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SKAGIT RIVER FLOODS IN QUICK RISE AFTER STORM

FREAK STORM WITH HEAVY RAIN AND HIGH WIND SETS OFF FIRST SERIOUS FLOOD SINCE 1921 – DAMAGE HEAVY IN ROCKPORT AND HAMILTON; NO PROPERTY HIT HERE

Heavy rains and unseasonably warm temperatures combined with other factors over the week end in causing the first serious flood on the Skagit river in many years. Although the river was high for several days, the rapid rise of the river Saturday night and Sunday morning caught most residents living near the river by surprise.

The real cause of the flood was the unusually heavy rainfall during the week, when 11 inches fell on the upper Skagit between Tuesday and Sunday. During the storm that hit here Saturday, four inches of rain fell in 24 hours. This, combined with a Chinook wind and the already bank-full river, brought the water up at a rapid rate starting early Saturday evening.

By 2:00 a.m. Sunday water had started to enter the town of Hamilton and by morning there was from two to four feet of water over the entire town.

At Concrete the river backed up into the fields in east Concrete and reached the McDaniel, Gradinler and Gregory homes before it stopped rising. It has been many years since this area was flooded.

Crofoot addition had water up within a few inches of the bank, but no homes were touched. Edgar Gates' barn was isolated by a virtual river.

Rockport Has Rescue

At Rockport the waters overflowed the

south banks, marooning Mr. and Mrs. Merten on the roof of their house. Mrs. Watson and small child were also trapped in their home by the waters. Rescue parties from Rockport removed both families by boat. Mrs. Watson and youngster were found floating about the room on a mattress when help arrived.

At Marblemount the Cascade and Skagit combined to flood the area east of the bridge. The Witham place was isolated and a portion of highway was washed out just beyond the bridge.

The small bridge to the fish hatchery, across the Cascade, was swept away. Much damage was done at the hatchery itself.

Roads Closed Below

All traffic to the upper valley was closed Sunday by water over the road at Lyman. Before that a few cars had been able to get thru by detouring Hamilton by way of the Lyman Timber Co. road to Grandy Lake.

Roads were open again Tuesday with some stretches of water still over the highway, but passable. The railroad is checking their right-of-way for weak spots before renewing service.

In this district a bridge is reported out at Park Creek, across Faber ferry. Ferry landings are also badly damaged. The Rockport-Newhalem railroad took the worst beating, many sections being washed away and a number of bridges damaged. School

children in both the Faber and Newhalem areas are unable to attend classes and will probably be out of school for some time.

Skagit Dams Help

The fact that water was low behind Ross dam kept the flood from being much worse. The valves of the dam were closed Wednesday and the dam was able to hold back all water here until the flood crest had passed. At the crest of the flood 42,600 cubic feet of water were impounded every second. The lake, over 20 miles long, came up ten and is now forty feet higher than anticipated for this time of the year. Monday there was still enough storage space to impound another 200,000 acre feet of water. No water is being released.

The Baker river dam here held back the rising Baker river until late Saturday evening, when storage capacity was reached. The water was then released at a minimum rate, keeping the lake level at full height.

The Sauk river, uncontrolled, was a big factor in the rapid rise of the river here. The flood crest here Sunday reached 149,000 cubic feet per second.

The last big flood here was in 1921, before that in 1909.