
News Release

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Matthew T. Whitehead

614-430-7749

mtwhiteh@usgs.gov

Note to reporters: The Blanchard River hydrograph for August 21 to 24, 2007, is available at http://oh.water.usgs.gov/images/Findlay_flood_blanchard07_hydrograph.jpg. The Blanchard River hydrograph for January 31 to February 13, 2008, is available at http://oh.water.usgs.gov/images/Findlay_flood_blanchard08_hydrograph.jpg. This news release can be viewed online at http://oh.water.usgs.gov/newsreleases/Findlay_flood_warning.pdf and flood photos from August 2007 are available at <http://oh.water.usgs.gov/newsroom.htm>.

Innovative Flood Warning System Installed in Findlay, Ohio

With the recent flooding, the residents of Findlay, Ohio, are having flashbacks to the August 2007 floods in northwestern Ohio. But now they are armed with a flood warning system, thanks to scientists and engineers with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the City of Findlay, who have devised an innovative way to alert residents and emergency personnel when floodwaters are expected to reach critical levels.

The flood warning system enhances the ability of the National Weather Service (NWS) to predict flood-forecasts for the City of Findlay by upgrading an existing streamgauge on the Blanchard River near Findlay and installing four new streamgages to transmit real-time streamflow and river-stage data to emergency managers. The system enables city officials to receive automated warnings about flood stage or rapid stage increases directly from the streamgages.

“We are creating flood-inundation maps of the city to better define the areas that may be in danger of flooding at a given stage,” said Matt Whitehead, USGS hydrologist and project leader. “In cooperation with the National Weather Service, we will provide the public and city officials with a way to quickly display flood-inundation maps approximately corresponding to current or projected conditions.”

The USGS recently installed the four new streamgages and accompanying rain gages with multiple forms of telemetry, which will enhance the NWS’s ability to accurately forecast flood peaks in the Findlay area and provide additional early-warning capabilities. The new gages are all upstream of Findlay—two on the Blanchard River and one each on Eagle Creek and Lye Creek, the two main tributaries to the Blanchard River in Findlay.

“Together with the USGS, we have installed an automated system that will allow emergency officials and residents to view real-time data of the Blanchard River so everyone can have a better idea when the river is approaching critical levels,” said Brian Hurt, City of Findlay Engineer. “I don’t want to see any more floods like we’ve experienced recently; but if we do, this warning system gives us more time to react and respond.”

Later this year, the USGS will provide the City of Findlay with detailed flood-inundation maps for a series of stream stages ranging from about the 2-year to the 100-year-recurrence-interval flood levels. These flood-inundation maps will be made available to the public on the NWS Advanced Hydrologic Prediction Service web page. Findlay residents will be able to see the predicted peak stage for the USGS streamgauge on the NWS web page and view preprepared flood-inundation map for stages that bracket or are equal to the predicted peak stage.

Current real-time streamflow data for the streamgages near Findlay and all USGS streamgages in Ohio are available <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/oh/nwis/rt> . For more information about floods, see the USGS fact sheet, "Flood Hazards—A National Threat," at <http://pubs.usgs.gov/fs/2006/3026>.

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