



THE BOARD OF BLAINE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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**** FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE ****

BLAINE COUNTY FLOODING UPDATE

The recent sustained warm temperatures and above average snow pack at higher elevations are resulting in significant spring runoff, earlier and quicker than expected. Conditions are rapidly becoming more dangerous resulting in potential record-setting flooding. The Blaine County Commissioners and Sheriff's Office want to remind everyone of the significant risks facing the community and steps everyone can take to stay safe.

A few very important factors to keep in mind:

- Stay away from all flood waters!!! This includes the creeks, rivers, and standing water.
- High flows are dangerous. A person and even a car will be quickly swept away by floodwaters.
- DO NOT swim, walk, or allow children or pets to play in the floodwaters. Floodwaters can be contaminated by such things as flooded septic tanks and other hazardous materials. Numerous dangers may lie hidden beneath floodwaters including electrical wires, which could result in electrocution.
- Obey road closures and evacuations. They are in place for your safety! Roads and pathways can be washed out beneath muddy floodwaters.
- The worst flooding can occur between midnight and early morning hours. Stay vigilant! If you need to quickly evacuate in the middle of the night, have a plan.
- Beware of trees located in or near floodwaters. Water can saturate the root structure, causing large trees to become unstable and fall.
- If you see something – Say something! If something looks unusual or concerns you, notify your local officials. For NON-EMERGENCIES call Blaine County Dispatch at 788-5555 or 911 for an emergency.

All local first responders and government officials are coordinating and working together to ensure the safety of the community. As local emergency responders continue to evaluate the situation, decisions will

be made in the best interest of public safety. The flooding cannot be stopped! Take precautions and be prepared to evacuate if necessary.

Pre-evacuation – which means prepare to evacuate – and evacuation may be ordered and power may be shut off. Public officials will work to communicate such events to those affected through the Code Red Emergency Alert Notification System. If you have not already registered to receive the Code Red emergency alerts, visit <http://blainecounty911.org/systems.asp> and register through the “Blaine County Alert Notification System.”

In flood mitigation and flood fight operations, all stream alterations must be planned and then approved by the appropriate governing jurisdiction, in most cases Blaine County. Emergency procedures allow this to be done immediately. Any work done to move or control moving water or debris can have a negative effect on property downstream or across the stream. Actions should be taken to protect one’s home, but landowners do not have the right to take actions that will negatively affect their neighbors.

For additional information regarding emergency stream alteration permits, visit www.blainecounty.org.

Floodplain areas play important roles in allowing water to spread out and release pressure from the river channel. Bladders, sandbags, and similar barriers should be placed close to the home structure (within about 10 feet) but not against it. (A permit is not required for these activities.) Sandbags and bladders must not block or impede the flow of water through or across the stream channel or floodplain.

Landowners are, for the most part, responsible for the protection of their own properties. Local city and county governments normally work to protect public property and important infrastructure such as roads and bridges.

Contact your local authorities with questions about procedures and processes in flood response activities. The worst is likely yet to come. Some may remember the floods of 2006 in the Wood River Valley. Official predictions suggest this year’s floods will surpass the 2006 flood water levels. Many in the county have been through high water events before, so they are good sources of advice and recommendations. A primary resource for flood preparedness information can be found at: www.blaineemergency.org.

For current updates regarding Blaine County evacuations and road closures, visit www.blainesherriff.com.

Please direct any questions to Blaine County Disaster Services Coordinator Chris Corwin at 208-720-5454 or ccorwin@co.blaine.id.us.