

As Columbia River levels increase, flood protection agencies work to minimize flood risk in Portland, OR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MAY 17, 2018

Photo Credit: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Photo Description: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Conduct periodic inspection of the levee system in 2017 near the Interstate Bridge on I-5.



Portland, OR – Rising water levels on the Columbia River prompted the Multnomah County Drainage District (MCDD) to move to Enhanced Operations on May 12.

There is no immediate threat of a flood in the areas protected by 27 miles of Columbia River levees.

During Enhanced Operations, MCDD conducts weekly surveillance of the levee system, coordinates with partners such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Portland Bureau of Emergency Management, and reaches out to the public to minimize inundation exposure to low-lying communities. At this time, no structural issues have been identified.

Some houseless camps are in areas that could be subject to flooding by rising water levels. MCDD is working with City of Portland Park Rangers and Multnomah County Joint Office of Homeless Services crews to conduct outreach to assist people living in those areas.

MCDD protects areas of North and Northeast Portland including Portland International Airport, Interstate 5, drinking water facilities and industrial and residential areas.

Communities and businesses depend on the continued maintenance and upgrade of the levee and flood risk management system. [Levee Ready Columbia](#), a partnership of over 30 organizations, is working to ensure that the levee system meets the requirements for participation in federal programs and continues to reduce the risk of flooding for important regional assets in the area now and into the future.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's weather predictions, the Columbia River levels are expected to remain below 17 feet at the Vancouver Gauge over the next week. MCDD crews will keep monitoring the levee for signs of ponding or erosion and inform the community about significant changes or impacts to the levee system. Unusual activity can be reported to MCDD at 503-281-5675.

Seventy years ago, the 1948 Vanport Flood destroyed what was the second-largest city in Oregon. The flood killed 15 people and left 18,000 houseless. To raise awareness about flood risk and to commemorate the stories of survivors, MCDD will host a forum with community partners from 1-3 p.m. on May 28 at the Expo Center in Portland. Emergency preparedness experts, advocates and disaster survivors will come together to discuss Portland's current flood risks, levee readiness, and disaster preparedness along the Columbia River. More information is available at www.vanportmosaic.org.