

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HEAVY RAINS INCREASE RISKS FOR FLOODING

LIVE OAK, FLA., Aug 3, 2018 – Rainfall across the Suwannee Valley has increased levels in the aquifer across much of the 15-county region of the Suwannee River Water Management District (District) and the springs and rivers are flowing; but so is water in the streets in some areas. The District is warning residents to be prepared as we move into what is typically the most active months of the year for tropical weather.

“Water levels are the highest they have been for many years in some areas of the District,” said Fay Baird, senior hydrologist with the District. “If our area receives a tropical storm or heavy rainfall event, flooding in many low areas across the District could be significant.”

Many areas throughout the District have experienced much higher than average rainfall over the past two months. Areas in Dixie and Levy counties have received almost 40 inches of rain over the past three months, compared to a long-term average of approximately 18 inches for that same time period.

Communities in Alachua, Levy and Dixie counties have already experienced localized flooding, particularly in low-lying areas of the counties. Additionally, river-level forecasts on the Santa Fe River are already at minor flood stages, although water levels are currently expected to recede before significant flooding occurs.

Because of all the rain, there is little ability for the landscape to absorb more water. This can result in flooding. In many areas of the District, the only solution is for the water to move to another place, recede, evaporate or percolate into the ground.

Historically, August and September are the months in which the District is most likely to have widespread rain from tropical systems. But even if there is no tropical weather over the next few weeks, summer thunderstorms can create local downpours. Under those conditions local flooding can happen very quickly especially when an area is already saturated.

Residents in low lying areas and those along rivers and streams should be thinking NOW about what they can do to safeguard their homes and belongings from high water.

- Take time to identify alternate evacuation routes in the event the home’s main ingress and egress becomes flooded. Residents also should keep in mind that even if their home is on high ground, the roads that lead to it may not be.
- Make a plan to move valuable property, including animals, from low, flood-prone areas to higher ground.
- Verify that drainageways on or through the property are not blocked and allow for water flow.
- Identify an evacuation location ahead of time.
- Always evacuate if instructed to do so.

The District monitors river and rainfall levels on an hourly basis. If levels along river corridors approach flood stage, the District works with the National Weather Service and local emergency management personnel to warn citizens, so they can protect their homes, resources and roads.

For more information on rainfall and river levels, visit www.MySuwanneeRiver.com. The District works with local communities to provide grant funding for flooding prevention and mitigation. If you have ideas for projects, please submit them to the District's Project Portal found on the website.

The mission of the Suwannee River Water Management District is to protect and manage water resources using science-based solutions to support natural systems and the needs of the public. The District holds true to the belief of water for nature, water for people. Headquartered in Live Oak, Florida, the District serves 15 surrounding north-central Florida counties.

For more information about the District, visit www.MySuwanneeRiver.com or follow us on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Twitter, search @SRWMD.

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