

In Need of Sandbaggers: 'Nutwood Will Not Go Down Without a Fight'

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
June 2 2019 6:47 AM







NUTWOOD - Nutwood community members and nearby residents are bonded together to put up a fight against the rising Illinois River.

The Illinois River at Hardin stands at 38.69 feet as of 8 p.m. Saturday. The crest is projected at 40.3 feet on Wednesday, June 5. The levee is 40 feet in some areas.

A call for sandbagging help went out later Saturday in Nutwood. Rick Deverger, chairman of the Nutwood Levee District and some others at the site issued a plea for assistance.

“We have several miles of the levee to cover,” Deverger said. “We want to gain at least another foot. We need as many volunteers as we can get. We don’t have a machine at this time, so we need sandbagging help.”

Susan Baze and Chandra Eckert have been sandbagging and building a wall in Nutwood all week trying to help keep the small community safe from the flood waters.

“The Nutwood community will not go down without a fight,” Baze said. “My son and I and my husband took off all week to work here.”

Eckert and Baze both said they are trying to save their homes in the process. The two women said people have been extremely kind and generous. Bulldozers were donated at the site for three days and all they asked for was fuel. There have also been several donations. The two women encouraged people to come and help sandbag.

The Illinois National Guard is on site in Nutwood and working to keep the levee as safe as possible.

“We came for manpower to assist with the effort,” said Lt. Jeremy Irvin, the commander at the location and others to Hardin. “We had 197 soldiers total come to help.”

The National Guard is on site in Nutwood, patrolling the levee non-stop trying to make sure it remains as safe as possible.

If that Nutwood Levee does breach, as many fear, Hardin will be inaccessible via Route 16. This would further isolate the county and make the Kampsville Ferry the fastest way to reach Greene and Jersey Counties and points to the south. If the levee breaches at Nutwood – as it did in 1993 – residents said a mere trip from Hardin to Jerseyville will take four hours and cover as much as 120 miles.

The Nutwood Drainage and Levee District (D&LD) protects 10,360 acres of primarily agricultural land located in Greene and Jersey Counties, Illinois, on the left bank of the Illinois River between river miles 15.2 and 23.7 above the mouth of the Illinois River.

The levee was overtopped and breached completely during the flood of 1993, inundating the area and causing a disruption of traffic on Illinois Routes 100 and 16 for over three months.

The Mississippi River level at the Melvin Price Lock and Dam in Alton was at 36.9 feet at 8 p.m. Saturday night.

The Mississippi River level in Grafton was 33.11 feet at 8 p.m. Saturday. The river is supposed to crest at 36 feet on Wednesday, June 5.





