

## News Release

**U.S. Department of the Interior**  
**U.S. Geological Survey**

**Release**

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## Major Flooding Occurs in Southern Illinois

Water levels in many streams in southern Illinois and Indiana are above flood stage as a result of persistent rain over the past several weeks on top of saturated soils from snowmelt. About 3-6 inches of rain have fallen since the beginning of the month. Rainfall for the whole month of January averages only about 2 inches. Southern Indiana has been experiencing even greater rainfall. As a result, the Wabash and Ohio Rivers are the most impacted.

The U.S. Geological Survey Illinois Water Science Center (USGS) based out of Urbana-Champaign Illinois has been making field measurements of this flood at many sites since the beginning of January. This information is critical for the National Weather Service (NWS) to provide accurate river-flood forecasts. The USGS is working with the National Weather Service (NWS); the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Office of Water Resources; and various other Federal, State, and local agencies in monitoring this flood.

Flooding of greatest concern at present in Illinois is the Little Wabash, Wabash, and Ohio Rivers.

The Ohio River at Shawneetown is 14 feet above flood stage and is forecast (NWS) to peak at 51.90 ft. on January 16. USGS Illinois Water Science Center personnel will be at

the Ohio River at Shawneetown, Illinois location to conduct flood measurements from the USGS research boat MV Iroquois. USGS personnel will be verifying water levels and using state of the art acoustic Doppler measuring devices to measure water flows. **Center Director Dr. Robert Holmes is extending an invitation to media personnel to accompany him on board the USGS research boat to make flow measurements at the Shawneetown location.** “The USGS data collection effort is crucial to the safety and well-being of the public, particularly during times of flooding. Giving the media access to observe the use of high-tech acoustic and GPS equipment to measure this significant flood event will enable them to give the public a view into an interesting aspect of flood science.” Interested media should contact Dr. Holmes at 217-344-0037 or email him at [dc\\_il@usgs.gov](mailto:dc_il@usgs.gov).

The Little Wabash River at Carmi is over 8 feet above flood stage and rising, and is forecast (NWS) to reach 35.4 ft. by today (1/12), which will be the fifth largest flood on record at Carmi. The projected crest elevation is the level at which businesses on Route 14 and Route 1 in Carmi begin to flood (NWS).

The Wabash River at Mount Carmel is almost 15 feet above flood stage, and is forecast (NWS) to peak at 34.10 ft. tonight (1/12/05). The projected crest elevation is over one foot higher than the previous recorded flood peak elevation in 1913. The USGS Indiana Water Science Center reported (Web <http://in.water.usgs.gov/flood/>) the following:

“January 10: Automated equipment at the USGS streamflow-gaging station [Wabash at Mt. Carmel](#) today recorded a historic river level of 33.08 feet--the highest river level measured since the 1913 flood peak of 33.00 feet. The 33.08 level was recorded at 3:00 am on January 11 and the river was still rising. This level is the highest in the history of this station (records date back to 1875).

USGS crews today will make streamflow measurements at the [White River at Petersburg](#) and [Wabash River at Riverton](#) stations as levels peak, then will head to Mt. Carmel to make a measurement late today or early tomorrow. Yesterday crews made measurements at the streamflow gaging stations [East Fork White River at Bedford](#) and [East Fork White River at Shoals](#) and confirmed the accuracy of the discharge data from those stations. Accurate discharge data is vital to the National Weather Service for forecasting flood crests.”

USGS will be conducting field operations at other locations throughout the flood areas. “The combination of rain on saturated soil over southern Illinois and Indiana has caused substantial rises of stage and flow over most streams in the area” said USGS Hydrologist John LaTour. “More rain is forecasted for Wednesday and Thursday of this week, which could cause even more flooding. Our flood operations center is in operation and our field staff will continue to be deployed to flood areas through the weekend.” The USGS

operates a network of over 180 streamflow-gaging stations in Illinois. The streamflow-gaging-station network makes it possible for government agencies, private industry, and the general public to monitor streamflow conditions across the State. Real-time water elevation and streamflow data for Illinois can be accessed at:

<http://il.water.usgs.gov/data/index.html>

USGS field observations of water levels and flow as well as flood news for the flood impacted areas can be found at

<http://il.water.usgs.gov/flooddata/view.cgi?date=20050105>.

Maps and real-time streamflow data for the United States are available to the public on the USGS WaterWatch Web site:

<http://water.usgs.gov/waterwatch/>

The USGS is the Nation's largest earth-science agency and has the principal responsibility within the Federal Government for providing hydrologic information and for appraising the Nation's water resources.

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