

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT BOISE RIVER FLOODING

Q

How many large dams are on the Boise River, who regulates them, and what is their combined storage capacity?

A

The Boise River has three large upstream dams: Anderson Ranch, Arrowrock, and Lucky Peak. Lucky Peak is regulated by the Corps of Engineers. Anderson Ranch & Arrowrock are Bureau of Reclamation projects. All three dams have a combined storage capacity of just under 1,000,000 acre-feet.

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What's the difference between *release rates* and *flow rates*?

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Release rates on the Boise River are measured at the Lucky Peak Dam. *Flow rates* are generally given for Glenwood Bridge. A *flow rate* of 6,500 cubic feet per second (cfs) at Glenwood Bridge is considered bank-full, while 7,000 cfs is flood stage. Often *release rates* from Lucky Peak Dam and *flow rates* measured at the Glenwood Bridge don't match because of irrigation canal diversions. Maximum canal diversions include New York Canal - 2,400 cfs; Ridenbaugh Canal - 600 cfs; Others - 600 cfs.

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What factors determine the *release rates* out of Lucky Peak?

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Temperature, precipitation and runoff, and reservoir carryover from the previous year. Releases must be increased to make room in the reservoirs for anticipated spring run-off, generally from April 1 - July 1.

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How can I find out what the current *release rates* and *flow rates* are?

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Call the Bureau of Reclamation at 334-9134 for a recorded message of current *release rates* and *flow rates*. Website: <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/id/nwis/current/?type=flow>

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Why can't floodwater be diverted into the irrigation canals?

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Maintenance work on the canals is done in the winter or non-irrigation months. Many head gates are open and would cause additional flooding throughout the valley. In addition, the New York Canal empties into Lake Lowell in Canyon County. When Lake Lowell is full this is not an option.

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How often have flows reached or exceeded 6,500 cfs at the Glenwood Bridge?

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Flows at Glenwood Bridge have exceeded 6,500 cfs more than 15 times since 1955 when Lucky Peak Dam was completed. On June 13, 1983, the flow was 9,560 cfs.

Q How much water can actually be released from Lucky Peak Dam?

A The maximum amount of water Lucky Peak Dam can release before it goes over the spillway is about 35,000 cfs.

Q Does standard homeowners’ insurance cover flood damage?

A Unfortunately, many homeowners do not find out until it’s too late that typical homeowners’ policies do not cover flooding. Flood insurance is not required for homes outside the 100-year floodplain. However, anyone in Ada County can purchase flood insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). We strongly recommend everyone living near the Boise River purchase flood insurance, whether it’s required or not. Consult with your insurance agent to find out if you are covered.

Q What is a 100-year flood? How can I tell if my house is in the 100-year floodplain?

The 100-year flood is a term commonly used to refer to the one percent annual chance flood. On average, it is the flood that is equaled or exceeded once in 100 years. However, the term should not be taken literally as the 100-year flood may occur several times, or not at all, within a given 100-year period. On the Boise River, the 1% chance flood (100-year flood) flow is 16,600 cfs. To determine if you are in the floodplain contact the appropriate jurisdiction listed below.

	JURISDICTION	AGENCY	PHONE
A	Ada County, unincorporated areas	Ada County Development Services 200 W. Front St. Rm 2119, Boise, ID 83702	287-7900
	Boise City	Boise Public Works 150 N. Capital Blvd., Boise ID 83702	384-3900
	Eagle City	Eagle Building Department 660 E. Civic Lane, Eagle ID 83616	489-8760
	Garden City	Garden City Public Works 6015 Glenwood St., Garden City ID 83714	472-2900
	Star City	Star City Hall 11525 Highway 44, Star ID 83669	286-7247
	State Coordinator for National Flood Insurance	National Flood Insurance Program 322 E Front St., Boise, ID 83702	287-4800

Q What can I do to protect myself from flooding?

A First of all consider buying flood insurance. In deciding whether you need flood insurance use common sense, not the strict letter of the law. All citizens of Ada County are eligible to buy flood insurance, consult your insurance agent. Develop a plan to deal with high water if it occurs. Decide in advance which items must be moved or elevated and where to move them. Other measures include: sandbagging, elevating a structure, and dry or wet flood proofing.

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If my home is in or very near the 100-year floodplain, what’s the risk?

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According to national statistics, there is a 28% chance that a structure located in the 100-year floodplain will suffer flood damage during the course of a 30-year mortgage. Keep in mind that floodplain maps are only estimates of flood hazard areas and the degree of risk in those areas. A line on a map is no guarantee. Nationally, over a quarter of all flood insurance claims come from areas designated as low-risk.

Q

Who’s in charge of flood response?

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Each jurisdiction in Ada County has an agency in charge of flood response. However these agencies will not conduct flood response activities on private property. Their job is to protect public roads, buildings, and utilities; and ensure public safety by recommending evacuation or other actions when necessary. Citizens are responsible for flood response on their own property. Ada City-County Emergency Management is responsible for coordinating overall efforts and supplying public information. To report instances of flooding notify the following agencies:

- Ada County (unincorporated areas).....Ada County Sheriff’s Office
- Boise.....Boise Public Works
- Eagle.....Eagle Fire District (Eagle city limits)
- Garden City.....Garden City Public Works
- Kuna.....Kuna Fire District (Kuna city limits)
- Meridian.....Meridian Public Works
- Star.....Star Fire District (Star city limits)

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Why are some areas allowed to flood?

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Certain areas are allowed to flood because they are part of the natural floodway. These areas include: Loggers Creek, Parkcenter Pond, Warm Springs Golf Course and Garden City Pond next to the Glenwood Bridge. Preventing flooding in these areas means that the water would be pushed downstream to areas that normally would not flood. Anyone taking this course of action might incur liability from downstream landowners.

For more information or for brochures on flooding and related topics contact Ada City-County Emergency Management at 577-4750, or check out our website at:

www.accem.org