



NEWS RELEASE

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

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SUBJECT: DNR offers additional guidance in wake of northern flooding

ASHLAND, Wis. – With flood waters receding throughout northern Wisconsin areas affected by last week’s heavy rains, many property owners are working through the clean-up process to check wells, remove storm related debris, and identify repairs that may require permits.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources reminds area residents that heavy rains can create conditions that affect private wells and drinking water. Following is a roundup of tips, resources and guidance in the aftermath of flooding, including information about expedited permitting for repairs.

Floodwaters

- People and pets are advised to limit contact and avoid swimming or wading in flood waters and runoff, which may contain bacteria and other contaminants.

Private wells and drinking water

- Floodwaters and runoff may affect private wells. Well owners who observe flooding or changes in their water should assume their wells are contaminated and should stop drinking the water. Homeowners are encouraged to make sure their wells are properly disinfected, then sample the well after pumping and disinfection to assure the water is safe.
- Wells located in pits, basements and low-lying areas are especially susceptible to contamination.
- Even without obvious signs of flooding, a well can become contaminated. More [recommendations for private well owners](#) whose wells have been inundated are available on the DNR website.
- More information on bacteriological contamination of drinking water wells, along with lists of licensed well drillers, pump installer and labs certified to analyze water samples are available by searching the DNR website, dnr.wi.gov, for the keyword "[wells](#)."

Visiting state parks and properties

- A number of state properties were affected by the rains, yet most remain open to welcome visitors.
- Merrick and Interstate facilities are expected to be affected by the high waters up to and possibly through the weekend. A complete list of current conditions can be found by visiting DNR.wi.gov and searching "[Current Conditions](#)."
- Sections of the Gandy Dancer, Saunders and Wild Rivers state trails remain closed due to downed trees and washouts.

- Because some areas of the far northwest experienced washouts of some roads and highways, people traveling to the area should check the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's web page, 511.wi.gov [exit DNR] for road closure details.

Handling debris

- DNR has compiled information on how to dispose of specific materials and items. Visit [Cleaning up storm debris](#) for more information. You can also contact local authorities to find out if there are special arrangements or resources for cleaning up and disposing of storm and flood debris.

Expedited permitting

- DNR water management specialists and water management engineers may be able to expedite projects including some types of private bridges, culverts and roads in an officially declared disaster area. Please contact your local DNR transportation liaison for activities related to repair/replacement of public roadways, bridges and culverts. To learn if your project qualifies for expedited review and how to proceed, visit <http://dnr.wi.gov/files/PDF/pubs/fh/FH0057.pdf>. A list of regional water management specialists and transportation liaisons can be found at <http://dnr.wi.gov/emergency/documents/floodContactsNorth.pdf>.

Additional information for those affected by the flooding can be found on DNR's website by searching "[Coping with Flooding](#)." The Wisconsin Department of Health Services also provides information and links to resources on its Flood Hazards and Recovery page: www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/flood/ (exit DNR).