

NWS FORM E-5
(11-88)
(PRES. by WSOM E-41)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

HYDROLOGIC SERVICE AREA (HSA)

Midland, Texas

MONTHLY REPORT OF RIVER AND FLOOD CONDITIONS

REPORT FOR:

MONTH

March

YEAR

2000

TO: Hydrometeorological Information Center, W/OH2
NOAA / National Weather Service
1325 East West Highway, Room 7230
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3283

SIGNATURE

J. DeBerry/Dan Koch

In Charge of HSA

DATE

4/1/00

When no flooding occurs, include miscellaneous river conditions, such as significant rises, record low stages, ice conditions, snow cover, droughts, and hydrologic products issued (NWS Instruction 10-924)

[] Several flood stages were reached in this HSA in March.

The first major severe weather outbreak of the spring occurred on the night of March 21st. Heavy precipitation thunderstorms developed and moved over portions of southeast New Mexico, the South Plains, and the northwest Permian Basin, resulting in upwards of 3" of rainfall in some locations. 8 flash flood warnings were issued, the first at 10:45 PM CST. Flash flooding occurred in Andrews, Dawson, Ector, Gaines, Lea, and Martin Counties, but damage was minimal and the flooding only occurred on area roadways. The heaviest reported flooding occurred in west central Martin County, where 2' of water covered the intersection of TX 176 and FM 1212.

Severe thunderstorms developed again during the afternoon of March 22nd, and continued into the morning of March 23rd. A series of heavy precipitation supercells developed southeast of Fort Stockton in Pecos County and moved northeast, one after another, along virtually the same path. 5 widespread flash flood warnings were issued, the first at 3:53 PM CST. Flash flooding occurred throughout the night in Borden, Crane, Glasscock, Howard, Martin, Midland, Mitchell, Pecos, Reagan, Terrell, and Upton Counties. Many streets and highways flooded, with reports of up to 2.5' of water covering roads in some locations. Many highways were barricaded overnight as a result. Midland County's first ever white water rescue was conducted by a Department of Public Safety helicopter for 2 people who were stranded in a pickup that had been pushed off the highway and into a field by flooding waters.

There were 2 flash flood-related fatalities from these storms that occurred in Mustang Draw along FM 818 12 miles southwest of Big Spring. On the morning of the 23rd, a woman was traveling along FM 818 with her 2 children, an 18-month-old and a 6-year-old, when 7-8' of water washed her car off a low water crossing and into Mustang Draw. The woman managed to free herself from the car but could not save her children in time.

The heavy rains of March 22-23 resulted in moderate to major overbank flooding of Beals Creek in Howard and Mitchell Counties. Moderate overbank flooding occurred throughout the town of Big Spring. The creek also overtopped the Beals Creek Bridge on Highway 164 south of Westbrook. The river gage/forecast point (WBRT2) there measured the crest at 23.41' on the 24th at 1 PM CST. Flood stage is 22.50'.

Moderate to major flooding occurred along the Colorado River in Mitchell County, particularly in Colorado City. Some homes and streets on the south side of the city were impacted, as well as the Colorado City sewer plant. The river gage/forecast point (CDCT2) there measured the crest at 23.57' on the 24th just after midnight. Flood stage was 8.00' at the time, but in light of the minimal impact of the floodwaters at this level, an effort has been undertaken to raise the flood stage to 15.00'.

The crest of 28.57' represents the flood of record since the construction of Lake J.B. Thomas upstream.

Prior to this the flood of record was 27.81' back in 1980. Before the construction of Lake J.B. Thomas in 1952, the river once reached a stage of 35.9' in 1939.

The upshot of these storms was reservoir replenishment. The river gage on the Colorado River above Lake J.B. Thomas Reservoir (JBGT2) crested at 15.54' on the 24th at 11:00 PM and again on the 25th at 12:15 AM. Over the next several days this raised the pool elevation of Lake J.B. Thomas by approximately 1.5'. Further downstream, Champion Creek Reservoir was also raised approximately 1.5'. Lake Colorado City, between the 21st and 26th, gained 12.78' in pool elevation.

One last round of thunderstorms occurred on March 31st. 3 flash flood warnings were issued beginning at 6:05 PM CST for Glasscock, Howard, and Midland Counties, and flash flooding was reported in Midland County on TX Highway 349. No significant damage occurred.

Locations that received notable amounts of precipitation for the month of March (91% of it from the storms of March 22-23) were:

Big Spring, Howard County	4.36"
Garden City, Glasscock County	5.21"
Snyder, Scurry County	6.05"
Forsan, Howard County	6.12"

Midland International Airport received a total of 0.76" of precipitation for the month. Normal for the month of March is 0.58". This brings the yearly total to 1.37", which is still below the normal 1.60". However, long-range precipitation forecasts for the summer hint at normal or above-normal precipitation for the HSA, especially the western half.

Reservoir levels at Brantley Lake, NM are above conservation level, and Lake Colorado City is close to conservation level thanks to the recent heavy inflows. All other reservoirs remain below conservation stage, and overall the flood threat remains low.

River products issued:
RVS = 2 FLS = 9 FLW = 3

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cc: USGS USCE IBWC-ELP IBWC-Presidio