

# Clackamas River reaches flood stage, several boat ramps under water

by Jackie Labrecque and Keaton Thomas, KATU News

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*Clackamas swells after spring storm - Image from KATU photojournalist Evan Bell.*

ESTACADA, Ore. — The Clackamas River crested Monday evening, just above flood stage, which is 20 feet, prompting low level flooding concerns between Estacada and Carver Park.

Clackamas County officials closed the boat ramp at Carver Park due to high water. Water inundated areas that are normally dry and the spaces where fishermen normally park.



Further east and upriver in Estacada, in Milo McIver State Park, the boat ramps were also under water.

“You can’t get close to the River. It’s dangerous,” says Dave Getzlaff, the park's camp host who says the swift water and high river levels ruined some plans.

“Sometimes the steelhead run well after a heavy rain, so the fishermen know that,” Getzlaff explained. “I had to ask a few people to leave, which didn’t make them real happy. ... We can't allow any boats out there when there’s no booms out there.”

Clackamas County sheriff's deputies say people should not be on the river when it's running like this. Debris, like logs and large tree branches, can damage boats and kayaks.

“(It's) pretty scary with the water this high,” Getzlaff said. “I mean, it’s Oregon. We have rain! It’s not to be unexpected.”



Despite the high water, KATU News met two people who kayaked from Barton Park to Carver Park. It's a popular tubing route during the summer, but the river is running much faster now.

"It's fast," said Mike Pendergast, a river guide. "Normally in the summer, you float this on an inner tube and it's like 500 cubic feet per second (CFS). Right now it's 21,000 CFS. It's like a freight train. We finished this whole stretch in an hour. Normally, it takes four or five hours."

"It's definitely the fastest flowing river I've been in," said Suja Shyam, Pendergast's student for the day.



Pendergast says you shouldn't be on the river unless you're experienced on whitewater.

As of Monday afternoon, deputies said they haven't responded to any rescues along the Clackamas River.

Staff with the Clackamas River Basin Council visited areas of the river to check on past restoration projects. Some of their projects included returning river banks to their natural habitat and creating side channels to let the river expand when water levels rise.

"The whole site had been engineered to create this natural side channel through this space, and it was doing exactly what we had hoped it would do," said Pat Kaczmarck, outreach and programs coordinator for the council.

The Clackamas River is expected to recede overnight.

In Oregon City, the Willamette River is swelling and will rise more over the next two days. Water is spilling into the parking lot at Sportcraft Landing. The river is expected to rise another few feet by Wednesday, meaning that parking lot could fill with even more water.