

Swollen Rock River still rising

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By Mike DuPre'/Gazette Staff

The Sugar River in the southwest corner of Rock County has crested, and the Rock River is expected to crest early Saturday afternoon.

The word comes from Shirley Connors, the county's emergency management coordinator. But she also warned that water probably will remain high in the county and flood certain areas for a while.

"It will stay around," Connors said. "It took a while for it to get like this, and it will take a while to get back to normal."

Connors also warned that high water could contaminate rural residents' wells.

If flood water has covered their well casings or if residents think flood water is seeping into their wells, they should check their water for cloudiness and/or odor, she said.

If the water appears tainted, residents should not drink it, bathe in it or wash dishes in it, Connors said.

The rivers are swollen beyond their banks in some spots because of unusually heavy rain in May. Janesville 's 7.2 inches more than doubled the city's 56-year average for the month.

At 6 a.m. today, the Rock River measured 11.39 feet at Newville, approaching the National Weather Service's definition of moderate flood-12 feet-for the Newville measuring site.

"They are doing a lot of sandbagging there, in the Ellendale Road area," Connors said.

Residents can get sandbags-but not sand-through the emergency management office, (608) 757-7900, or at the sheriff's department, 200 E. Highway 14, Janesville .

At Indianford, the Rock River was about an inch higher this morning than it was Wednesday morning. The river was at 15.23 feet at 6 a.m. ; flood stage is 15 feet, the National Weather Service reported.

Flood water has reached the pavilions and swamped a play area near the baseball field in Janesville's Riverside Park, and the engorged river has closed Joseph Street in the Mole & Sadler Subdivision on the west side of the river.

Storm sewers on North Main Street south of Traxler Park still were backed up.

In downtown Janesville below the Centerway Dam, the Rock River roiled, churning up foam and spray but remaining below the river walls.

Water was being pumped this morning from the basements of several buildings on the east side of the river in downtown Janesville .

At Afton , the river was a half inch higher this morning than at the same time Wednesday.

The river was at 10.9 feet at 6:30 a.m. today, approaching 11.1 feet, which the weather service defines as a flood experienced once every 10 years.

If the weather stays dry, flooding is not expected to spread, Connors said.

"We should be OK," she said. "That's what we're hoping for."

The next rain in the forecast is for thunderstorms and showers Saturday and Sunday.

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