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Flood Event Report

For January 26-29, 2024

**Issued on
January 31, 2024**

Executive Summary

On the morning of Friday, January 26, 2024, the National Weather Service reported that an atmospheric river was developing, and while forecasts were likely to change several times per day, the current forecasts for the weekend from the Northwest River Forecast Center indicated:

- White River to reach Phase 2 flood stage on Saturday afternoon;
- Tolt River to reach Phase 2 flood stage on Sunday morning;
- Snoqualmie River to reach Phase 2 flood stage on Sunday morning; and
- Heavy flows expected for the South Fork Skykomish River.

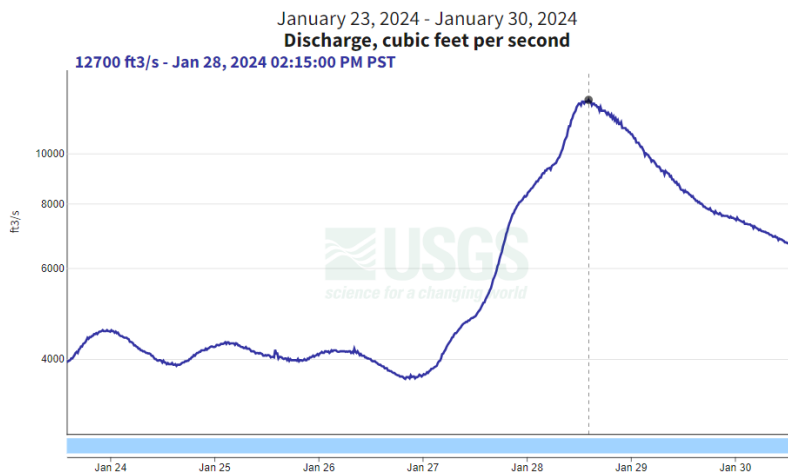
The potential for higher river levels could not be ruled out at the time of this initial forecast.

“We are thankful to the first responders and King County staff who were prepared to take action during this flood event. Fortunately, the rainfall associated with this potentially dangerous weather system did not result in widespread flooding and only required a small response from our governmental partners.”

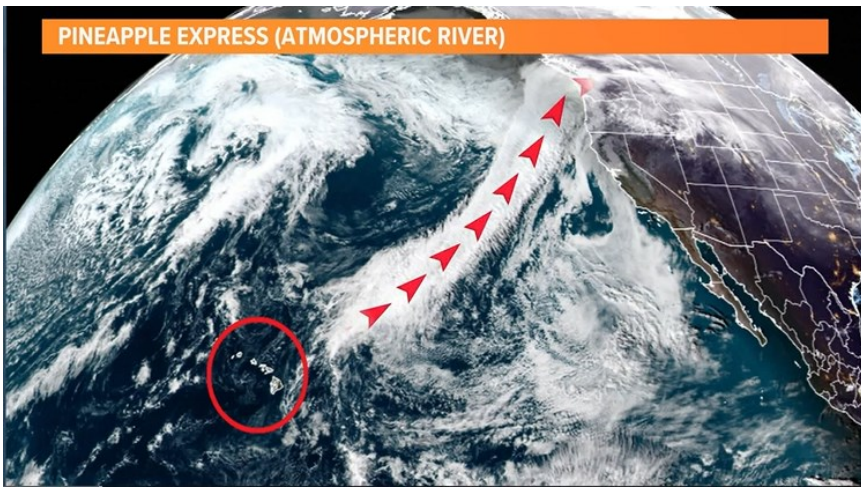


Reagan Dunn, Chair

Snoqualmie River Near Snoqualmie, WA - 12144500



By Sunday morning, January 28, 2024, the Snoqualmie River reached Phase 2 flood stage, which is determined when the USGS gage on the Snoqualmie River near the city of Snoqualmie measures above 12,000 cubic feet per second (cfs). At 11:15 a.m., the gage hit 12,100 cfs, it peaked at 12,700 cfs at 2:15 p.m., and dropped below Phase 2 flood stage at 6:15 p.m. The White and Tolt rivers did not reach Phase 2 flood stage. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers limited flows to 5,000 cfs at the Mud Mountain Dam over the weekend, which is the Phase 2 threshold for the White River.



Credit: KING 5

Response Overview

This section lists some of the actions taken by the King County Flood Control District and its governmental partners. It is not intended to be an all-inclusive list of governmental actions taken during this flood event.

- Jan. 28: King County opened the Flood Warning Center at 11:15 a.m. to monitor flooding along the Snoqualmie River.
- Jan. 28: The King County Flood Warning Center closed at 6:15 p.m. after river conditions dropped below the Phase 2 flood stage level.

Communications

This section lists some of the communications provided by the King County Flood Control District and its governmental partners. It is not intended to be an all-inclusive list of governmental communications provided during this flood event.

- Michelle Clark, Executive Director of the King County Flood Control District, kept the District’s Board of Supervisors informed of the flood event by distributing 2 updates from Jan. 26 to Jan. 28.
- Jan. 28: King County’s Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP) issued a news release informing the media that the sum of the Snoqualmie River’s three forks eclipsed the Phase 2 flood alert threshold, thus triggering the opening of the King County Flood Warning Center.



Jan. 28, 2024 flooding along the Snoqualmie River. Credit: KOMO News



Jan. 27, 2024 predicted rain totals. Credit: FOX 13

Infrastructure and Critical Facilities

This section assesses the impact of flooding on critical infrastructure such as roads, bridges, utilities, and public facilities, and it highlights past investments which may have mitigated the impact of this flood event. It is not intended to be an all-inclusive list of flooding impacts, nor does it highlight all past government investment in area flood mitigation infrastructure.

The following roads were at risk for closure during this flood event.

Snoqualmie River Basin

- Reinig Rd
- Mill Pond Rd
- Neal Rd SE
- West Snoqualmie River Rd NE (Walker Rd)
- Snoqualmie Meadowbrook Rd

Lessons Learned

This section lists some of the lessons learned by the King County Flood Control District and its governmental partners. It is not intended to be an all-inclusive list of governmental lessons learned during this flood event.

- Flood forecasting and warning appeared to function as designed given there was no loss of life in King County during this flood event.
- Existing flood mitigation infrastructure appeared to function as designed given flooding impacts were minimal.
- Media outreach and coverage appeared to function as intended to help keep the public properly informed and minimize public risks.
- The King County Flood Alert system and Flood Warning Mobile App both functioned as designed providing useful information to those signed up - individuals can sign up for the King County Flood Alert at green2.kingcounty.gov/floodalertsysteem/ and the Flood Warning Mobile App is available for download from the Google Play and Apple App Store.
- The flooding, while minor, underscores the policy position supporting the need for further investment in flood mitigation planning and projects.

News Coverage

This section lists some of the media coverage that occurred during this flood event. It is not intended to be an all-inclusive list of media coverage.

Seattle Times

- <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/weather/seattles-5-p-m-sunsets-are-here-and-so-is-springlike-weather/>
- <https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/intense-storms-fueled-by-el-nino-are-set-to-bombard-west-coast/>
- <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/weather/heavy-rain-in-western-wa-brings-minor-flooding-landslide-danger/>

KOMO (ABC affiliate)

- <https://komonews.com/news/local/seattle-puget-sound-forecast-rain-atmospheric-river-flooding-flood-warning-warm-temperatures-pineapple-express-cascade-passes-snow-levels-western-washington#>
- <https://komonews.com/news/local/king-county-flood-warning-center-opens-following-heavy-rain-across-region-weather-water-travel-minor-snoqualmie-river-landslides-danger-department-of-natural-resources-and-parks-alert-threshold-low-lying-are#>

KING (NBC affiliate)

- <https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/atmospheric-river-western-washington-national-weather-service/281-f465db5f-9756-4ebf-9060-00e34ff061c8>

FOX (FOX affiliate)

- <https://www.fox13seattle.com/weather/wet-and-mild-weekend-ahead-river-flooding-possible-early-next-week>
- <https://www.fox13seattle.com/weather/seattle-weather-wet-weekend-warmer-temperatures>
- <https://www.fox13seattle.com/weather/seattle-weather-rainy-weekend-60-degree-temperatures-possible>

KUOW (NPR affiliate)

- <https://www.kuow.org/stories/western-washington-is-going-to-get-drenched-this-weekend>

MyNorthwest

- <https://mynorthwest.com/3948163/buehner-expect-record-breaking-weather-warming-temperatures/>



Recognitions

The King County Flood Control District was created to provide funding and policy oversight for flood risk reduction capital projects and programs in King County. The Flood Control District brings a comprehensive approach to flood management and provides funding to improve the County's aging and inadequate flood protection facilities, including flood control facilities, capital improvement projects, and floodplain management and restoration programs. Funding is also provided for a regional flood warning center and emergency response, flood facility maintenance, public education and outreach, mapping and technical studies, citizen inquiry, and public response.

During flood events, however, it is the Flood Control District's governmental partners at King County and the other jurisdictions throughout the county who are responsible for emergency services, transportation, public works, housing, and other government services critical for the protection of life and property.

The King County Flood Control District would like to recognize and show appreciation for the dedicated public services provided by those who work at King County and at cities throughout the county. These talented professionals work long hours during flood events, occasionally at risk to their own safety, to ensure the best possible outcomes for the citizens of King County. Thank you, from the King County Flood Control District, to all the governmental partners listed in the Flood Event Report for the January 26-29, 2024 flood event.

