



# NEWS RELEASE

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

**DATE:** Sept. 23, 2016

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**SUBJECT: DNR offers guidance in wake of regional flooding; visitors to parks and natural areas encouraged to check conditions**

MADISON, Wis. – Heavy rains in many Wisconsin counties this week have affected private property owners and state properties as well.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is encouraging visitors planning a trip to state parks and forests to check the department's [current conditions page](#) as portions of some trails and campgrounds have been affected.

The department also is offering the guidance below as many property owners will begin assessing damage, checking wells and septic systems and removing storm related debris. In particular, heavy rains can create conditions that affect private wells and drinking water.

## Visiting state parks and properties

- [Black River State Forest](#), [Wildcat Mountain](#), the [Kettle Moraine State Forest – Northern Unit](#) and [Merrick State Park](#) remain open to welcome visitors but have experienced some flooding and trail damage.
- Visitors also may want to check on affected portions of the [400 State Trail](#) and [Chippewa River State Trail](#).
- Current condition updates can be found by visiting [DNR.wi.gov](http://DNR.wi.gov) and searching "[Parks Conditions](#)."

## 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](http://dnr.wi.gov), for the keyword "[wells](#)."

## 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.

### **Septic systems**

- Septic systems are regulated by the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services. Look for more information at [DSPS.wi.gov](http://DSPS.wi.gov), search "[private onsite wastewater treatment systems program](#)."

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/](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/flood/) (exit DNR).