

Water surrounds Mississippi town as rivers rise across South

February 28 2019, by Jeff Amy



Herman Brown fishes in the flooded lands off of LeTourneau Road in Vicksburg, Miss., Wednesday February 27, 2019. (Courtland Wells/The Vicksburg Post via AP)

Many Southern communities could face weeks of flooding, along with other disruptions, as recent rains have sent many streams over their banks.

In one Mississippi Delta hamlet, the mayor says [water](#) has cut off all but one road into the town and forced some residents to flee. Runoff is pooling behind a Mississippi levee and could cause record flooding. And the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers opened a spillway to relieve pressure on New Orleans.

Nearly the entire state of Tennessee has seen 10-20 inches (25-51 centimeters) of rain this month, the National Weather Service said. The Tennessee Department of Transportation is building temporary lanes on Interstate 24 near Nashville after a landslide closed the highway's eastbound lanes Saturday. Authorities Wednesday estimated 800-900 homes flooded in and around Knoxville.

The Tennessee River was cresting Wednesday at Perryville, Tennessee, at the third-highest level ever, with waters predicted to fall gradually. Many riverside buildings are submerged in a string of small towns, and drinking water is cut off in a few areas.

"People are going to be shell-shocked when the water recedes," Hardin County Mayor Kevin Davis told the Jackson Sun.

The Ohio River is predicted to crest this weekend at Cairo, Illinois, also at the third-highest level ever. But the flow is far from over downriver, with crests at Vicksburg, Mississippi, and below unlikely until the middle of March.

In Glendora, Mississippi, the town of 151 people was caught between the flooded Tallahatchie River and Black Bayou. Water is within inches of covering U.S. 49, the only unflooded route into town.

Mayor Johnny B. Thomas told The Associated Press that 12-15 houses in the small Delta town are flooded. A shelter is open, although Thomas said many people are trying to stay home.

The water has receded an inch or two. Thomas said, but National Weather Service forecasters are warning of more rain over the weekend.

"I've never seen it this bad," he said. Thomas said. "I'm surrounded with water under my house."

Some of that water is pooling up against a closed Mississippi River levee and could cause a 75-mile-long flood in the Mississippi Delta.

Mississippi Levee Board Chief Engineer Peter Nimrod said Wednesday that water inside the Yazoo Backwater Levee could reach the highest levels since the levee was completed in 1978.

The levee protects thousands of square miles from even worse flooding by the Mississippi River. But when officials close a floodgate that keeps out the big river, water draining down smaller rivers has nowhere to go.



S.K.E. Jackson and Herman Brown fish in the flooded lands off of LeTourneau

Road in Vicksburg, Miss., Wednesday February 27, 2019. (Courtland Wells/The Vicksburg Post via AP)

That gate is closed now and is unlikely to reopen until late in March.

"The water just sits there," Nimrod said. "It's a dead flat pool."

Clay Adcock, who farms 3,800 acres near Holly Bluff, Mississippi, said his home has never flooded in the 34 years he's lived there. But he's worried now.

"I'm building a [levee](#) today," Adcock said.

All but about 200 acres (81 hectares) of his land will be unfarmable until water recedes, Adcock said, meaning he won't be able to plant corn because of a shortened growing season. Instead, Adcock will turn to other crops.

In Louisiana, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers opened a flood control structure upstream of New Orleans to divert Mississippi River water and ease pressure on levees protecting the city.

Cranes lifted wooden timbers from the Bonnet Carre Spillway structure Wednesday. That allows some river water to flow into Lake Pontchartrain.

Wednesday marks the first time the structure has operated in consecutive years. It's the 13th time it's opened since construction was completed in 1931.

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