

PUBLIC INFORMATION STATEMENT
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE ALBANY NY
800 AM EDT THU OCT 24 2013

...WINTER WEATHER AWARENESS WEEK CONTINUES...

OCTOBER 20 TO OCTOBER 26 IS WINTER WEATHER AWARENESS WEEK IN NEW YORK.

ONE OF OUR DEADLIEST WINTER WEATHER HAZARDS IS FLOODING.

IN EASTERN NEW YORK AND WESTERN NEW ENGLAND ONE USUALLY ASSOCIATES SNOW...ICE...AND BITING COLD WITH WINTER. BUT SOMETIMES NATURE THROWS A CURVE AT US...WITH UNSEASONABLE WARMTH...AND WITH IT...RAIN.

A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT FACTORS WORK TOGETHER TO MAKE FLOODS IN WINTER.

WHEN UNSEASONABLE WARMTH COMES TO THE REGION IT WILL OFTEN MELT MUCH OF THE SNOW ON THE GROUND. THE MELTING SNOW WILL SATURATE THE GROUND AND ALSO BEGIN TO SWELL THE RIVERS.

OFTEN THE WARMER AIR WILL RISE OVER COLDER AIR TRAPPED IN THE REGION. AS THIS AIR RISES IT RESULTS IN CLOUDS AND RAIN...WHICH WILL COMBINE WITH THE MELTING SNOW TO INCREASE FLOWS IN THE RIVERS. MELTING SNOW AND HEAVY RAIN CAN PUT ENOUGH WATER INTO THE RIVERS TO SEND THEM OVER THEIR BANKS.

SOME OF OUR WORST WINTER FLOODS ARE CAUSED BY INTENSE CYCLONES THAT TRACK FROM THE OHIO VALLEY NORTHEAST UP THE SAINT LAWRENCE VALLEY INTO CANADA. THESE STORMS BRING A LOT OF WARM AND MOIST AIR INTO THE REGION OFF THE ATLANTIC OCEAN.

IN APRIL 2011...THE ADIRONDACKS SAW RECORD RIVER FLOWS AT SOME LOCATIONS DUE TO MELTING SNOW COMBINED WITH HEAVY RAIN.

ANOTHER WINTER PROBLEM IN THIS AREA IS FLOODING CAUSED BY ICE JAMS IN THE RIVERS. OUR AREA IS PARTICULARLY SUSCEPTIBLE TO ICE JAM FLOODING. IN JANUARY 2010 AND MARCH 2011...COMMUNITIES ALONG THE MOHAWK RIVER EXPERIENCED SEVERE ICE JAM FLOODING.

SINCE ICE THAT COVERS THE RIVERS IS LIGHTER THAN WATER IT WILL TEND TO FLOAT. UNDER THE PRESSURE IT WILL OFTEN BREAK INTO HUGE SLABS. THESE SLABS WILL THEN MOVE DOWNSTREAM IN THE CURRENT UNTIL THEY RUN INTO AN OBSTRUCTION SUCH AS A BEND...ISLAND...OR WIDE SHALLOW AREA. WHEN THIS HAPPENS THE ICE WILL OFTEN STOP AND PILE UP INTO A JAM. WHEN ICE BLOCKS THE FLOW OF THE RIVER...THE WATER CAN OVERFLOW THE BANKS IN LESS THAN AN HOUR AS IT TRIES TO GET AROUND THE ICE. ALSO...AS THE WATER RISES THE PRESSURE CAN BREAK THE JAM AND RELEASE A SUDDEN SURGE OF WATER AND ICE DOWN THE RIVER.

WHILE ICE JAMS OFTEN FORM IN THE SAME SPOTS YEAR AFTER YEAR IT IS NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE TO PREDICT EXACTLY WHEN OR WHERE A JAM WILL FORM...OR WHEN ONE WILL BREAK. SOMETIMES A JAM THAT FORMS IN EARLY WINTER WILL FREEZE IN PLACE FOR MOST OF THE WINTER.

SEVERE FLOODING OF ROADS AND BUILT UP AREAS CAN ALSO OCCUR WHEN MOUNDS OF PLOWED SNOW AND ICE BLOCK AND PLUG UP THE STORM DRAINS...SO THE WATER FROM THE PAVEMENT HAS NO WHERE TO GO. THIS STANDING WATER CAN CAUSE DANGEROUS BLACK ICE IF IT FREEZES.

ALL OF OUR WEATHER AND HYDROLOGIC INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE ONLINE. SIMPLY GO TO WWW.WEATHER.GOV AND THEN CLICK ON EASTERN NEW YORK OR WESTERN NEW ENGLAND. THIS WILL TAKE YOU TO THE MAIN WEBPAGE OF THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE IN ALBANY NEW YORK.

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