



News Release

U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Geological Survey

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USGS Measures Record Flooding during Tropical Storm Ivan in Pennsylvania

Torrential rains dumped by Tropical Storm Ivan throughout Pennsylvania caused several rivers and streams to rise above the levels recorded more than 30 years ago during Hurricane Agnes according to the U.S. Geological Survey. The USGS monitors flood conditions through an extensive real-time network of about 255 streamgages throughout the state.

Ivan dropped between 4 and 9 inches of rain across the region, although there were some local reports of more than 13 inches of rain, according to the National Weather Service. The rainfall caused extensive flooding and new record peaks for several streams throughout the Commonwealth. Heavy rain fell on ground already-saturated from Tropical Storm Frances and was so intense in some areas of the Commonwealth that it exceeded the capacity of gutters, drains, and storm sewers to carry runoff to stream channels. Many major roads in the Commonwealth were closed because of flooding, landslides and/or damage. Flooding in metropolitan areas throughout the Commonwealth was common.

Throughout the storm, USGS personnel monitored real-time data-transmission equipment located at USGS streamgages in rivers and streams, provided on-site maintenance to ensure continuity of real-time data transmissions, and either measured or documented peak river stages and flows.

“Peak flows at several gages exceeded the levels recorded or measured during the June 1972 flood caused by Hurricane Agnes,” said Bob Hainly, USGS Pennsylvania assistant district chief.

The most significantly affected areas in Pa. were in the Lower Allegheny and Monongahela, Lower and Middle Susquehanna, and Upper Delaware River Basins. New peaks of record occurred at Chartiers Creek (24.98 feet), Buffalo Creek (14.18 feet), West Branch Susquehanna River (28.13 feet), Frankstown Branch Juniata River (19.46 feet), Swatara Creek (15.17 feet), and Monocacy Creek (9.62 feet).

Stream levels had recently peaked in some of the larger streams in the affected river basins at the time of this summary. The peak stage information will be updated as data are collected and reported to the USGS Pennsylvania District office in New Cumberland. A summary of the peak stage and flow data are available at http://pa.water.usgs.gov/reports/press_releases/2004/ivanpeaks_index.html



The USGS has collected streamflow data in Pennsylvania for more than 100 years. For current Pennsylvania streamflow information including discharge, precipitation, and gage height, please visit <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/pa/nwis/rt/>.

For more information on USGS flood activities and related impacts from Hurricane Ivan, please see: <http://water.usgs.gov/osw/>.

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