

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers deploying flood teams for snowpack melt events

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SEATTLE -- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers emergency management teams have been on the ground this past week in Montana and providing technical assistance to cities, counties and state at sites that have been affected by rising rivers in Eastern Washington, northern Idaho and Eastern Montana.

"Temperatures are some 20 degrees above normal in Eastern Washington, northern Idaho and Eastern Montana," said Larry Schick, Seattle District meteorologist. The snowpack is above average in most basins and is melting quickly, bringing rivers up, said Schick.

According to Paul Komoroske, chief of Emergency Management at the Corps' office in downtown Seattle, besides the rising river levels, the rapid melt brings debris with it that can affect levees, block drainages and cause roads and areas to flood.

"The Corps has a seasoned team of emergency responders that assist in floods and natural disasters," said Komoroske.

Currently, flood fight personnel from the Corps have been requested by the state to provide technical assistance on the Kootenai River near Libby, Mont. The Corps is monitoring the situation in northern Idaho.

In eastern Washington, a flood fight crew is traveling to the Methow River area near Twisp, Wash., to provide assistance to the Okanogan County emergency management staff there. "We are also monitoring the Naches River near Naches, Wash.," said Komoroske.

"In most areas, we expect to see some low level flooding, but without significant rainfall, we expect the majority of the runoff will peak this weekend," said Schick.

For more information and up-to-date river forecasts go to www.nws.usace.army.mil and click on Rivers and Reservoirs or call the RCC at (206) 764-6702. Information on Emergency Management is also available at that same web address.