National Weather Service
Quad Cities, IA/IL
Thursday, March 11, 2021

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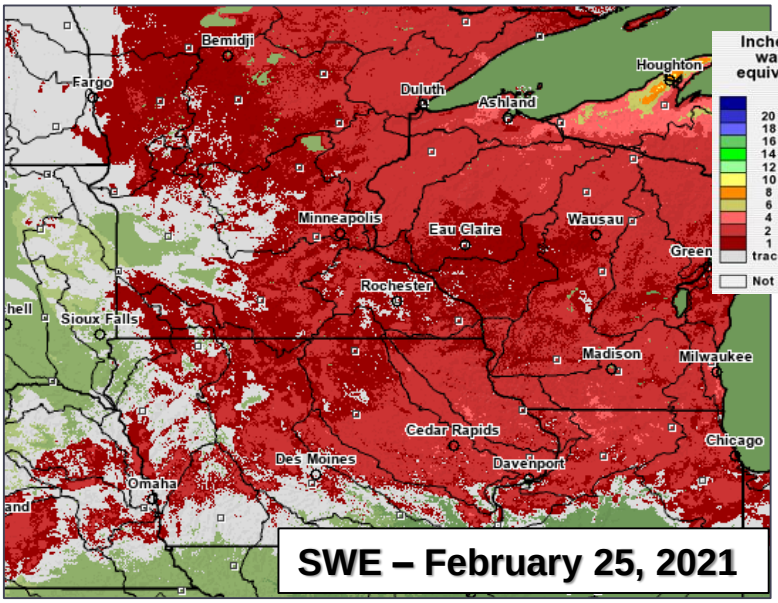
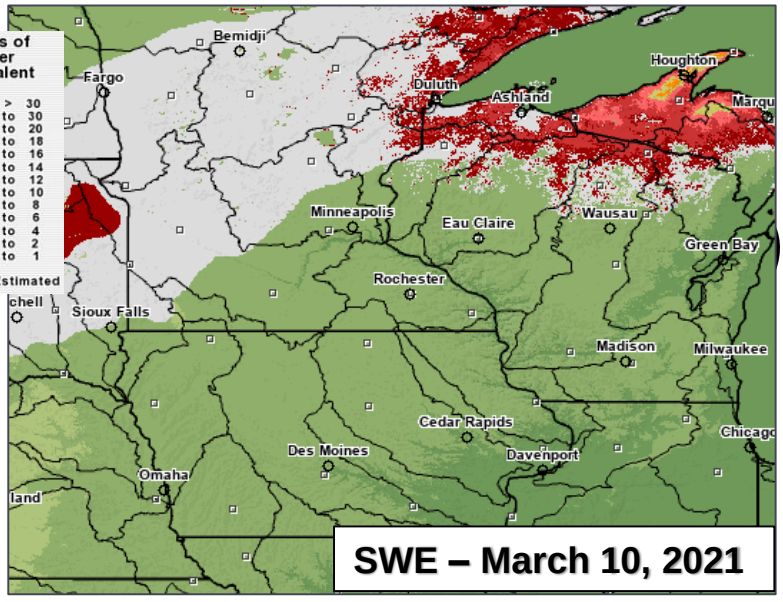
Gradual Snowmelt Leads to Reduced Flood Risk

- ***Risk for Spring Flooding: reduced for all rivers compared to 2 weeks ago.***
- ***Near to slightly above normal risk for flooding continues for portions of the Pecatonica, Rock, Mississippi, and Wapsipinicon Rivers***
- Risk for ***Minor Flooding*** on the Mississippi River is slightly above normal for locations downstream of the Quad Cities.
- Most locations have a below normal risk for reaching moderate/major stages.
- With the snowpack gone, spring rains will be the leading factor to the occurrence and severity of flooding this spring.

What's New?

- Flood risk has been reduced as almost all snow in the region has melted (see images below).
- Snow melted slowly which has limited the impact on rivers as meltwater moved into the rivers gradually, rather than swiftly.
- River flows have increased due high amounts of runoff
- All ice has melted out of the rivers, leading to ice jams no longer being a threat.





Significant melting of the snowpack occurred in the past 2 weeks as viewed in the images above. Left image was from 2/25/2021, showing 2-4 inches of liquid water in the snowpack across portions of Iowa, northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin. The right image was taken on 3/10/2021 showing nearly all snowcover has melted.

March Temperature and Precipitation forecast:

Week 2: Temp/Precip Outlook / Risk of Hazardous Weather Weeks 3-4: Temp/Precip Outlook

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Bottom Line:

- River rises are ongoing as snowmelt runoff works through the river systems.
- Favorable rate of melt kept most river rises within the river banks.
- With current conditions, snowmelt crests expected on tributary rivers in the next week and next 1-3 weeks on the Mississippi River with Minor flooding or within bank rises expected.
- Loss of snow leads to the Spring flood risk now being tied to future precipitation.
- Highest probability is for Minor Flooding this season. Most rivers have a well below normal chance for reaching Major Flood levels.
- Heavy spring precipitation would be needed for significant flooding to occur.

Spring Flood Threat Checklist (as of March 11, 2021)

Threat for Flooding	Impact to Potential Spring Flooding	Change in Threat Since Last Outlook	Link to Image of Information
River Levels	**Neutral to Increased Threat**	Increased Flows	USGS WaterWatch
Soil Moisture	**Decreased Threat**	Unchanged	CPC Soil Moisture
Snowpack	**Decreased Threat**	Significant loss of Snowpack	Snow/Liquid Equivalent Analysis
Rate of Snowmelt	**Decreased Threat**	Slow Snowmelt	Snowmelt
Frost Depth	**Decreased Threat**	Loss of Frozen Ground for much of the region	Frost Depth Map
Spring Precipitation	**Near Normal**	N/A	Mar-May Outlook

Combination of Factors → **Overall lowered risk. Near to below normal chances for flooding this spring with the exception of a few locations.**

2021 Probabilistic Spring Flood Outlooks Completed for 2021 Season.

www.weather.gov/dvn/2021_springfloodoutlook

The National Weather Service urges those with interests in flooding to stay tuned to additional communications going through the spring season.