

MDC's lowland conservation areas and accesses in western Missouri flooded

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) reports that flooding lake and river levels continue to hamper public access at many conservation areas or access sites in northwest and west central Missouri. Many boat ramps and parking lots are inundated or unusable due to flood damage. Visitors should use caution in all low-lying areas.

The MDC headquarters offices for the Four Rivers Conservation Area and the Schell Osage Conservation Area both remain above water. But they are mostly surrounded by flood water, and much of the acreage and public access sites are under water, said Nick Laposha, MDC protection regional supervisor. Both areas are affected by flooding from the Osage River and Truman Lake.

“The office complexes are essentially on islands right now,” Laposha said.

MDC’s Clinton Office is also affected by high water at Truman Lake. Flooding has covered the road normally used by the public to reach the office, which is south of Clinton and near the lake’s flood pool. Although, a service road and the office remain open. MDC staff is placing sandbags to protect the office should higher water levels occur. On May 30, the Truman Lake level stood at 738.41 feet, more than 32 feet above normal. Officials with the Corps of Engineers said the lake is expected to rise more and top the previous record of 738.72 set in 1986. MDC’s Golden Valley Shooting Range near Clinton and Truman Lake is closed and unreachable because of water over roads.

Flooding is affecting four MDC conservation areas in northwest Missouri that are managed primarily for wetland habitat. Flood water from the Missouri River has moved back into the Bob Brown Conservation Area in Holt County through levees breached this spring by flooding. Missouri River water has also overtopped levees at the Grand Pass Conservation Area in Saline County, and equipment and offices are being evacuated there. Levee breaches along the Nodaway River are causing flooding in the Randy Herzog wetland units at the Nodaway Valley Conservation Area in Holt and Andrew counties. Flooding in the lower Grand River basin had inundated the Fountain Grove Conservation Area in Linn and Chariton counties, including water in the headquarters and maintenance buildings.

Although they are wetland units, the flooding will leave sediment damage and deposits on roads, parking lots, and structures that will need to be fixed, said Blaine Adams, MDC disaster response coordinator for the northwest region. Flooding is also making MDC river access sites unusable along the Missouri, Grand, and Platte rivers. Heavy rains in recent days, including a nine-inch rainfall in one event in the Grand River basin, are causing the swollen rivers.

“High river flows and the wet cycle we’re in have definitely impacted MDC areas,” Adams said. “All of our river accesses are affected. I don’t know of any that are in safe, usable condition at this time.”

To find an MDC conservation area near you or to check for closures, visit <https://nature.mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/places>.

