

Future Flooding Could Bring Higher Crests to Riverbend Later This Spring

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
April 2 2019 12:30 PM



ST. LOUIS – Moderate and major flooding is soaking the Riverbend area, and its end is not yet in sight.

Alton is expected to crest around midnight Wednesday morning, meteorologists from the National Weather Service (NWS) said, at around 32 feet. This number is well into the moderate stage and only two feet from the designation of “major.” Grafton, which multiple signs around the area remind people is open for business, is even closer to

major flooding. It is expected to crest around 28.9 feet within the next 18-24 hours. Major levels in Grafton begin at 29 feet – just a tenth of a foot below current levels.

Hardin is currently experiencing major flooding with a crest of 34.3 feet expected overnight. Currently, Hardin's levels are hovering around 34.2 feet.

Once these crests are reached, Alton is expected to recede the fastest. Flood levels should return to minor levels by this coming weekend. Meteorologists say this is due to the influence the Missouri River has on Alton's flood levels. Because the Missouri River is falling at a faster rate, Alton, St. Louis and the Southern Illinois town of Chester will see flood waters vacate faster.

This is not the case for Grafton and Hardin. Because the Illinois River carves its way through mostly flat lands, it does not recede as quickly. A NWS meteorologist said the water levels at Grafton will fall “real slow” after its crest.

Again, Hardin will experience the worst of this flooding with major levels expected to continue for at least the next 10 days, meteorologists said. This could even eventually lead to an even higher crest.

Higher crests could also come to Alton and Grafton later this year. Snow melt in the Upper Mississippi Valley will soon give way to rains, which will also affect the river levels.

Fortunately, meteorologists are expecting a relatively dry week as waters recede. Rain is expected overnight from Wednesday to Thursday with as much as a half an inch possible. This system will not drop as much precipitation in the northern parts of the Mississippi Valley, however, meaning not as much water will come south.

The wettest months of the year – May and June – are yet to come, though. Even if precipitation is at pace with average levels, more and worse flooding could come to the Riverbend before the start of summer, meteorologists said.