

Rain, snowmelt, cause concerns of more flooding



Flood waters cover Buchanan County, Missouri, east of Atchison, on March 22, 2019/Credit: Atchison County Emergency Management

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Even as floodwaters receded in hard-hit places in the Midwest, experts warned Saturday that with plenty of snow still left to melt in northern states, the relief may only be temporary.

Rainfall and some snowmelt spurred flooding in recent weeks that's blamed on three deaths so far, with two men in Nebraska missing for more than a week. Thousands were forced from their homes as water broke through or poured over levees in the region. The damage is estimated at \$3 billion, and that figure is expected to rise.

As temperatures start to warm, snowmelt in the Dakotas and Minnesota will escalate, sending more water down the Missouri and Mississippi rivers and their tributaries.

A precautionary evacuation involving hundreds of homes in the St. Joseph, Missouri-area was lifted as the Missouri River began a swift decline after unofficially rising to a new all-time high, inches above the 1993 record. St. Joseph was largely spared, but officials say 250 homes were flooded in the southern part of Buchanan County. It wasn't clear when residents would be able to get back.

When they do, officials say they need to be careful. Contaminants that escaped from flooded farm fields, industrial operations and sewage plants are part of the murky water now saturating homes.

Near St. Joseph, in Elwood, Kansas, residents were forced to evacuate Thursday as the river rose. However, they were able to return home Sunday morning.

No residential flood damage was reported in Elwood.

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