

Media Advisory – 11 a.m., Nov. 13, 2008

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County ratchets down Emergency Ops Center *River levels throughout county returning to normal*

As river levels continue receding, the Snohomish County Department of Emergency Management (DEM) will close down its Emergency Operations Center at noon Thursday.

DEM opened its Emergency Operations Center early Wednesday morning amid forecasts of heavy rains and major flooding on all river systems throughout Snohomish County. By mid-afternoon Thursday, the Skykomish, Snohomish and Stillaguamish river systems were returning to normal levels following moderate to major flooding in area cities.

DEM will transition from response to recovery, assisting Snohomish County Public Works, which will begin assessing damages to about 30 roads closed during the past 48 hours. Many of those roads are open again. A full list of roads closed due to flooding can be found at www.snoco.org.

Specifically, flood waters spilled into Index, Gold Bar and Sultan Wednesday afternoon and evening. Coordinated efforts between the DEM and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers helped shore up the Skykomish River at Index, limiting floodwaters' impacts on the three cities.

Still, quickly rising waters forced some residents to voluntarily evacuate from the area, and before the Skykomish River crested near 19 feet at Gold Bar – four feet above flood stage – emergency personnel had safely performed three water rescues.

At the same time, the Stillaguamish River, forecast to flood Granite Falls and Arlington, crested at just under 17 feet at Arlington, sparing all but the lowlands along the river channel. Flood stage is 14 feet.

Early Thursday morning, the Snohomish River crested at 19.37 feet, a touch more than four feet above flood stage but lower than initial expectations. The Snohomish River at Snohomish also flooded about four feet above flood stage, which is 25 feet, later that morning.

While careful observation of levees was maintained Wednesday and Thursday, only Cannery Dike at Gold Bar was topped by flood waters despite efforts to sandbag. There are about 99 miles of dikes located in Snohomish County.

Snohomish County Public Works delivered about 174 tons of sand and 7,500 bags to Gold Bar, Sultan, Index, Snohomish, Stanwood and Oso for residents to use. About 50

volunteers helped shore up vulnerable areas with sandbags including along the Skykomish River in Sultan.

The American Red Cross housed about a dozen people in two shelters at Monroe and Sultan. The Sultan shelter at the VOA Sky Valley Camp, 701 First St., will close at noon Friday. The shelter in Monroe at the Rock Church, 16891 146th St. SE, will remain open as long as needed.

Residents and business owners who experienced flooding are encouraged to begin documenting damage. Reports should be made to an individual's insurance company and also can be called in to the Snohomish County Department of Emergency Management at 425-388-5060.

Additional flooding issues can be reported to Emergency Management at 425-388-5060.

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