

Merced's Bear Creek expected to flood again

Here's a timeline and what the city's doing

Sun-Star Staff

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National Weather Service forecasters say they expect the most recent round of rainstorms will cause Merced's Bear Creek to reach flood stage again, most likely by Saturday evening.

The news comes just a few days after heavy rains cause widespread flooding throughout Merced and nearby Planada, causing [mandatory evacuations and millions of dollars in property damage](#).

Light showers began late Friday morning in Merced County, and the storm is expected to grow in intensity into the evening with heavy rain into Saturday morning, according to Jim Bagnall, meteorologist with the National Weather Service Valley office in Hanford.

As of 11:45 a.m. Friday, the gauge in Bear Creek at McKee Road recorded a depth of 11 feet, Bagnall said.

With the downpour of rains, that's expected to rise above a flood stage of 23 feet by Saturday night.

The weather service expects Merced to receive up to an inch of rain Saturday.

Merced city officials on Friday said they are working to strengthen weak areas of the creek levee. They are asking residents to stay away from those places, as they can pose a danger.

“The previous storm resulted in issues that required the City's immediate remediation. This work is critical to preparing for the upcoming storm, “ Merced City Manager Stephanie Dietz said in a statement to the Sun-Star.

A flood watch is in effect from 10 a.m. Saturday until 7 a.m. Sunday, according to the weather service. Merced city officials say residents are encouraged to stay off roads, creek areas, waterways, and fast-moving waters during those times.

Bagnall of the weather service said Merced since Oct. 1 has received 10.81 inches of rain, 4.60 inches since Jan. 1 and 2.80 inches in the past week, all of which are above average amounts.

Important resources

Merced city officials say residents should be prepared in the event they need to evacuate. That means gathering household members, pets, personal items, important documents, and prescription medication.

Residents should also:

Pack a change of clothes, nonperishable foods, water, extra batteries, flashlights, and phone chargers.

Prepare to evacuate to a safe location.

Prepare your home. Elevate and anchor utilities, waterproof your basement, clear debris from gutters, elevate or move your furniture.

Register for [Subscribe Merced](#) to receive up-to-date storm related information from the City of Merced.

Sandbag locations are listed at countyofmerced.com/sandbags.

Merced County has set up a flood hotline at (209) 385-7563. Residents can call the hotline for sandbag information, flood evacuation warnings, mandatory flood evacuation locations, shelter locations, road closures, family reunification support, and additional flood resources.

Xfinity has opened up hotspots across its California footprint throughout the storm emergency. Visit, california.comcast.com/2023/01/13/comcast-opens-free-xfinity-wifi-hotspots-to-support-residents-during-storms/

For more information about evacuation preparedness visit ready.gov/evacuation and floodsmart.gov/first-prepare-flooding.

<https://www.mercedsunstar.com/news/weather-news/article271164232.html>

Willowbrook Drive remains flooded near Merced apartment complex



1:06

Merced resident Michael Harrington, used his kayak to get through floodwater and reach Walmart from his home in the Willowbrook Apartments in Merced, Calif., on Wednesday, Jan. 11, 2023. BY [ANDREW KUHN](#)

Merced residents evacuated from homes near Highway 59 due to flooding



3:07

Some Merced residents were evacuated from their homes near Highway 59 between West 16th Street and West Olive Avenue due to flooding on Tuesday, Jan. 10, 2023. BY [ANDREW KUHN](#)