

## Drier weather means less chance for flooding in Southwest Washington

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News Release

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SEATTLE—No news is good news when it comes to local river level forecasts. A drier than average fall and winter has produced favorable conditions for those residents living in flood zones, and unfavorable conditions for those who are purveyors of public utilities. Most rivers and streams in the region are well within their banks and are capable of handling heavier rains than is normally the case this time of year.

One area hit especially hard historically is the Chehalis River Basin. The flood event of 1996 took a major toll on the towns of Centralia and Chehalis, shutting down I-5 for four days. But according to Tom Murphy, meteorologist for the Corps, “although the flood season is far from over, the odds are we will not approach those record-breaking high water marks the rest of this water year. We are more than a month past the normal wettest time of the year and are moving toward warmer and drier conditions. There has been no flooding in the basin this water year,” he says.

“Generally, the basin is in a similar condition to the rest of Western Washington basins, with well below normal streamflows expected this spring and summer. The National Weather Service’s latest water supply forecast for April to September calls for many rivers and lakes in the region to be near 75 percent of average. No significant flooding is anticipated within [Seattle] District boundaries until later this winter,” says Murphy.

. . . And that no news is good news for the people who have “100-year flood event” as part of their daily vocabulary.