

Incoming Rains Threaten to Raise River Levels Throughout Area

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ST. LOUIS – River levels around the area are projected to rise this week. The river levels at Grafton are predicted to rise a projected two feet – into moderate flooding levels again this week – following another round of rain.

Presently, Grafton river levels are at 23.49 feet and predicted to be 25.3 May 6. Moderate flood levels are 25.3 in Grafton. Hardin river levels are presently at 29.13 feet as of today and projected to be 30.9 on May 6. Moderate flooding for Hardin is a level

of 30.37. The river levels at the Melvin Price Lock and Dam are presently 25.36 and projected to be 26.6 on May 5. Minor flooding for Alton is 21 feet or above.

National Weather Service (NWS) Meteorologist Patrick Walsh said as much as two to three inches of rain is expected as part of a system over Missouri and Illinois. As much as three to four inches may fall north of the St. Louis Metro Area, and all of that water has to go somewhere. Walsh said the predictions have not yet taken into account additional rainfall predictions for Wednesday and Thursday. Outlooks for Alton and St. Louis show the possibility of minor flooding.

Monday's rainy morning will give way to dryer weather later, but Tuesday's forecast shows a frontal boundary moving into the area from Western and Central Missouri. That will set the stage for a line of strong-to-severe thunderstorms. As of now, Walsh said the St. Louis Area is facing a "marginal" risk for severe weather Tuesday afternoon and evening as those storms move through the area. He said the main risks for those storms will most likely be hail and strong winds.

That risk is diminished by Wednesday, but Walsh said the chance for severe weather still lingers a bit. Overall, he said run-of-the-mill showers and thunderstorms are expected. The risk for severe weather is all but eliminated by Thursday when showers are still expected to fall.

While severe weather poses an immediate threat during the storms, Walsh said the main threat from this system is flooding. He said some areas will get soaked Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, meaning small creeks and streams as well as the larger rivers, such as the Missouri, Mississippi and Illinois, will all be affected.

So far, this year, the Missouri River has stayed relatively low. The aftermath of this rain system may change that, however, especially when coupled with a rising Mississippi. Walsh said some communities on the Illinois River have recently been lowered back to normal from flood stages but said that could change with these rains over Central Illinois also coupled with backup from a swollen Mississippi.

Temperatures will be above normal – in the upper 70s – Tuesday and Wednesday before falling back to the upper 60s and low 70s by Thursday and Friday.