

MAJOR RIVER FLOODING ON THE LOWER OHIO RIVER

Widespread heavy rain, combined with snowmelt from December, produced major flooding on the Lower Ohio River in early to mid January.

- **Impacts during the peak of this event: Several cities and counties along the Ohio River declared a State of Emergency. Many miles of roads were closed in Livingston and Henderson Counties. U.S. Route 60 in Smithland, KY was partially closed because a makeshift levee was constructed on one lane. Illinois Route 1 was closed in parts of Hardin and Gallatin Counties in IL. Public access to two villages in Gallatin County, IL was restricted at barricades manned by state police. About ten families were evacuated in Union County, KY. Isolated evacuations were conducted in several other counties.**

PHOTOS:



Photo of a flooded area on Pearl Street in Metropolis, IL. Photo courtesy of Beau Dodson.



This photo, courtesy of Jeff and Christine Wielgos, shows the makeshift levee constructed on U.S. Highway 60 in Smithland, KY. Smithland is located in Livingston County, about 15 miles upriver from Paducah. With no permanent levee, a makeshift levee is built to protect Smithland during each major river flood. Photo taken looking north on Route 60 from the southern city limits.



Photo taken in Livingston County, KY on Route 137 near Phelps Creek. Ice formed in many backwater areas. Photo courtesy of Jeff and Christine Wielgos.



Extensive flooding in Gallatin County, Illinois. The Shawneetown bridge is in the background. Photo courtesy of Tracy Felty.



During major floods, the Ohio River backs up the Saline River into Gallatin and Saline Counties in Illinois. This photo shows a house surrounded by floodwaters in the community of Junction, which is much closer to the Saline River than the Ohio. Photo courtesy of Tracy Felty.



Photo taken south of Equality, IL in Gallatin County. Equality is on the Saline River about 10 miles from the Ohio River. Photo courtesy of Tracy Felty.



Photo of the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, taken from a hill at Wickliffe, KY. The Ohio River is in the foreground. Both rivers are in flood. Photo courtesy of Beau Dodson.



Photo of flooding on Pearl Street in Metropolis, which is not protected by a levee or floodwall. Photo courtesy of Beau Dodson.



Another photo of flooding in Metropolis, IL, courtesy of Beau Dodson.



In Metropolis, a casino riverboat's parking lot and entrance area was heavily impacted by the Ohio River. Photo courtesy of Kevin Smith.



A trailer community is flooded in Metropolis, IL on 2nd Street. Photo taken on January 14, courtesy of Charlie Taylor.



Photo of a flooded intersection in Equality, IL (Gallatin County). Intersection is closed and ice is forming on the water. Photo courtesy of Tracy Felty.



Water covers a road in Livingston County, KY. Photo from Beau Dodson.



Water is several feet deep across Old Illinois 13 in Junction, IL. Photo courtesy of Tracy Felty.



Water begins to surround a restaurant in Harrisburg, IL (Saline County). Photo courtesy of Tracy Felty.



Work crews fill sandbags in Metropolis, IL on January 14.



The following photo, courtesy of Beau Dodson, is a view of the makeshift levee constructed on U.S. Highway 60 in Smithland, KY. Photo taken on January 15.



Photo of low areas surrounding the business district of Wickliffe, KY. Wickliffe is along the Ohio River very near the confluence with the Mississippi River. Photo from Beau Dodson.



Firefighters and other city workers install a floodgate in downtown Paducah, KY on January 14. This was the first time since the 1997 flood that floodgates were installed in Paducah.



Another photo taken on Friday, Jan. 14 of the floodgate installation in downtown Paducah.



Photo of the Ohio River taken from the same spot as the preceding photo.



Photo of a flooded campground along the Ohio River in Livingston County, KY near Birdsville on January 10. Photo courtesy of Brian Brush.

- How did this flood compare to the Flood of 1997? At most gage points, the crest was 3 to 4 feet lower than in 1997. Some flood crest stages in 1997 include: Evansville...47.5 feet. Shawneetown...54.4 feet. Paducah...51.8 feet. Cairo...56.2 feet.
- The river flooding was the result of a prolonged period of above normal precipitation. The graphic below, from the Ohio River Forecast Center, shows the percentage departure from normal of rainfall during a 30-day period preceding the flood.

30-day Percent of Normal Precipitation Ending 7 AM EST, Fri, Jan 14, 2005

