

SPRING FLOOD AND ICE JAM PREPAREDNESS

What County Residents Need to Know



This winter, we have seen above-average snowfall, which will affect the overall spring thaw and water levels on properties, along roads, in ditches, rivers, and creeks throughout the County.

River levels and ice conditions fluctuate daily. This is expected at this time of year and is monitored by the Alberta River Forecasting Centre. The County is in regular contact with the Alberta River Forecasting Centre regarding conditions of the Peace River.

Spring thaw conditions are unpredictable, and there is currently no forecast for river flooding.

While the County maintains public drainage systems, property owners are responsible for managing and protecting their own property from flooding.

The County is providing information on potential risks and how best to prepare.

POTENTIAL RISK: ICE JAM

Potentially Affected Areas: Property owners living near rivers and Seasonal Access and Agricultural Property Owners along the Peace River (Sunny Valley, Kulyna's Flat, Carcajou, Whitemud Flats, Simpson Flats, etc.)

The primary risk is an ice jam. This occurs when ice builds up and blocks the river's natural flow, raising water levels. Ice jams can rapidly raise water levels and cause localized flooding, often without warning.

- Ice jams are difficult to predict in terms of timing, location(s), and severity, even with monitoring systems in place
- Ice jams can cause conditions to change rapidly within hours
- Conditions of tributaries flowing into rivers can also contribute to localized flooding

Actions County is Currently Taking:

- Staying in regular contact with the Alberta River Forecasting Centre to monitor the conditions
- Ensuring that County roads are clear of snow
- Providing updates on our website and social media as they are made available

Actions Property Owners Should Take:

- Ensure valuable and important items are stored above ground or removed from your property
- Prepare an emergency plan, including planning an evacuation for your family, pets, and livestock
- Stay up to date on river conditions by visiting the Alberta Rivers website or by downloading the app

Actions for Seasonal Access/Agricultural Property Owners along the Peace River:

(Sunny Valley, Kulyna's Flat, Carcajou, Whitemud Flats, Simpson Flats, etc.)

- Ensure valuable and important items are removed from your property
- Take the necessary precautions to prepare and plan for the removal of buildings, vehicles, livestock, and farm equipment
- Clearing snow from driveways and property entrances
- Disconnect any utilities from your building(s)
- Have equipment ready to move buildings

POTENTIAL RISK: FLOODING

Potentially Affected Areas: Property owners and residents

Flooding can occur at any time and can result from heavy rainfall, ice jams, or the rapid melting of snowpacks, especially along ditches. The potential for flood damage is high in low-lying areas along ditches and in low-lying areas along rivers, creeks, and ravines. These areas are called floodplains.

Actions County is Currently Taking:

- Clearing drainage ditches and ditches in known problem areas
- Marking culvert ends in anticipation of steaming work
- Monitoring the spring thaw conditions and dispatching equipment (steamers, contractors, etc.) as needed
- Providing updates related to road closures on our website and social media

Actions Property Owners and Residents Should Take:

- Review your insurance policy to ensure you have adequate coverage
- Assess your property to determine where you may encounter flooding issues
- Check to ensure sump pumps are working properly and arrange for septic servicing to properly empty and dispose of septic holding tanks
- Keep important items above ground level
- Clear snow away from foundations, roofs, and vents
- Ensure downspouts are clear and can move water away from your property
- Don't move snow into County ditches or flood-prone spots on your property
- Prepare sandbags
- Prepare an emergency plan, including planning an evacuation for your family, pets, and livestock
- Prepare a basic 72-hour emergency kit with essentials
- Stay up to date on road closures by visiting the County website or Facebook page

REPORT PLUGGED/FROZEN CULVERTS AND OVERLAND FLOODING ON COUNTY ROADS

- Online reporting form: www.countyofnorthernlights.com/report-issue
- Call the office: 780-836-3348 during regular office hours
- After-hours Emergency: 780-836-3348 and listen for the on-call list

SAFETY REMINDER

- Never cross flooded areas. Land and roads may be washed out even if they look safe
- Stay off rivers/creeks and the banks
- County roads in valleys/low-lying areas may experience washouts and may be closed if there is a threat to public safety
- If there is a road closure, we will contact affected residents and property owners
- Update your contact information with the County