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**NOAA'S NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE (NWS) PROVIDES NEW RIVER
FORECAST SERVICES AT FLETCHER, NORTH CAROLINA**

NOAA's National Weather Service in Greenville-Spartanburg, South Carolina, and the Lower Mississippi River Forecast Center (LMRFC) in Slidell, LA, will provide a new river forecast service for the French Broad River at Fletcher, North Carolina, starting July 16, 2013.

This new forecasting service at Fletcher is part of NOAA's continuing mission to serve society's needs for weather and water information. On average, 84 people lose their lives due to floods in the U.S. every year. The new forecast service will provide valuable time for people to take action and help reduce the number of fatalities.

This forecast service is intended to provide the public and emergency management officials in Buncombe and Henderson Counties with advance warning of impending floods. Flood warnings will be disseminated over the NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards, through local media and county emergency officials as well as the Internet. <http://www.weather.gov/gsp/>

Flood stage at Fletcher on the French Broad River has been set at 13.0 feet based on an elevation of 2068.00 feet above Mean Sea Level. The zero stage for the gage is set at an elevation of 2055.00 feet above Mean Sea Level.

The French Broad River at Fletcher, North Carolina will become a daily forecast point included in NWS Advanced Hydrologic Prediction Service (AHPS), a web-based service of accurate and timely forecasts related to hydrology. "A graphic and text display shows how long it will take the river to reach a flood stage, how high the river will rise and how long the flood will last whenever a forecast is issued," explained NOAA's NWS Patricia Tanner, hydrologist at Greenville-Spartanburg. Specific daily river forecasts will be available starting July 16, 2013 for the French Broad River at Fletcher on NWS AHPS on the web at <http://water.weather.gov/ahps2/hydrograph.php?wfo=gsp&gage=ficn7>

The river gage site is owned, operated, and maintained by the United States Geological Survey in Asheville, N.C. The gage is located on Old Fanning Bridge Road over the French Broad River.