

Army Corps of Engineers reminds river users of snowmelt hazards

Contact: Casondra Brewster (206) 764-6958 or Patricia Graesser (206) 764-3760

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SEATTLE – River inflows to Howard Hanson and Mud Mountain dams have come down from the levels from last week, but the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle District water management team wants to remind river users that levels can change quickly and water temperatures are cold.

“Even though at this time no flooding is expected in western Washington, rivers in the region have been flowing faster, higher and churning up a large amount of debris – another hazard that river users should be aware before recreating in river waters,” said Corps meteorologist Larry Schick.

Outflow from Howard Hanson Dam is currently 4,420 cubic feet per second. Outflow from Mud Mountain Dam is currently 6,300 cubic feet per second. Inflows and outflows at each dam, although somewhat lower than recent levels which caused King County to close the waters to users because of the high risk and danger, are still two to three times higher than normal for this time of year. Hydrologists at the Seattle District anticipate that similar flows will continue through Memorial Day weekend, but advise that things could change rapidly.

The Seattle District Reservoir Control Center manages and regulates Mud Mountain and Howard Hanson dams, both located near Enumclaw, Wash. The Reservoir Control Center is closely monitoring river conditions in western Washington throughout the holiday weekend. Howard Hanson Dam sits along the Green River and Mud Mountain Dam is on the White River. Both provide vital flood risk management for populations of the Green and Puyallup valleys.

As part of its monitoring efforts, the Corps will be measuring the snow pack in the Green River Basin. This late-season round of measurements scheduled to occur next week is due to an abundance of snowpack, held in place by an unusually cool spring. Media are welcome to cover the snowpack measuring operations and should contact the Seattle District Public Affairs Office for coordination.

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