

High Water



PREPAREDNESS GUIDE

**ROUTT COUNTY...
READY TO HELP CITIZENS HELP THEMSELVES**

April 2019

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To Residents, Business Owners, and Visitors of Routt County:

With the heavy snowfalls this season, Routt County could realize the effects of the melting snow from May through June. The Routt County Office of Emergency assembled a packet of information to inform the community about the impacts of high water. The county, city, and towns have prepared a plan of action and all departments are ready for a possible high water event! ***Routt County is prepared to help citizens help themselves.***

No one can completely predict the spring weather, to include warm temperatures and precipitation that will determine the rate of flow in the tributaries, creeks, and rivers in Routt County. Local and State officials continuously monitor the flows in the Yampa and Elk River drainages and are prepared to respond to the possibilities of high water situations.

During May and June, the county, city, and town Public Works departments will begin managing debris and obstructions in waterways.

The Routt County Office of Emergency Management assembled a summary of information, questions, and answers on the following pages to help you prepare for a high water event. Flood Insurance Rate Maps to assist you in locating your property and evaluating its proximity to the 100-year flood areas are available on-line at www.fema.gov, or you may call the Planning department in your city/town or the county for this information.

Another great resource is www.Ready.gov for emergency preparedness information and the United States Geological Survey (USGS) site (<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/co/nwis/discharge>) that monitors the flow (CFS-cubic feet per second) in area creeks and rivers and for other information as the spring melt situation unfolds.

The primary alerting mechanism for residents and guests is the Routt County Public Alert and Warning System. However, registration is required for residents and guests to receive this information. Residents and guests can register for these alerts by visiting RouttCountyAlerts.com, selecting "Click Here to Sign Up," and following the prompts.

On behalf of the City of Steamboat Springs, the Towns of Hayden, Oak Creek and Yampa, and Routt County Government, thank you for your efforts to be more resilient and better prepared to withstand and endure any emergency or disaster that comes our way.

Routt County Government
City of Steamboat Springs
Town of Hayden
Town of Oak Creek
Town of Yampa

INTRODUCTION

Cities, towns, and counties in all parts of Colorado, with the assistance of federal and state agencies, continue to develop comprehensive emergency preparedness programs to reduce loss of life and protect property from disasters. People are being warned of impending emergencies/disasters, evacuated from danger areas, treated for injury, and helped to resume their normal lives after disaster strikes.

The primary purpose of this guide is to save lives, reduce injuries, and protect property. It is designed to present information and guidance on action to take to enhance survival in the event of high-water events.

You can give yourself and your family a much better chance of surviving and recovering from major disasters if you will take time now to:

- Register for emergency notification through RouttCountyAlerts.com;
- Understand the dangers you would face in an emergency;
- Make your own preparations; and
- Learn what actions you should take at the time of the emergency.

This guide discusses preparation and emergency actions that will help people cope with the impacts of high water.



EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION



**Routt
County
Alerts**

RouttCountyAlerts utilizes the Everbridge® platform for public alert and warning. The RouttCountyAlerts system is used to send critical communications, from evacuation notices to missing child alerts.

The system provides public safety officials the ability to alert the public when needed. Residents and businesses are encouraged to sign up for RouttCountyAlerts to ensure they receive timely emergency notifications when alerts are issued.

To ensure you receive notifications, go to www.RouttCountyAlerts.com and enter your contact information, including multiple phone numbers, text and email addresses. Your contact information remains confidential and will only be used for community notifications.



HIGH WATER EVENTS IN ROUTT COUNTY

BACKGROUND

- Unusually high snowpacks naturally raise the risk of future high water.
- The rate at which snowpacks melt in the spring affects high water risk.
- Rain, coupled with warm weather and snowmelt, increases the risk of high water.
- A number of factors determines high water risk.
 - Proximity to waterway
 - Time the dwellings were built (prior to the floodplain regulations)
- Significant high water events occurred in 1934, 1952, 1974, 1984, 1997, 2006 and 2011.

HIGH WATER PREPAREDNESS

WHAT CAN CITIZENS DO TO PREPARE FOR AN EMERGENCY?

Determine whether you live in a high risk area:

The severity of local high water and whether or not major high water events occur along tributaries, creeks, and rivers in Routt County depends mostly on the weather conditions during snowmelt in May and June. The weather determines when and how rapidly snowmelt occurs. Unusually high snow packs naturally raise the possibility of high water, but risk is determined by a combination of events and conditions:

- Heavy, concentrated rain events
- Heavy rains mixed with spring's melting snow, creating excessive run-off into rivers and creeks
- Ice jams – water upstream is blocked by ice downstream

Remember that if rising waters become a threat to your safety, follow the instructions of local emergency officials who are involved in rescue or high water response operations, including those directing traffic, as water can be deeper than it appears.

Before a high water emergency:

High water may occur in the area where you live, and although your home may not be immediately affected, you may be cut off from outside resources (phone, electricity, safe drinking water, road access) and even some members of your household.

Have in place:

- An emergency plan that every household member knows. The plan should include information on how to shut off electrical power and natural gas sources, safe meeting places out of the high water-risk area, an out-of-area contact, plans for pets and livestock, and a neighborhood safety plan that identifies people who may need extra help. Once you formulate your plan, rehearse it!
- An emergency supply kit containing non-perishable foods, bottled water, first aid kit, necessary medications, flashlights and batteries, personal toiletries, identification for each family member, some cash, and any important family documents. Be prepared to be on your own for at least 72 hours, possibly longer.
- Have a grab-and-go emergency kit ready for each member of your household as you may have to leave in the middle of the night or on short notice. This kit should have basic essential items such as prescription medications, eyeglasses, important papers, flashlight, clothing, identification, and some cash.
- Organize your homeowners association, neighbors, and friends to assist with filling and placing of sandbags.

- Help a neighbor who may require special assistance – infants, elderly people, and people with disabilities.
- If local authorities instruct you, turn off all utilities at the main power switch and close the main gas valve.

After a high water emergency:

- Do not return home or visit disaster areas until authorized to do so. High water dangers do not end when the water begins to recede. Use common sense, exercise caution, and follow directions of emergency responders.
- If you have flood insurance and suffer a loss, notify your agent.
- Listen for news reports to learn whether the water supply is safe to drink.
- Avoid flooded areas; water may be contaminated or may be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines.
- Clean and disinfect everything that got wet. Mud left from high water can contain sewage and chemicals.
- Do not turn on electrical switches or wet electrical equipment unless certified by an electrician.
- Avoid a health hazard from eating food contaminated with high water or left in an unplugged refrigerator or freezer – if in doubt, throw it out! Contamination can spoil foods and medicines, making them dangerous to consume.

HIGH WATER PUBLIC WORKS ACTION PLAN

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM PUBLIC WORKS?

- Monitoring rivers and streams in the city, towns and county.
- Managing debris that might impede the flow of water in creeks and culverts in public right-of-way.
- Evaluating levels of flooding and/or anticipated flood threat and determining needs.
- Establishing priorities for the protection of life safety, essential facilities, access roads, bridge structures and culverts.



CONTACT INFORMATION (during business hours):

City of Steamboat Springs

Police Department (970) 879-1144
Public Works (Jon Snyder) (970) 871-8207
Floodplain Manager (Bob Keenan) (970) 871-8260

Town of Hayden

Police Department (970) 276-3232
Public Works (Alex Evonitz) (970) 276-3840
Floodplain Manager (Mathew Mendisco) (970) 276-3741

Town of Oak Creek

Police Department (970) 736-8355
Public Works (Tom Holliday) (970) 736-2459
Floodplain Manager (Oak Creek Town Hall) (970) 736-2422

Town of Yampa

Public Works / Floodplain Manager (Eric Berry) (970) 638-4511

Routt County

Sheriff (970) 879-1090
Office of Emergency Management (970) 870-5551
Public Works (970) 870-5552
Floodplain Manager (Alan Goldich) (970) 870-5599

AFTER BUSINESS HOURS CALL THE ROUTT COUNTY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER (970) 879-1090

HIGH WATER LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTION PLAN

What can you expect from law enforcement?

- Protect life (health and well-being of the community).
- Minimize the threat to people and property in response to flooding (via evacuation if necessary).
- Continue to provide essential law enforcement services.

Priorities:

- Evaluate the threat level
 - 24-hour stream watch during peak run-off period
 - Communication with affected agencies
 - Obtain hydrologic information from relevant sources

- Identify actual affected areas
 - Life threatening potential
 - Need to evacuate
 - Secure affected area (traffic/crowds)
 - Establish and secure access to affected areas
- Secure property impacted by high water
 - Public property (local government infrastructure)
 - Private property (prevent looting)
- Continue to provide essential police services
 - Prioritize police response to requests for service
 - Additional manpower and other resources from local agencies

SANDBAGGING

Public Works:

- Although Public Works generally does not provide sandbagging services for anything other than public infrastructure protection, you can contact your local Public Works office with questions (refer to contact information for appropriate contact numbers).

Sandbags can be purchased locally at the following locations:

- Elk River Farm & Feed – 2680 Copper Ridge Circle – Steamboat Springs – (970) 879-5383
- MJK Sales & Feed – 290 Ranney – Craig – (970) 824-6581

Refer to the Yellow Pages of your phone book for sand and delivery contractors.



HIGH WATER PREPAREDNESS RESOURCES

To watch the flow in area rivers & streams

go to

<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/co/nwis/discharge>

or

<http://cwcb.state.co.us>

The Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) is the state authority on the administration of flood insurance and information. They are actively engaging in preparatory activities and updating information on their website throughout the flood season.

Website links with flood information pertinent to Routt County homeowners:

Certificates of Elevation can be obtained from a licensed PLS (surveyor) in the state of Colorado. Blank certificates and detailed instructions can be found on-line at the FEMA website: <http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=1383>.

Routt County can provide guidance based on floodway/floodplain information available to them, but cannot verify all of the information provided to them. FEMA's Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) are available at the City and County Planning Departments for review by the public. They are also available on-line at the FEMA website: www.fema.gov. Select 'FEMA flood map store' link (on the left side), then proceed to look for the flood map for your location.

- National Weather Service: <http://www.floodsafety.noaa.gov/>
- Federal Alliance for Safe Homes: www.flash.org or 1-877-221-SAFE
- Flood Insurance: www.floodsmart.gov
- Emergency Preparedness: www.fema.gov or www.redcross.org or www.readycolorado.org or <http://www.co.routt.co.us/153/Emergency-Management> (Routt County Office of Emergency Management)
- Colorado Water Conservation Board: www.cwcb.state.co.us
- Flood Information: www.floodsafety.com
- Institute for Business and Home Safety: www.ibhs.org
- U.S. Army Corp of Engineers: <http://www.usace.army.mil/Emergency/Pages/home.aspx>

FEMA FLOOD INSURANCE RATE MAPS

Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) are available as part of the National Flood Insurance Program.

Routt County can provide guidance based on floodway/floodplain information available to them. FEMA's Flood Plain Insurance Rate Maps are available at the <http://msc.fema.gov/portal> for review by the public. Information on flood maps and flood insurance is available at <http://cwcb.state.co.us/> then click on the "Flood Protection" tab on the left for the following:

- Colorado Flood and Weather Information
- FEMA Resources (maps, documents, technical guidance)
- Flood Insurance Information and Floodplain Maps
- Floodplain Management Presentations and Reports
- Forms and Documents (flood-related downloads)

For assistance in determining whether your property is in the 100-year flood area, please contact the Planning Department in your city/town or the county.

(Please note: Flood insurance rate maps are available for review and the various towns will answer general questions for the public. However, lending institutions, not the towns, determine whether flood insurance will be required for a property and the related liability potential.)



**Routt
County
Alerts**

Prepared by:

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