

Army Corps flood fight teams assisting northern Idaho, eastern Washington and western Montana

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SEATTLE – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle District, has flood teams on the ground to assist local governments with flood fighting activities on five river basins in Washington, Idaho and Montana.

More than a dozen seasoned and trained flood engineers, environmental scientists and specialists are working in the Pend Oreille, St. Joe, and Coeur d'Alene river basins in Idaho, Kootenai River Basin in Montana, and the Yakima / Naches basin in Washington.

Yakima County, the City of Yakima and Shoshone County have submitted requests for direct assistance, and the State of Idaho has requested assistance. The Corps has been asked to assist with bank erosion on the Yakima and Naches rivers and with levee erosion at Lightning Creek near the Lower Clark Fork in Idaho. The Corps is providing a pump for potential use in Cataldo, Idaho, and Corps flood teams are monitoring levee conditions downstream of Ellensburg, Wash.

According to Paul Komoroske, chief of Emergency Management at the Corps' office in Seattle, the Corps activated its Emergency Operations Center May 15. Public Law 84-99 enables the Corps to assist state and local authorities in flood fight activities and cost share in the repair of flood protection structures.

"The purpose is to prevent loss of life and minimize property damage associated with severe weather," said Komoroske.

The Seattle District Reservoir Control Center is also monitoring river conditions. The Reservoir Control Center manages and regulates Mud Mountain and Howard Hanson dams, both located near Enumclaw, Wash. Both dams are releasing flows at rates of less than 6,000 cubic feet per second, and hydrologists expect to keep releases from Howard Hanson Dam below 6,500 cfs and flows from Mud Mountain Dam to less than 8,000 cfs. At this time, no major flooding is expected in western Washington, where rivers are expected to run high with snowmelt flows, though minor nuisance flooding is possible.

Chief Joseph Dam near Brewster, Wash., Albeni Falls Dam near Newport, Wash., and Libby Dam in Montana are operated by the Corps' Northwestern Division Reservoir Control Center in Portland, Ore.

For more information on the Corps, and up-to-date river forecasts, go to www.nws.usace.army.mil <http://www.nws.usace.army.mil/Administration/Front_Page/News/www.nws.usace.army.mil> and click on the link to "lake and river level information" under Links of Interest. The Corps has a 24 hour recorded information toll free line that is updated during emergencies at (866) 596-2635.