estimates based on Doppler radar predicted another 5 to 12 inches of rain.

As of Tuesday morning, some 6 to 12 inches of rain had fallen across La Crosse, Monroe, and Vernon counties in western Wisconsin, with floodwaters inundating towns and overtaking roads.

The town of Ontario, Wis., pop. 554, was hit especially hard as the *Kickapoo River* overflowed its banks, swamping the town's center. About 20 miles downstream, Viola, Wis., pop. 672, prepared for a record-breaking crest of the *Kickapoo River* expected by Wednesday morning.

The Crawford County Sheriff's Office, meanwhile, warned residents living in Soldiers Grove, Gays Mills, and Steuben, Wis., that the *Kickapoo* would rise 6 to 10 feet above flood stage Wednesday and into Thursday morning.

Flooding also closed Interstate 90/94 in the Mauston area of central Wisconsin between La Crosse and Madison.

More than 100 people were evacuated overnight Monday from Coon Valley, a small town southeast of La Crosse where 38 roads in Vernon County were closed.

Across the border in Minnesota, the National Weather Service reported a pair of weak tornadoes Monday about an hour south of the Twin Cities in the towns of Nerstrand and Vasa. The twisters were classified as EF0 tornadoes, which have wind speeds between 65 mph and 85 mph.

Rain, floods deliver one-two punch

Significant damage to a hangar was reported at the Red Wing Airport, where wind gusts reached 82 mph Monday evening, the National Weather Service said.

The severe weather forced the Red Wing City Council to delay its Monday meeting as those attending took cover in the basement.

More than 5 inches of rain fell across Houston County in southeastern Minnesota where flash flooding was reported.

On Tuesday, massive flooding across western Wisconsin made roads impassable, prompting a National Weather Service warning.

"Life threatening flooding is occurring now over portions of southeast Minnesota into southwest and central Wisconsin. Many roads under water and evacuations continue in areas," the warning read.

Damage reports were still coming in Tuesday evening as officials assessed the situation.

Gretebeck, the farmer who was hit with flash flooding, said he heard from neighbors that houses had been torn from their foundations. The flood threw another neighbor's truck down a valley, he said.

After the dam broke west of Cashton, the first thing it hit was Gretebeck's pumpkin patch business, a side hustle to help his family through the ups and downs of the dairy business. He lost tractors, wagons, three cabins decorated with original murals, and the wood stove.

"Who knows how far some of that stuff went," said Gretebeck, who said he was grateful, at least, that his house and barns were safe on higher ground.

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Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Publication-Type: Newspaper

Subject: WEATHER (92%); FLOODS & FLOODING (90%); SEVERE WEATHER (89%); TORNADOES (89%); NATURAL DISASTERS (78%); METEOROLOGY (73%); CITIES (69%); LEGISLATIVE BODIES (67%); SHERIFFS (65%); CITY GOVERNMENT (64%); WATER; WEATHER

Industry: DAMS & RESERVOIRS (90%); AGRICULTURAL EQUIPMENT (77%); RADAR SYSTEMS (66%)

Geographic: WISCONSIN, USA (94%); MINNESOTA, USA (93%)

Load-Date: August 29, 2018