



US Army Corps of Engineers
St. Paul District

2007 Flash Flooding – Minnesota, Wisconsin & Iowa

Background

Torrential rains on August 18 and 19, 2007, resulted in devastating flash flooding in southeast Minnesota, southwest Wisconsin and northeast Iowa.



Minnesota

Several Federal flood control projects were tested during this event, including Rochester, Houston, Winona, Gilmore Creek, Zumbro Falls, and Kellogg. Many saw their highest river levels since completion, and they protected each community as designed, preventing tens of millions of dollars in damages.

Rushford was one of the hardest hit communities in Minnesota. Although it had a Federal flood control project, the levees were overtopped in the early morning hours of August 19, inundating the town and pump stations. Based on available data, Rush Creek exceeded its previous flood of record by well over 200 percent. Initial inspections indicate the project withstood the overtopping with minimal damages. Because it is a Federal project, all repairs will be covered under Public Law 84-99 at no cost to the non-Federal sponsor.

Wisconsin

The same rain system produced flash flooding along the Kickapoo River basin in southwestern Wisconsin. The unprotected community of Gays Mills sustained major damages. Soldiers Grove was spared significant damages because the town had previously been moved out of the floodplain.

Iowa

The city of Marquette experienced high water and flooding in July that resulted in some homes being flooded. The August rain filled the interior drainage retention ponds once again, resulting in an unstable situation and the potential for additional damages.

USACE Response

The Morning of August 19, the St. Paul District sent flood engineers to each threatened community and provided sandbags and pumps. This support mitigated the damages that had already occurred and prevented additional damages in several communities.

The St. Paul District also provided direct support to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, providing pumps to a secluded Natural Resources Conservation Service dam that had sustained significant damages during the flood.



Status

Although the river and stream flows have returned to normal, considerable work remains. The St. Paul District is coordinating with communities that had Federal flood control projects to ensure these projects are quickly inspected and repaired under Public Law 84-99. The Federal Emergency Management Agency is supporting recovery efforts in many communities.

Authority

USACE Emergency Operations and Levee Rehabilitation are authorized under Public Law 84-99.

Fiscal

Funds for emergency operations and levee rehabilitation are provided by the Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies (FCCE) appropriation.

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