

August will go into the books as the wettest month ever in Janesville

(Published Thursday, August 23, 2007 11:27:31 AM CST)

Gazette Staff

Fifty years of weather records show this August has been the wettest month in local history.

And we've still got eight days to go.

Local and state officials have all but camped out near dams and lakes to keep an eye on things.

"I just hope people are operating their dams," said Sue Josheff, the lower Rock River supervisor for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. "A lot of people own dams-municipalities, utilities, private people. They need to make sure they keep those spillways clean and flowing."

In the last five days, rainfall has ranged from 9½ inches on Lake Koshkonong to 6 inches in Clinton, she said, and the entire Rock River from Dane County to Illinois is under slow/no wake rules.



Janesville police officer Aaron Ellis turns cars away from a flooded section of Black Bridge Road near the landfill at about 7:30 p.m. Wednesday after a heavy downpour. Four cars already had stalled. 'The last guy that went in there, it was up to his knees,' Ellis said. One driver seemed especially intent on trying to get through, but Ellis advised the driver to turn around. 'We're out of tow trucks,' he said.

Dan Lassiter/Gazette Staff

[Order a reprint of this photo](#)

The National Weather Service has issued a flood warning for the river in the Afton area. Current projections indicate river levels could crest between 11 feet and 12 feet by late next week.

Janesville city crews have placed sandbags on the river walk between Milwaukee Street and Firehouse Park on the east side of the river downtown. At these levels, flooding may occur in the Mole/Sadler subdivision, Riverside Park and on Main Street near Centerway.

Up river, Lake Koshkonong has not had a slow/no wake enacted, and it won't happen, Jefferson County emergency management director Donna Haugom said. The county only enforces slow/no wake zones on rivers.

But the need for the zones in Jefferson County is determined by the water level in Lake Koshkonong. This morning, it was a foot short.

Things are no better on Walworth county lakes.

The dam is wide open on Geneva Lake, and water is gushing out at a rate of 2,100 gallons per second into the already swollen White River. That's 7.5 million gallons per day, said Tom Hausner, manager of the Geneva Lake Law Enforcement Agency.

The lake is about 11 inches above normal, said Greg Holden, a town of Linn supervisor. Water spilling out of Geneva Lake has flooded Donian Park, which the White River flows through on its way out of the city.

The city of Lake Geneva and town of Linn enacted emergency slow/no wake rules Wednesday for their portions of the approximately 5,200-acre lake. Fontana likely will follow suit tonight, and Williams Bay is considering similar action, Hausner said.

The town of Linn closed its boat ramps. Ramps in Lake Geneva, Williams Bay and Fontana remain open.

Delavan Lake is 17 inches above normal, and water is flowing into the lake twice as fast as it's flowing out, Delavan Lake Sanitary District Kevin McKinnon said this morning.

The town of Delavan closed Community Park on Tuesday night, which effectively shut down the public boat launch. It also closed Bluegill Road, shutting off access to a ramp there. Most of the private launches have also closed, Town Chairman Wayne Polzin said.

Delavan Lake and Whitewater Lake also have emergency slow/no wake rules in effect until further notice. Pieces of piers have floated away on Delavan Lake and so have some of the boats and jet skis attached to them, said Mary Knipper, former president of the Delavan Lake Improvement Association.

Knipper said she hopes the weekend boaters and anglers that come to the area are reading newspapers or watching the news.

"Hopefully, they're aware of what we're experiencing and might not want to come," Knipper said. "If they do, hopefully they're people that will take it with a good spirit by accepting that they can't launch on that day."

Town of Koshkonong chairman Tim Griep also is worried about weekend boaters being a little out-of-touch. Many of their boats are on lifts designed for lower water levels. If the water gets any higher, the boats could become debris on the lake.

"Maybe this is a case where neighbors need to talk to each other," Griep said.

Rainfall this month

Date*, Rainfall

Aug. 4: 4.22 inches

Aug. 5: 0.01

Aug. 6: 3.88

Aug. 7: 0.01

Aug. 8: 0.10

Aug. 9: 0.01

Aug. 10: 0.01

Aug. 11: 0.41

Aug. 12: 0.01

Aug. 13: 1.26

Aug. 14: 0.02

Aug. 15: 0.33

Aug. 18: 2.01

Aug. 19: 2.37
Aug. 20: 0.02
Aug. 21: 0.54
Aug. 22: 1.69
Total: 16.90

*Rainfall between 7 a.m. this date and 7 a.m. the following date