



## High Water Mark Sign Update

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Issued: August 4, 2008

Severe flooding is part of the history of many communities in the southeast U.S.; still, many residents are not fully aware of the flood potential in their area. To help raise awareness of flood risk, SERFC began a project in 2006 to install high water mark signs in highly visible locations within communities that have experienced severe flooding. One such example would be the wall of a building downtown; this makes more of an impression than a sign near the riverbank would.

Service hydrologists from local NWS offices coordinate with emergency management and other local officials to select the best locations for the signs. The USGS is involved as well, providing historical data and aiding with the surveying of high water mark signs in their districts.

The first sign was unveiled in Rome, Ga., on March 21, 2007, during Flood Safety Awareness Week. Rome's record flood occurred on April 1, 1886, when the Oostanaula River rose to a stage of 40.3 feet, inundating some parts of downtown Rome with more than 20 feet of water. The downtown area was so severely damaged that the city opted to fill in much of it, so that street level of present-day downtown Rome is what used to be the second floor. Even so, the high water mark was more than four feet above the ground. The sign was installed on the side of the Rome Area History Museum building.



Eric Frantz, USGS student employee, and his father, Kent Frantz, Senior Service Hydrologist for the Atlanta Weather Forecast Office, installed the Rome, Ga., sign as a team.

Several of the signs commemorate severe flooding in the wake of 1999's Hurricane Floyd. Signs were unveiled in Franklin, Virginia, and Tarboro, North Carolina, on May 22nd and 23rd, 2007, as part of Hurricane Preparedness Week. Franklin's sign is on a pillar in front of the Coldwell Banker building on Main Street; Tarboro's is on the Edgecombe County Administration Building.



**James P. Council III, Mayor of Franklin, Va, and Keith Lynch, Service Hydrologist of the Wakefield, Va., Weather Forecast Office, unveil the Franklin sign.**



**Darin Figurskey, Meteorologist-In-Charge of the Raleigh Weather Forecast Office, at the unveiling of the Tarboro, N.C., high water mark sign.**

# HIGH WATER MARK

37.20 FEET (24.30 FEET ABOVE FLOOD STAGE)

## MAY 8, 2003

ON THIS DAY, WATER FROM THE TALLAPOOSA RIVER ROSE TO THIS LEVEL AT THIS LOCATION. FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

**NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE BIRMINGHAM, AL**  
[www.srh.noaa.gov/bmx](http://www.srh.noaa.gov/bmx)

**SOUTHEAST RIVER FORECAST CENTER**  
[weather.gov/serfc](http://weather.gov/serfc)

**USGS ALABAMA WATER SCIENCE CENTER**  
[al.water.usgs.gov](http://al.water.usgs.gov)



### Wadley, Ala., high water mark sign

Wadley, Alabama, received a sign on May 8, 2008, to commemorate the fifth anniversary of its record flood. Several other signs are also slated to debut in 2008, most of which recall the devastating flooding that followed 1999's Hurricane Floyd. In North Carolina, the communities of Snow Hill, Pollocksville, Greenville, and Kinston will receive Floyd-related signs, as will Conway, South Carolina. Kinston will have an additional sign showing the crest from Hurricane Fran in 1996, which was several feet lower. Belhaven, N.C., will have a sign showing its record crest from 2003's Hurricane Isabel.

Following the success of the 2007 pilot project, SERFC hopes to partner with more WFOs to install additional high water mark signs. If you would like a high water mark sign for your community, please contact the SERFC or your local Weather Forecast Office. People who have lived through a severe flood will not soon forget its effects, but the signs will raise awareness of the dangers of flooding for new residents and future generations.